

Early Evaluation of the Techscaler Programme: 2022-2024: Survey Write-ups

February 2026

Early Evaluation of the Techscaler Programme 2022-24

Survey Write-ups for the Scottish Government

February 2026



In partnership with



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1 Introduction

This supplementary report sits alongside the main report for the early evaluation of the Techscaler Programme and contains the full write-ups of the various surveys undertaken as part of the evaluation.

1.1 Structure

The remainder of this report has been structured as follows:

- **Chapter 2** presents the feedback from the mentor survey.
- **Chapter 3** presents the views of engaged members of Techscaler.
- **Chapter 4** provides the feedback from Techscaler members who have not yet engaged with Techscaler support and activities.

2 Mentor survey

2.1 Introduction

CodeBase issued an online survey, on behalf of EKOS, to 150 Techscaler mentors on 21 March 2025. The purpose of this survey was to capture the perspectives of mentors on:

- their experience of becoming a Techscaler mentor.
- how the matching and relationship management process worked.
- benefits of mentorship for Techscaler mentees.
- benefits of being a Techscaler mentor.
- the effectiveness of the Techscaler support and activities for tech startups and scaleups.
- suggestions for how the mentorship programme could be improved.

Email reminders were issued by CodeBase to mentors on 7 and 22 April 2025. The mentor survey timescale was extended to help boost participation and the survey closed on 2 May 2025. A total of 43 responses were received when the survey closed – this represents a good response rate of 29%.

The survey asked mentors whether they would be interested in taking part in a follow-up interview with the evaluators to provide more qualitative feedback on their experiences of engagement with Techscaler. Many mentors (31) indicated that they would be happy to take part in a follow-up conversation – a total of 12 interviews were undertaken during June and July 2025. This additional qualitative feedback has been integrated into the main evaluation report.

2.2 Becoming a Techscaler mentor

Mentors who responded to the survey have been a Techscaler mentor for varied lengths of time. The majority (65%) have been a Techscaler mentor for over one year, see **Table 2.1**.

Table 2.1: How long have you been a Techscaler mentor?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
Less than six months	3	7%
Between six months and one year	12	28%
Between one and two years	19	44%
Over two years	9	21%

Source: EKOS mentor online survey. Base=43.

The main ways mentors first found out about the Techscaler mentorship programme was directly from CodeBase, from another Techscaler mentor, or through an existing relationship with CodeBase, see **Table 2.2**. These three ways accounted for over three-quarters (77%) of all responses.

Table 2.2: How did you first hear of the Techscaler mentorship programme?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
Directly from the CodeBase team	12	28%
Recommendation from another Techscaler mentor	11	26%
I have an existing relationship with CodeBase	10	23%
Recommendation from a professional contact	5	12%
Saw information on becoming a mentor on the Techscaler website or social media – and filled out the online form	2	5%
Word of mouth from another organisation or agency	2	5%
Don't know/can't remember	1	2%
Other	-	-

Source: EKOS mentor online survey. Base=43.

The main motivation for individuals becoming a Techscaler mentor was to share their skills experience, and knowledge and to support the development of tech startup founders and senior leaders (86% each), see **Table 2.3**. This was followed by to give something back to the tech community (74%).

Table 2.3: Why were you interested in becoming a Techscaler mentor?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
As a way of sharing my skills, experience, and knowledge	37	86%
To support the development of tech startup founders and senior leaders	37	86%
To give something back to the tech community	32	74%
To support my own development and understanding of business	11	26%
To grow my own professional network	9	21%
To gain mentor training	2	5%
Other reason	2	5%

Source: EKOS mentor online survey. Base=43.

Multiple response question where respondents could select more than one option and all that applied. Percentages may total more than 100% as a result.

Note: 'Other' responses included: to support creative companies and see potential opportunities in a tech world; and to play a role in the establishment of a strong startup ecosystem/tech hub in Scotland.

The vast majority of mentors have current and/or previous mentoring experience outside the Techscaler Programme (88%), with most of this being current mentoring experience, see **Table 2.4**.

Table 2.4: Do you have mentoring experience outside the Techscaler Programme?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
Yes, I am currently mentoring startup and scaleup companies outside the Techscaler Programme	31	72%
Yes, I have previous experience of mentoring startup and scaleup companies prior to becoming a Techscaler mentor	24	56%
No	5	12%

Source: EKOS mentor online survey. Base=43.

Multiple response question where respondents could select more than one option and all that applied. Percentages may total more than 100% as a result.

2.3 Mentor application process

Mentors were asked to indicate how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with various aspects of the Techscaler mentor application process and with their initial engagement with CodeBase.

Satisfaction was mixed across all of the statements, see **Table 2.5**. Points to note include that:

- satisfaction (either very satisfied or satisfied) ranged from a low of 35% for 'The online 'Interest in becoming a Mentor' form' to a high of 74% for 'Interview discussion with CodeBase following submission of the mentor form'.
- a couple of statements attracted a sizable 'Don't know' response, including CodeBase check-ins with mentors (23%).

Table 2.5: How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following aspects of the Techscaler mentor application process and your initial engagement with CodeBase?

Answer choice	Very satisfied - No.	Very satisfied - %	Satisfied- No.	Satisfied- %	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied - No.	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied - %
The online 'Interest in becoming a Mentor' form	6	14%	9	21%	9	21%
Interview discussion with CodeBase following submission of the mentor form	19	44%	13	30%	4	9%
The exercise undertaken to identify your relevant sectors and areas of expertise	17	40%	11	26%	8	19%
The ability to chat with and 'shadow' an experienced Techscaler mentor before you started providing Techscaler mentoring support	18	42%	7	16%	5	12%
CodeBase check-in with mentor and mentee following your first mentoring session	12	28%	7	16%	9	21%

Answer choice	Dissatis- fied - No.	Dissatis- fied - %	Very dissatis- fied - No.	Very dissatis- fied - %	Don't know - No.	Don't know - %
The online 'Interest in becoming a Mentor' form	-	-	2	5%	17	40%
Interview discussion with CodeBase following submission of the mentor form	-	-	5	12%	2	5%
The exercise undertaken to identify your relevant sectors and areas of expertise	-	-	5	12%	2	5%
The ability to chat with and 'shadow' an experienced Techscaler mentor before you started providing Techscaler mentoring support	-	-	4	9%	8	19%
CodeBase check-in with mentor and mentee following your first mentoring session	-	-	5	12%	10	23%

Source: EKOS mentor online survey. Base=43.

Most mentors provided qualitative feedback on what worked well with the application process and/or with their initial engagement with the CodeBase team. The main points have been summarised as follows:

- the application and onboarding process for mentors was largely well thought of – processes were considered clear, well-managed, straightforward, smooth, structured, transparent, and thorough.
- mentors said that they received clear communication from CodeBase at the outset, including clear articulation of the steps involved in the onboarding and mentorship process.
- CodeBase were considered approachable, friendly, professional, and responsive, and have helped make new mentors feel comfortable and relaxed as well as sufficiently briefed/informed on the Techscaler Programme and on mentor roles, responsibilities, and requirements.
- the ability of newly onboarded mentors to shadow an experienced mentor before undertaking their own mentoring session was considered helpful and beneficial – the feedback from mentors confirmed that this onboarding mechanism helped to instil confidence in new Techscaler mentors, clarified the process and approach, and ensured new mentors felt supported, prepared to deliver an effective first session, and knew what to expect.

Around half of mentors provided qualitative feedback on what worked less well with the application process and/or with their initial engagement with CodeBase. Some mentors who became a mentor with Techscaler in the earlier stages of programme delivery commented that processes, materials, and onboarding have improved over time – this was welcomed and considered a positive step. Other points raised by mentors included that:

- the time taken between stages (for example, from mentor application to interview, from mentor interview to confirmation of onboarding, or from onboarding to delivering mentor sessions) felt lengthy – there was some feedback that internal processes could be smoother and quicker.
- new Techscaler mentors might benefit from being able to shadow two experienced mentors, rather than one, as part of the onboarding process – so that new Techscaler mentors can experience different mentoring styles and approaches before they delivered the first session.

- mentors felt that there could be greater clarity and transparency from CodeBase around how the matching process worked as well as ensuring mentors have sufficient notice and lead-in time when they have been matched/to accommodate new mentees.
- CodeBase communications could be improved – various points related to communications were raised by mentors, including that some mentors felt that they might have missed some messages or communications when they joined via the Slack platform. Some mentors said they might be registered for some communications but not others. Another point raised that was that a better balance could be struck in communications to ensure new Techscaler mentors did not feel overloaded with information and communications.

2.4 Financial compensation

The vast majority (93%) of mentors indicated that they valued the financial compensation they received for the Techscaler mentoring services provided, see **Table 2.6**.

Table 2.6: Do you value the financial compensation you receive from Techscaler for the mentoring services you provide?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
Yes	40	93%
No	1	2%
Don't know/unsure	2	5%

Source: EKOS mentor online survey. Base=43.

Wider qualitative feedback from these mentors highlighted that they valued the financial compensation received as:

- it helped to cover some but not all of the costs associated with the time mentors spent on preparing for sessions, delivering mentoring support, any follow-up with mentees, and that it recognised the effort and energy of mentors involvement.
- it was said to be commensurate with consulting rates and with other mentoring programmes, and it showed that CodeBase valued and recognised the knowledge, experience, industry expertise, skills, and value mentors brought to nurturing and supporting founders and their contribution to the overall Techscaler Programme.
- remuneration made it easier for mentors to free up, prioritise or dedicate more time out of their busy schedules and existing commitments to be involved in the mentorship programme and to contribute to the Techscaler effort.
- mentors connect mentees with their own networks and contacts, and this was considered hugely valuable to mentees.

Only 7% of mentors indicated that they did not value the financial compensation they received for the Techscaler mentoring services provided, or were unsure, see **Table 2.6**. Wider qualitative feedback from these mentors was that they do it to help and to give something back.

A majority (66%) of mentors reported that the financial compensation received from Techscaler was a material consideration in their decision to offer time to the Techscaler Programme, see **Table 2.7**. The main reasons put forward for this viewpoint included that:

- financial compensation made it easier for these mentors to commit or invest more of their time and energy to providing mentoring support as part of Techscaler amidst busy schedules and other commitments – that is, the payment helped to compensate for some of their time and input, including those who have their own company, or other competing priorities, or other professional and personal responsibilities.

- some mentors mentioned that they provide mentoring supporting outside the Techscaler Programme or were Board trustees on a voluntary basis – and that there was a limit to the time they could provide for free.
- mentees expected mentors to be compensated for their input as this helped to demonstrate the value of the service to them both personally and professionally.

Table 2.7: To what extent was the financial compensation a material consideration in your decision to offer your time to the Techscaler Programme as a mentor?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
To a large extent	14	33%
To some extent	14	33%
To a limited extent	10	23%
Not at all	5	12%
Don't know/unsure	-	-

Source: EKOS mentor online survey. Base=43.

A further 23% of mentors reported that the financial compensation was a material consideration, to a limited extent, in their decision to offer time to the Techscaler Programme as a mentor. Here, the main mentor feedback centred on a desire to give something back and to make a difference to tech founders and companies – while financial compensation was welcomed (it helped to compensate for some of their time and incentivised more commitment) it was not the only reason for them becoming a Techscaler mentor.

The remainder (12%) of mentors reported that the financial compensation was not a material consideration in their decision to offer time to the Techscaler Programme as a mentor. The main reasons put forward for this viewpoint included that:

- financial compensation was viewed as a bonus rather than essential – albeit there was recognition within the feedback provided that financial compensation might be a more important consideration for some mentors.
- their incentive to be involved as a mentor was not financially motivated.

Almost all (95%) mentors rated CodeBase’s relationship management with mentors as either good or very good, see **Table 2.8**.

Table 2.8: How would you rate CodeBase’s relationship management with mentors on a scale of very good to very poor?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
Very good	25	60%
Good	15	35%
Average	-	-
Poor	-	-
Very poor	2	5%
Don't know/unsure	-	-

Source: EKOS mentor online survey. Base=42.

Qualitative feedback provided by these mentors highlighted that:

- CodeBase were approachable, easy to interact with, and do a good job – these mentors were broadly happy with the contact they have had with and receive from CodeBase.
- suggestions made by these mentors for improvement included:
 - greater visibility of the future pipeline of mentees coming through the programme – mentors sometimes felt that they have a lot of mentoring sessions close together and then other times with very few or no sessions at all.
 - exploring ways to streamline the current way to book sessions.
 - exploring ways to join up emerging themes and challenges from the mentorship programme across the network, so Techscaler initiatives/materials were amended accordingly.
 - that CodeBase could encourage more mentees to provide feedback on their mentoring experience (some do, some don't) and sharing this with mentors in a timely fashion.
 - mentors should be able to update their own mentor bio on the platform used for the programme.

The remainder (5%) of mentors rated CodeBase’s relationship management with mentors as very poor. While absolute numbers were small, the qualitative feedback provided by these mentors highlighted that:

- there could be more opportunities for mentors to connect with CodeBase and with other mentors.
- the volume of group wide emails and reply-all chains could be frustrating.
- a perception that the Techscaler Programme was run by people who have not previously worked in a startup or scaleup.

2.5 Mentor training and support

Interesting, only around one-quarter of mentors (24%) indicated that they have received any mentor training and/or other support since becoming a Techscaler mentor, see **Table 2.9**. The vast majority of mentors (76%) indicated that they have not received any mentor training and/or other support since becoming a Techscaler mentor or were unsure.

Table 2.9: Have you received any mentor training and/or other support since becoming a Techscaler mentor?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
Yes	10	24%
No	27	64%
Don't know/not sure	5	12%

Source: EKOS mentor online survey. Base=42.

All mentors who indicated that they have received mentor training and/or other support since becoming a Techscaler mentor said that this was either useful or extremely useful, see **Table 2.10**.

Table 2.10: How would you rate Techscaler’s mentor training and support?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
Extremely useful	5	50%
Useful	5	50%
Neither/nor	-	-
Not that useful	-	-
Not useful at all	-	-
Don’t know/unsure	-	-

Source: EKOS mentor online survey. Base=10.

Mentors provided limited qualitative feedback regarding potential improvements for the Techscaler Programme’s mentor training and support. This potentially suggests that mentors were broadly satisfied with the current approach (as reflected in the feedback presented earlier in this chapter).

A few mentors took the time to reiterate that:

- the support received from CodeBase has been helpful.
- the provision of guidance and principles for the mentoring programme has been useful to better understand the tone and cultural ethos of the programme.
- the shadowing support has been invaluable for new Techscaler mentors.
- regular debriefs/post-delivery workshops have been welcomed.

As noted, limited suggestions were made for how Techscaler’s mentor training and support could be improved. A suggestion made included that ‘maybe more on do’s and don’ts, some examples of success stories achieved with mentorship as well as some cautionary tales would be beneficial.’

Table 2.11: Do you attend/participate in the Techscaler online 'mentor meet up' sessions (an unpaid monthly opportunity to get to know each other and receive peer support) and/or the 'mentor mixers' (an unpaid informal get together of mentors and founders a few times a year)

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
Yes, mentor meet-ups	23	53%
Yes, mentor mixers	15	35%
No, not yet but I plan to for a least one of these	17	40%
No, and I do not plan to	-	-
Don't know/unsure	-	-

Source: EKOS mentor online survey. Base=43.

Multiple response question where respondents could select more than one option and all that applied. Percentages may total more than 100% as a result.

The majority (65%) of mentors who have attended/participated in the Techscaler online 'mentor meet up' sessions, and almost all (93%) who have been involved in the 'mentor mixers' reported that these sessions have either been useful or extremely useful, see **Table 2.12** and **Table 2.13**. The meet up sessions received lower positive ratings overall.

Table 2.12: How would you rate the usefulness of the mentor meet ups which you have participated in/attended?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
Extremely useful	4	17%
Useful	11	48%
Neither/nor	4	17%
Not that useful	3	13%
Not useful at all	1	4%
Don't know/unsure	-	-

Source: EKOS mentor online survey. Base=23.

Table 2.13: How would you rate the usefulness of the mentor mixers which you have participated in/attended?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
Extremely useful	7	47%
Useful	7	47%
Neither/nor	-	-
Not that useful	-	-
Not useful at all	1	6%
Don't know/unsure	-	-

Source: EKOS mentor online survey. Base=15.

Most mentors provided qualitative feedback on what worked well with the mentor meet ups and/or the mentor mixers which they have participated in. The main points have been summarised below.

The mentor meet ups and/or the mentor mixers sessions:

- were friendly and welcoming sessions with a good level of topic-based discussion – support was also expressed by mentors for the in-person sessions held.
- provided opportunities for mentors to meet and form connections with their peers/other mentors, to network, and helped to encourage conversation and discussion.
- provided opportunities for mentors to share experiences, stories, ideas, and learning – for example, what worked well with the mentorship programme, what challenges their mentees faced, and how they have helped mentees to resolve issues or challenges.
- enabled mentors to develop expand their own professional networks.

Where mentors made suggestions for how the mentor meet ups and/or the mentor mixers could be improved (albeit it was not always clear which one they are referring to), this included that:

- the sessions could benefit from more structured facilitation (that is, chaired, agenda with key topics for discussion) – for example, facilitation could help ensure everyone has a say/participate/share perspectives and that strong voices do not dominate the conversation, and that mentors could be asked for potential discussion topics which were advertised in advance of the meeting to help encourage increased attendance/participation.
- CodeBase could schedule all sessions in the diary at the outset of the year rather than on a more ad hoc basis to ensure mentors have sufficient notice of when these will take place – other suggestions included that: there could be more than one online session a month or that the day of the week/time of day could be varied; the numbers who attend online sessions should not be capped to account for those who register a slot but who then do not attend; and hosting special interest meetings every quarter could be also considered.
- more action could be taken by CodeBase to encourage increased participation from across the Techscaler mentor network as a whole – to secure wide engagement and commitment beyond a small core group who attend on a regular basis. Although not raised to a great extent, there was feedback that a lack of engagement in the sessions may be related to the unpaid nature of these sessions for mentors.
- CodeBase could share key learning and lessons learned at the sessions – for example, from the mentorship programme, from the wider Techscaler Programme, etc.

2.6 The matching process

The majority (65%) of mentors felt the matching process worked well in terms of CodeBase connecting them with suitable and appropriate mentees, and a further 23% reported that the process was ok, see **Table 2.14**. Fewer respondents (12%) suggested that the matching process could be improved.

Table 2.14: How do you feel the matching process works in terms of CodeBase connecting you with suitable and appropriate mentees?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
The process works well	28	65%
The process is ok	10	23%
The process could be improved	5	12%

Source: EKOS mentor online survey. Base=43.

Around two-thirds of mentors identified aspects of the matching process that worked well. Common feedback from these mentors was that:

- CodeBase has a good understanding of mentors’ backgrounds, strengths, areas of interest, expertise and specialisms and use this knowledge to inform the matching process.
- in further support of the aforementioned bullet, there was some feedback from mentors who reported that they have been matched with the right individuals and types of company – and that the matching process has facilitated good/relevant/constructive/productive connections to be formed between mentors and mentees and has identified those situations where mentors could help mentees and add value.
- CodeBase share a mentee summary with mentors prior to engagement which was considered helpful and allowed mentors to review mentees specific needs.

A few mentors intimated that there were no areas for improvement, while other feedback was that it was difficult to form an overall view of the matching process – “...it's hard to judge if it works well – I can't see who isn't matched with me.”

Where suggestions were made for improvements to how the matching process worked in practice, the main points raised related to:

- the frequency of matching and opportunities and ensuring mentors were clear on how the matching and selection process/framework worked, and who did the final selection – to aid improved transparency and understanding. A few mentors either reported no or few matches (and were not sure why this has been the case), and others said that they were uncertain why they have been matched with some startups but not others or were not sure why their experience was not deemed as relevant. Providing mentors with an overview of the companies in the Techscaler Programme could give mentors with a better understanding of who has been involved and where they may be best able to add value.
- timing – there was feedback that notice of matches felt rushed/last minute, and that more advanced notice would be helpful to support better planning, etc.

Other feedback on improvements to the matching process (note: absolute numbers were small) included that:

- more could be done to ensure mentees were clear on the role and purpose of mentoring – for example, there might be a misunderstanding among some mentees that mentors will be investors or unlock investment.
- CodeBase could explore ways to improve the consistency of mentors meeting new startups – for example, helping with new cohorts, either onboarding or post-onboarding, creating workshops, sessions, relevant sales and marketing support in line with the Techscaler Programme.
- it was considered important that mentors have practical, hands-on experience as an operator or founder within a company to be of most value to mentees.
- CodeBase could consider sharing some of the mentee feedback with other potential mentees as testimonials to help mentees choose a mentor.

- CodeBase could undertake follow-up meetings with mentors to ask them for feedback on the mentoring sessions, mentees progress, etc. – it was suggested that this could also help ensure mentors have a strong understanding of how the Techscaler Programme continues to improve and evolve its offer.
- matching based on skill sets was considered useful, but some mentors said that suitable matches might also come down to personalities too.
- CodeBase could help ensure the crib sheet information and sessions notes were complete.

Over half of mentors (56%) reported that CodeBase has matched them to provide Techscaler mentoring support many times, and a further 37% have been matched but not often, see **Table 2.15**.

Table 2.15: Has Codebase matched you to provide Techscaler mentoring support to mentees?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
Yes, many times	24	56%
Yes, not often	16	37%
No, not yet	3	7%

Source: EKOS mentor online survey. Base=43.

2.7 Benefits to mentees from receiving Techscaler mentoring support

Mentors reported that they bring a wide range of knowledge and expertise to the mentor relationship, see **Table 2.16**. This included aspects such as growth and innovation (88%), product development (76%), and market/sales (74%).

Table 2.16: What knowledge and expertise do you bring to the mentor relationship?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
Growth and innovation	37	88%
Product development	32	76%
Market/sales	31	74%
Finance/investment	23	55%
Recruitment	19	45%
Exit strategy	19	45%
Legal	8	19%
Other	11	29%

Source: EKOS mentor online survey. Base=42.

Multiple response question where respondents could select more than one option and all that applied. Percentages may total more than 100% as a result.

Note: 'Other' responses include: data and artificial intelligence strategy; creative industries, games, film and media; value proposition design and business model design; personal growth; leadership; team productivity; manufacturing; operations; regulatory landscape and approvals for go-to-market discussions; quality systems; supply chain management; technology; professional development; strategy; management; and KPIs.

Mentors have helped mentees in a range of ways, with the most common responses, including:

- listened and provided constructive challenge to consider a range of options and prioritise opportunities (93%).
- provided an independent objective perspective on business growth (88%).
- helped to focus on key issues and development opportunities (86%).
- shared my own business experience (84%), see **Table 2.17**.

Further, 44% have signposted mentees to other Techscaler support – this has mainly been to education programmes, see **Table 2.18**.

Table 2.17: How have you helped mentees in your role as mentor?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
Listened and provided constructive challenge to consider a range of options and prioritise opportunities	40	93%
Provided an independent objective perspective on business growth	38	88%
Helped to focus on key issues and development opportunities	37	86%
Shared my own business experience	36	84%
Shared resources – for example, provided tools and tips	33	77%
Helped to make introductions to my network	33	77%
Helped mentees to establish new professional connections	26	60%
Signposted mentees to other ecosystem support to access ongoing startup and scaleup support	20	47%
Signposted mentees to other Techscaler support	19	44%
It is too early to tell/have not provided mentoring yet	4	9%
Other	3	7%

Source: EKOS mentor online survey. Base=43.

Multiple response question where respondents could select more than one option and all that applied. Percentages may total more than 100% as a result.

Note: 'Other' responses include: provided guidance on investment funding options and approaches; provided perspective on technical challenges and finding suitable markets; and sharing learnings obtained from Reforge with mentees.

Table 2.18: Which Techscaler support have you signposted mentees to?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
Next Steps	13	68%
Reforge	13	68%
First Steps	10	53%
Funding readiness support	8	42%
International programmes	7	37%
Startup Basics	5	26%
Regional hubs	4	21%
Other Techscaler support	3	16%

Source: EKOS mentor online survey. Base=19.

Multiple response question where respondents could select more than one option and all that applied. Percentages may total more than 100% as a result.

Note: 'Other Techscaler support' responses include: local meetups in regional hubs; grant support; and Techscaler MVP grant.

Mentors reported that mentees have derived a range of personal benefits from their involvement in the mentorship programme, with the top three benefits reported as:

- improved knowledge of startup and/or scale up fundamentals (91%)
- it has helped them to focus on key issues and prioritise actions/next steps (91%).
- being challenged in a supportive manner/environment (81%), see **Table 2.19**.

Table 2.19: What do you consider the main personal benefits to mentees who are supported by the Techscaler mentor network?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
Improved knowledge of startup and/or scale up fundamentals	39	91%
Helps them to focus on key issues and prioritise actions/next steps	39	91%
Being challenged in a supportive manner/environment	35	81%
Increased confidence	34	79%
Access to an independent objective perspective on growth	33	77%
Improved mindset	31	72%
New relationships, contacts, and networks developed	29	67%
Increased motivation	21	49%
Higher quality pitches	20	47%
Other benefit	2	5%

Source: EKOS mentor online survey. Base=43.

Multiple response question where respondents could select more than one option and all that applied. Percentages may total more than 100% as a result.

Note: 'Other' responses include: understanding market and how critical this is for growth and investment; and exposure to a group of professionals with experience, acumen and understanding.

Further, mentors reported that mentees have also derived a range of business benefits from their involvement with Techscaler mentors, with the top three benefits reported as:

- support with strategy development and implementation (90%).
- greater confidence in company resilience/sustainability (83%).
- enhanced investor readiness (71%), see **Table 2.20**.

Table 2.20: What do you consider the main business benefits to mentees who are supported by the Techscaler mentor network?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
Support with strategy development and implementation	38	90%
Greater confidence in company resilience/sustainability	35	83%
Enhanced investor readiness	30	71%
Improved understanding of ecosystem support	22	52%
Improved access to ecosystem support	18	43%
Funding raised/secured	17	40%
Increased number of funding/investment deals completed	14	33%
Other benefit	8	19%

Source: EKOS mentor online survey. Base=42.

Multiple response question where respondents could select more than one option and all that applied. Percentages may total more than 100% as a result.

Note: 'Other' responses include: business growth; hiring; delegation; basic understanding of addressing a clear business need in a beachhead market; community; insight into a business environment; improved commercial offering/understanding; appreciation of commitment required to deliver; sharing practical advice on areas needed for building a business; and user adoption.

2.8 Benefits to Techscaler mentors

In response to an open-ended question, circa 90% of mentors reported personal benefits as a direct result of becoming a Techscaler mentor. The main benefits reported were that mentors have:

- a sense of satisfaction from helping to nurture and support startups and scaleups – building relationships and helping others develop personally and professionally.
- a sense of self-fulfilment from sharing their own knowledge experiences with mentees – it was a rewarding thing to do.
- increased confidence among newer mentors in providing mentoring support – as well sharpening mentoring and interpersonal skills.

- increased knowledge from connecting and sharing experiences with other mentors has been a learning opportunity for mentors.
- gained inspiration, learned new things, and gained different perspectives from their mentees.
- felt part of the wider tech ecosystem or community.
- further built upon and expand mentors their own professional network.
- enhanced their own resume or profile.

Almost all (85%) of mentors reported that involvement in the Techscaler mentorship programme has either met or exceeded their expectations, see **Table 2.21**. The main reasons put forward for this response included that these mentors:

- have been matched with a good range of interesting founders and companies who they have enjoyed working with and supporting.
- said mentees have been engaged in the mentoring process and some have been inspirational.
- have seen first-hand the positive and tangible impacts the mentoring support has had on their mentees – it has helped them to overcome challenges, progress in their career/journey, improve their businesses and products, etc.
- attached value to being part of the wider Techscaler Programme and community.
- have gained a lot from connecting with their peers (that is, other mentors).

Table 2.21: To what extent has the Techscaler mentorship programme met your expectations from becoming involved?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
It has exceeded my expectations	17	40%
It has met my expectations	19	45%
It has fallen short of my expectations in some way	6	15%

Source: EKOS mentor online survey. Base=42.

The remainder (15%) of mentors reported that involvement in the Techscaler mentorship programme has fallen short of their expectations.

The main point raised by these mentors (and by some of those who reported that it has met their expectations) was that they felt they have not been matched with mentees to any great extent or at all, and that they had expected more frequent or regular mentoring sessions.

A wider point raised was barriers to repeat mentoring – this was put down to a range of factors such as the booking system and available funding for mentorship, but that this created an artificial bottleneck in the process.

2.9 Involvement in other aspects of Techscaler

A positive finding was that the majority (64%) of mentors said they have been involved in other aspects of the Techscaler Programme over and above mentoring, see **Table 2.22**.

Table 2.22: Have you been involved in any other aspects of the Techscaler Programme over and above mentoring (for example, speaker at an event, attended a Techscaler event)?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
Yes	27	64%
No	15	36%

Source: EKOS Mentor online survey. Base=42.

Those who have been involved in other aspects of the Techscaler Programme provided feedback on their experience. Points raised included that:

- mentors highlighted the different ways they have been involved in the programme – this ranged from being a speaker or panellist at an event to organising a workshop for the Catalyst Programme, and from delivering education content to multiple cohorts of participants to delivering workshops and webinars, and from running a pitch desk session to attending events and conferences.

- mentors in the main said that their experience has been positive – with feedback including that:
 - they have been sufficiently and clearly briefed by CodeBase (where relevant), that the support they have received from the team has been good/responsive, things/their input have been well organised, and they received feedback from Techscaler on their involvement afterwards.
 - events and panels have been well attended and received, and attendees/participants actively engaged – they also provided opportunities to keep up to date with the latest developments in the Scottish startup ecosystem, networking opportunities, as well as keeping abreast of how the Techscaler Programme has evolved.
 - some mentors expressed interest in being involved more often where relevant and appropriate.

- there was limited negative feedback from these mentors (absolute numbers small, and were all individual points) – this centred on inherent challenges associated with facilitating hybrid sessions (that is, where some people attend in person while others dial in remotely), the time taken to get things arranged/approved (for example, webinar sessions), a perception that some participants get more value out of courses/workshops (and were more engaged) than others, and a sense that attendance at workshops they have been involved in could have been better, albeit it was reported that they did not know what average attendance at similar workshops has been.

The remainder of mentors (36%) who responded to the survey said that they have not been involved in other aspects of the Techscaler Programme over and above mentoring. The main feedback from these mentors was that:

- they face time constraints which affects their ability to get more involved in Techscaler (for example, work commitments).
- the timing of some events (evenings) was challenging when they have other commitments, including family commitments.

- they have either not been asked if they wish to be involved in other aspects of the programme or said that they might have missed communications which raised awareness of these opportunities, or that they were not aware that they could be involved in other aspects of Techscaler.

2.10 In the absence of the Techscaler mentor network

Circa half (47%) of mentors reported that either all, almost all, or most of the impacts they reported earlier can be attributed to the Techscaler mentor network, see **Table 2.23**.

Table 2.23: What proportion of the benefits you identified earlier do you think can be attributed to the Techscaler mentor network?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
None	-	-
A small amount of the impacts (up to 10%)	2	5%
Some of the impacts (up to 25%)	4	9%
Up to half of the impacts (up to 50%)	7	16%
Most of the impacts (up to 75%)	14	33%
Almost all of the impacts (up to 90%)	2	5%
All of the impacts (100%)	4	9%
Don't know/ Not sure	10	23%

Source: EKOS Mentor online survey. Base=43.

2.11 Challenges and issues

A handful of mentors indicated that there had been no specific challenges or issues, however, the remainder of mentors highlighted various challenges based on their experience of being a Techscaler mentor.

The main challenges and issues raised by mentors was that some did not feel that they have been matched as much as they expected, and that some mentees might benefit from additional (or more regular) sessions and check-ins to meaningfully benefit from mentorship. While others might actually require less mentoring support.

A wider range of issues were raised, but not to any great extent. This included:

- a perception that a set of common challenges were experienced by very early-stage founders, and that one-to-many workshop sessions might be a better approach, freeing up the focus of mentoring support on more specific founder issues.
- whether Techscaler has an accurate understanding of company needs and issues to inform the matching process (self-reported by the founder/company) – it was suggested that there could be value in a more independent assessment of company need being undertaken to assess where companies are at and to match them more appropriately with support and/or mentorship. There was a perception that certain companies might need significantly more or less support.
- gaps between monthly mentoring sessions were challenging, especially for those fast-moving founders/companies who might require more regular check-ins or where they have an issue or challenge that is pressing.
- managing the expectations of mentees.
- mentors not always being clear on what other Techscaler support the mentee has been involved in or if they have also been matched with another mentor.
- keeping mentors abreast of the Techscaler and wider ecosystem support offering so that they could effectively signpost mentees where appropriate – albeit there was acknowledgement that there was a role for mentors to keep on top of this themselves too.

2.12 Would you recommend the Techscaler mentorship programme

The Net Promoter Score (NPS)¹ for whether existing Techscaler mentors would recommend being a Techscaler mentor to others is **72 which is excellent**, see **Table 2.24**.

¹ <https://www.retently.com/blog/good-net-promoter-score/>

Table 2.24: How likely are you to recommend being a Techscaler mentor to other potential mentors, where 1 is definitely not to 10 already have?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
1 – Definitely not	1	2%
2	-	-
3	1	2%
4	-	-
5 – Maybe	1	2%
6	-	-
7	-	-
8	6	14%
9	5	12%
10 – Already have	28	67%

Source: EKOS Mentor online survey. Base=42.

The NPS for whether Techscaler mentors would recommend being a Techscaler mentee is **46 which is great**, see **Table 2.25**.

Table 2.25: How likely are you to recommend being a Techscaler mentor to other potential mentees, where 1 is definitely not to 10 already have?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
1 – Definitely not	-	-
2	1	2%
3	1	2%
4	1	2%
5 – Maybe	4	10%
6	1	2%
7	3	7%
8	4	10%
9	9	21%
10 – Already have	19	45%

Source: EKOS Mentor online survey. Base=43.

2.13 Effectiveness of Techscaler support

Points to note from **Table 2.26** (below) include that:

- the majority of mentors considered the Techscaler support effective for tech startups and scale ups – the most effective support was said to be mentorship (100% rated either effective or very effective). This was followed by the education courses (89%) and funding readiness support (89%).
- the regional hubs (30%), followed by international programmes (27%) were more likely to be considered of average (or less) effectiveness – albeit a majority of mentors still considered these effective.

Table 2.26: How effective or otherwise do you think the following Techscaler support is for tech startups and scaleups?

Type of support	Very effective - No.	Very effective - %	Effective - No.	Effective - %	Average - No.	Average - %
Education support Startup Basics, First Steps and next steps (N=35)	17	49%	14	40%	4	11%
Education support Reforge (N=29)	14	48%	10	34%	5	17%
Bespoke support International programmes (N=26)	9	35%	10	38%	7	27%
Bespoke support Mentorship (N=37)	24	65%	13	35%	-	-
Bespoke support Funding readiness support (N=27)	8	30%	16	59%	3	11%
Regional hubs (N=27)	9	33%	10	37%	7	26%

Type of support	Not effective - No.	Not effective - %	Not at all effective - No.	Not at all effective - %	Don't know - No.	Don't know - %
Education support Startup Basics, First Steps and next steps (N=35)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Education support Reforge (N=29)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bespoke support International programmes (N=26)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bespoke support Mentorship (N=37)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bespoke support Funding readiness support (N=27)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Regional hubs (N=27)	1	4%	-	-	-	-

Source: EKOS Mentor online survey.

When asked 'What, if anything, works well with the support' the main points raised by mentors included that:

- the range, content, and quality of support available to founders and their teams was considered a strength of Techscaler – it has helped founders to develop the necessary theory and basics to startup and grow their business and has provided them with practical tools and tips on how to go about it. It has also helped founders to focus and prioritise and has increased their knowledge as well as their awareness of the wider ecosystem.
- the design of Techscaler support has meant that the programme has supported a large number of individuals/businesses regardless of their stage of development.
- the one-to-one Techscaler support which has connected founders to those with industry/startup/scaleup experience, such as mentoring – this has: connected founders to individuals who have direct experience from the setup and growth of their own business(es) and who know the various issues, challenges and pitfalls that they might come up against; allowed advice and support to be tailored to the founder's needs; and has helped to empower founders to take the next steps.

On the flip side, when asked 'What, if anything, works less well', the main points raised by mentors included that:

- there could be greater Techscaler focus and support for companies to grow and scale – including working with high potential founders and companies to ensure they have increased access to investors and larger-scale funding opportunities, more founder connection programmes to bring together people with ideas, support to pivot, etc.
- mentees could only access one mentoring session a month – access to more than one session a month (where appropriate) could help build momentum and be more impactful in terms of supporting companies to grow and scale. Wider feedback was that successful entrepreneurs are generally time poor and driven to move fast, and that one-to-one support was more appropriate and impactful than one-to-many support for these companies.

- not all mentors felt exposed to other parts of the Techscaler Programme – and that increased awareness, and involvement could support the programme and mentoring to be more impactful.
- there was considered to have been a lack of companies joining the physical hubs at tenants, etc. – it has not created the buzz/community throughout Scotland as perhaps anticipated at the outset.
- running a startup can be a lonely place – there could be increased opportunities for founders to connect and talk with their peers and industry mentors.
- while Techscaler programmes were generally said to be good – there was some mentor feedback that not all founders need the same support at the same time, with a suggestion that some founders have spent time learning things that they might already know and did not need.

A few mentors indicated that they were not very familiar with other aspects of the Techscaler Programme, beyond the mentoring programme, and were not able to comment on this or provide an informed view on what worked well and less well – and indicated that they would like to learn more about Techscaler.

2.14 Views on the quality of tech startups and scale up coming through Techscaler

Mentors were asked the question 'Based on your engagement with Techscaler, what are your views on the quality of tech startups and scaleups coming through the Techscaler Programme?'

There was mixed feedback to this question.

Some mentors reported that, in their experience, the quality of tech startups and scaleups coming through the Techscaler Programme has generally been good or very good, with some saying that this has also improved over time. This point is further evidenced in the qualitative responses which highlighted that:

- mentors have been impressed by the quality and range of ideas and companies, and vision among founders they have mentored.

- mentees/founders were viewed as critical 'talent' in Scotland – mentors described some of their mentees using terms such as 'intelligent', 'diligent', 'focussed', 'driven', 'enthusiastic', 'motivated', and 'sincere'.
- mentors have worked with some 'stand out' founders and companies who they said have improved quickly with Techscaler support and mentoring.

Other mentors indicated that the quality of tech startups and scaleups coming through the Techscaler Programme has been variable – with terms used such as 'mixed', 'average' and 'varied'. Not all explained why they said this.

However, the range of points raised mainly by individual mentors included that:

- there have been some mentees who maybe should not be receiving mentoring support (at this time) – and that it was also important to separate the individual from the business idea – sometimes the business idea was poor, but the individual was excellent, or vice versa and so it was important that Techscaler casts the net wide for engagement. Wider feedback was that not all ideas were going to be successful, but that these ideas need to come through to help the founders recognise this – it is all part of the journey.
- there was feedback that some mentors had expected there to be mixed quality – for example, getting naive founders to become competitive businesspeople that found successful startups instead of vanity projects. They said that the ecosystem in Scotland was well behind other places – some of this was due to founders being young and needing to learn, as well as more structural issues at play.
- Scotland needs more people starting high quality startups in general and Techscaler appears to have been most useful for very early stage or first-time founders. These mentors said they would like to see Techscaler supporting more second time founders, more experienced startup leaders, and more later stage companies, including via mentoring support. Mentors said that scaling companies have similar and complex challenges, so reaching them or keeping them engaged through this stage could really benefit the Scottish tech community and see more succeed.

Further, a few mentors said that they were unable to answer this question – either because they said that they mentor founders through both Techscaler and Eagle Labs and did not know which have matched mentees with them, they have not mentored many people via Techscaler, or that they did not have a wider sense of the Techscaler population of supported founders/companies to provide an informed view.

2.15 Future delivery of the Techscaler mentorship programme

When asked 'What opportunities, if any, do you think could be made to the Techscaler mentorship programme to maximise the impact of the Scottish Government investment', the main suggestions proposed by mentors included that:

- the mentorship programme could be more flexible in its design and delivery, for example:
 - high potential founders and growth and scaleup companies could benefit from access to additional and/or more intensive mentoring sessions to accelerate the growth of later stage companies.
 - CodeBase could explore the potential for one-to-many mentoring sessions (in addition to the one-to-one support) to encourage the sharing of experiences, to troubleshoot recurring challenges, to guide high growth potential startups collectively, and to facilitate collaboration across startups.
- CodeBase could look to secure more involvement from mentors and explore ways to leverage and maximise the knowledge, experience, and insights mentors bring to the mentorship programme and to the wider Techscaler Programme, for example:
 - routinely capturing and sharing feedback from mentors on how the mentoring programme has worked in practice, key learning from startups and failed startups, any notable successes, and to celebrate and disseminate communications more widely and frequently on successes and impact (for example, not only in the annual report).

- ensure mentors were regularly informed, aware of, and have visibility of the different components of the programme (and its goals) – so that they could get more involved, where appropriate, and to improve signposting mentees to other relevant support.
- CodeBase could review the mentor pool – in terms of size and quality – the perception was that the mentor pool was too large and that there could be renewed focus on recruiting mentors who are/have been experienced founders or experienced operators in tech startup and scaleup companies.
- there could be clear measurable key performance indicators (KPIs) for the mentoring sessions (for example, percentage of actions implemented, survival rates, job creation, etc) – as well a red/amber/green (RAG) mechanism during mentor sessions to prioritise potential ‘highflyers’ and ‘weed out’ companies who are not committing to the process or stepping up.

Other points raised by mentors included:

- how to ensure consistency of good quality mentoring support and advice – a point raised is that many startups go through similar phases and milestones and that there should be a clearer pathway that guides the journey – and that each mentor was likely to have their own playbook and their own idea of ‘what good looks like’ which could lead to cases where advice and support is inconsistent and a lack of clarity on goals.
- improved marketing of the mentorship programme to founders to help onboard more mentees.

2.16 Final comments

Mentors were asked whether they had any final comments they would like to feed into the Techscaler evaluation.

Many mentors took the opportunity to reiterate points raised throughout this chapter. A range of positive comments were made about the Techscaler Programme and about the mentorship programme specifically.

This included feedback that:

- the original intent of creating Techscaler Programme was supported – there was also feedback that the programme could be a strategic game changer for Scotland.
- CodeBase has in the main done a good job so far in its early stages of delivery – but that it would be important to maintain and further build on that collective effort (and impact).

Areas for improvement identified in final comments included:

- ensuring a high-quality mentor pool was considered vitally important – mentors who could provide the practical support which founders need.
- that the programme could benefit from having more members of the CodeBase team with prior entrepreneurial and scaleup experience.
- the importance of making the support easy to access, in particular for founders who were said to be time poor, etc.

3 Engaged member surveys

3.1 Introduction

The methodology for the surveys undertaken with engaged Techscaler members are described in detail in the main evaluation report.

Table 3.1 shows the sample and the number of telephone interviews undertaken with Techscaler members. A total of 140 telephone interviews were undertaken by our study partner Research Resource. These interviews were largely undertaken with founders or co-founders of companies who have accessed Techscaler support (albeit to varying degrees) and who could share views of their experience of engagement from a company perspective.

Table 3.1: Techscaler company interviews – sample and completed telephone interviews

Engagement with Techscaler services	Original sample	Revised sample	Revised sample by engagement level (%)	Number of telephone interviews completed	Completed interviews by engagement level (%)
Low	319	292	50%	26	19%
Some	207	185	32%	62	44%
A lot	108	98	17%	49	35%
High	14	12	2%	3	2%
Total	648	587	100%	140	100%

The telephone survey was supplemented with an abbreviated online survey aimed at an agreed sample. This includes:

- those founders and co-founders who did not take part in the telephone survey.
- some other individual members of Techscaler – that is, member company employees and individuals at the ideation stage.

The online survey resulted in another 34 responses; all but one is from Techscaler members who have engaged with the programme in some way².

The surveys aimed at engaged Techscaler members resulted in a total of 173 interviews, against a target of 200 interviews (87% achieved).

Only the telephone survey asked detailed impact questions to inform the impact assessment work presented in the main evaluation report, and as mentioned above, the online survey was much shorter – it asked some similar questions to the telephone survey but not all questions. Further, not all Techscaler members answered each question.

3.2 About Techscaler members

This section presents a breakdown of the member base, including company type, size and location. A vast majority (90%) of members who took part in the survey are founders or co-founders of a company, see **Table 3.2**.

Table 3.2: Which of the following job titles best reflects your role?

Answer Choice	Number	Percentage
Founder or Co-founder	154	90%
C-Level Management (for example, Chief Executive Officer, Chief Technology Officer, Chief Marketing Officers, Managing Director, etc)	15	9%
Department Head	1	1%
Team Member	1	1%
Team Leader	0	0%
Other	1	1%

Source: EKOS Techscaler member survey. Base=172.

Figures may not total 100% due to rounding.

Note: 'Other' responses included: photographer.

² The remaining one response is from a Techscaler member who has not yet accessed support from the programme – this response has been included within the non-engaged member survey analysis (see Chapter 3 of this report).

Techscaler members operate in a wide range of industry sectors. Other service activities is most common (41%), followed by: human health and social work activities (14%); education (12%); and arts, entertainment and recreation (11%).

Table 3.3: What industry sector is/will be your primary focus?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
Other service activities	70	41%
Human health and social work activities	24	14%
Education	20	12%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	19	11%
Professional, scientific and technical activities	18	10%
Financial and insurance activities	5	3%
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	3	2%
Information and communication	4	2%
Mining and quarrying	1	1%
Manufacturing	1	1%
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	1	1%
Construction	1	1%
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	1	1%
Administrative and support service activities	1	1%
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	1	1%
Transportation and storage	1	1%
Accommodation and food service activities	1	1%
Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	0	0%
Real estate activities	0	0%
Activities of households as respondents; undifferentiated goods and services producing activities of households for own use	0	0%
Activities of extraterritorial organisations and bodies	0	0%

Source: EKOS Techscaler member survey. Base=172.

The vast majority of members are employed in a micro-business (97%). It should be noted that a large proportion of members are startups with no employees (other than themselves) (44%) – **Table 3.4**.

Table 3.4: How many employees (Full-time equivalents, FTEs) does your company have?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
Self-employed/sole trader (no employees other than yourself)	76	44%
Micro (Less than 10 employees)	91	53%
Small (10 to 49 employees)	5	3%
Medium (50 to 249 employees)	0	0%
Large (250+ employees)	0	0%

Source: Techscaler member survey. Base=172.

Members are based across Scotland, though one-third of members report that they/their business is based in Edinburgh and Lothians (33%), while a further 23% are based in Glasgow and West – **Table 3.5**.

Table 3.5: Which region are you/your company based in?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
Edinburgh and Lothians	57	33%
Glasgow and West	40	23%
Central Scotland	18	10%
Highlands and Islands	17	10%
Northeast Scotland	15	9%
Dundee and Tayside	13	8%
South of Scotland	9	5%
Other	3	2%

Source: Techscaler member survey. Base=172.

Table 3.6 provides further details about respondents' companies. Key points to note include:

- around two-fifths of members (41%) note that the company is female-led.
- circa one-third of companies (34%) are family majority-owned.
- one fifth of members (20%) state that the company is minority ethnic group led.
- more than half of members (59%) report that the company does not have premises and is home-based.

Table 3.6: Company type

Answer Choice	Yes - No.	Yes - %	No- No.	No- %	Don't know- No.	Don't know- %
Female led (Base=170)	70	41%	82	48%	18	11%
Family majority-owned (Base=165)	56	34%	93	56%	16	10%
Minority Ethnic Group led (Base=164)	33	20%	111	68%	20	12%
Home-based (that is does not have business premises) (Base=169)	99	59%	52	31%	18	11%

Source: EKOS Techscaler member survey.

Note: Female led, and Minority Ethnic Group led, are defined as a company with the majority of the combined total number of owners, partners and directors being female and from an ethnic minority background, respectively.

For the telephone survey CodeBase provided details of key company contacts' stage of development (from ideation to scaleup) at the time of joining Techscaler. The main message from **Table 3.7** is that a majority (68%) were at a very early stage when they joined Techscaler (that is, either ideation or early stage).

Both surveys (online and telephone) asked members to indicate where they see themselves now. **Table 3.8** shows a greater proportion of members are now in the growth and scaling stage (53%). This suggests that Techscaler has supported companies in the early stages to progress to the growth or scaling stage.

Table 3.7: Based on your application form Techscaler categorised you as at the...

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
Ideation stage – an individual with an idea but no clear focus or commitment to building a company	9	6%
Early stage – an individual focused on a specific market or problem space. They may/may not have a registered business, prototype, or Minimum Viable Product (MVP) but they are dedicating time to advancing their idea	87	62%
Growth – a company with a live product looking to acquire customers. They may/may not have existing customers at this stage	39	28%
Scaleup/scaling – a company with a live product, revenue, and a team which includes department heads/specialists (e.g. product team, engineering team, growth team)	5	4%

Source: Techscaler member survey. Base=140.

Table 3.8: Which of the following stages do YOU think best describes your/the company's situation now?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
Ideation stage	5	3%
Early stage	64	37%
Growth	74	43%
Scaleup/scaling	18	10%
Decided not to start up the company	4	2%
Have since stopped trading	2	1%
Decided to start/are considering starting up a different business	4	2%
Other	2	1%

Source: Techscaler member survey. Base=173.

Note: 'Other' responses included: photographer.

A majority of members (59%) did not have a product live in the market when they joined Techscaler – **Table 3.9**. Where members did have a live product in the market (41%), almost all said that this is still the case, see **Table 3.10**.

Table 3.9: At the time of joining Techscaler did you have a product live in the market?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
Yes	57	41%
No	83	59%

Source: Techscaler member survey. Base=140.

Table 3.10: Is this still the case now?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
Yes	53	93%
No	4	7%

Source: Techscaler member survey. Base=57.

3.3 Engagement with Techscaler

For the telephone survey, CodeBase provided details of their internal coding of key company contacts' level of engagement with Techscaler (from low or least engaged to high or most engaged). For the online survey members were asked to select the most appropriate rating.

Engagement is fairly mixed among members, with just over half being less engaged (54%) and the remaining 46% more engaged – **Table 3.11**.

Table 3.11: Level of engagement with Techscaler (from 1 (low) to 4 (high))

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
1 – Low	30	17%
2 – Some	64	37%
3 – A lot	68	40%
4 – High	10	6%

Source: Techscaler member survey. Base=172.

A broadly even mix of members joined Techscaler in either 2023 or 2024, see **Table 3.12**.

Table 3.12: When did you/your company join Techscaler?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
2023	95	55%
2024	78	45%

Source: Techscaler member survey. Base=173.

3.4 Prior to joining Techscaler

3.4.1 How members heard about Techscaler

Members mostly became aware of Techscaler through an existing relationship with CodeBase (22%) or via word of mouth from family/friends (19%) – **Table 3.13**.

Table 3.13: How did you first find out about Techscaler?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
Had an existing relationship with CodeBase	38	22%
Word of mouth from family or friend	33	19%
Signposted by another agency or organisation (for example, Enterprise Agency, Business Gateway, local authority)	28	16%
Online search/approached Techscaler directly to find out more	24	14%
From attendance at an event or conference	18	10%
Directly from CodeBase	7	4%
Saw information on the Scottish Government website or social media	7	4%
Saw information on the Techscaler website or social media	3	2%
Saw an advertisement	3	2%
Don't know/can't remember	5	3%
Other	17	10%

Source: EKOS Techscaler member survey. Base=173.

Note: 'Other' responses included: LinkedIn, through my employer; support teams; professional networks; and community events.

Multiple response question where respondents could select more than one option and all that applied. Percentages may total more than 100% as a result.

3.4.2 Main motivating factors for joining Techscaler

The main motivating factors for joining Techscaler included to:

- meet and connect with like-minded founders and peers (part of the 'community') (39%).
- access expert mentorship advice, guidance, and support (39%).
- attend events to meet fellow founders, expand our network, and hear from industry experts (37%).
- access resources and tools to help startup a business (36%) – **Table 3.14**.

Table 3.14: What were your main motivations for applying to Techscaler for support?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
To meet and connect with like-minded founders and peers (part of the 'community')	68	39%
To access expert mentorship advice, guidance, and support	67	39%
To attend events to meet fellow founders, expand our network, and hear from industry experts	65	37%
To access resources and tools to help startup a business	62	36%
Wanted to access skills development support for myself/founder/co-founder	58	33%
To help access finance (for example, grants, self-funding/bootstrapping, fundraising – in exchange for equity or convertible debt, bank loans, crowdfunding, Series A, B, and C funding rounds)	50	29%
To test the viability of my business idea	36	21%
To increase our understanding of, and ability to navigate the tech support ecosystem in Scotland	26	15%
To increase our investor connectivity	19	11%
Wanted to access skills development support for our wider team	14	8%
To enhance our financial readiness	14	8%
To start/increase our internationalisation	11	6%
To increase our understanding of, and ability to navigate the tech support ecosystem outside Scotland	8	5%
Help to grow the business	7	4%
To access an affordable place to work or meet from	6	3%
Other	15	9%

Source: EKOS Techscaler member survey. Base=173.

Note: 'Other' responses included: looking for staff; to develop knowledge base; traction to investment; to understand the steps to launch my business; strategic and technical support.

Multiple response question where respondents could select more than one option and all that applied. Percentages may total more than 100% as a result.

3.4.3 Barriers faced at that time

Almost two-thirds of members (61%) cited access to finance as a barrier they faced to startup, growth or scaling at the time of joining Techscaler – **Table 3.15**.

Table 3.15: What were the main barriers you/your company faced to startup, growth or scaleup at that time of joining Techscaler?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
Access to finance	106	61%
Limited understanding of the tech support ecosystem	87	50%
Lacked wider ecosystem connections (for example, academics, corporate, industry, technical experts)	84	48%
Lacked connections with fellow founders and startup peers	83	48%
Didn't know which organisation(s) to approach for support	76	44%
Not financial/investor ready	65	37%
Lacked the core skills to support the growth and scaleup of the business	61	35%
Time taken to generate a return	44	25%
Lacked the core practical skills to startup a business	38	22%
Lacked access to affordable physical space/hubs to work or meet from (for example, flexible hotdesking, coworking, office, and meeting room space)	33	19%
Other	21	12%
Not applicable	2	1%

Source: EKOS Techscaler member survey. Base=173.

Note: 'Other' responses included: struggling to find product market fit; time for events; knowledge building for cash revenue; understanding product demand; validation; and attracting new leads.

Multiple response question where respondents could select more than one option and all that applied. Percentages may total more than 100% as a result.

This was followed by:

- limited understanding of the tech support ecosystem (50%).
- a lack of wider ecosystem connections (48%).
- a lack of connections with founders and startup peers (48%).

3.4.4 Techscaler marketing and promotion

Overall, a majority of members were satisfied or very satisfied across different aspects of marketing and promotion of Techscaler. For example, this included:

- clarity on eligibility (73% very satisfied or satisfied)
- clarity on type of support Techscaler offers (72%)
- ease of finding out about the support (71%)
- clarity on how Techscaler could help you/your company (71%)

The main areas of dissatisfaction were with the 'Clarity of the type of support Techscaler offers' and 'How Techscaler could help them/their company' (both 11%) – although as noted, a majority of members were satisfied with these aspects too– **Table 3.16**.

Qualitative feedback regarding clarity of type of support is explored in more detail below.

Table 3.16: Thinking back, how would you rate your satisfaction with the following aspects of Techscaler’s marketing and promotion on a scale of 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied)

Answer choice	Very satisfied - No.	Very satisfied - %	Satisfied - No.	Satisfied - %	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied- No.	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied- %
Clarity on whether you/your company were eligible for Techscaler support (Base=173)	72	42%	54	31%	28	16%
Ease of finding out about Techscaler (Base=173)	71	41%	52	30%	28	16%
Clarity on the type of support Techscaler offers (Base=173)	66	38%	59	34%	28	16%
Clarity on how Techscaler could help you/your company (Base=172)	56	33%	65	38%	30	17%

Answer choice	Dissatisfied - No.	Dissatisfied - %	Very dissatisfied- No.	Very dissatisfied- %	Don't know- No.	Don't know- %
Clarity on whether you/your company were eligible for Techscaler support (Base=173)	8	5%	7	4%	3	2%
Ease of finding out about Techscaler (Base=173)	9	5%	3	2%	9	5%
Clarity on the type of support Techscaler offers (Base=173)	14	8%	5	3%	0	0%
Clarity on how Techscaler could help you/your company (Base=172)	16	9%	3	2%	1	1%

Source: EKOS Techscaler member survey.

Almost two-thirds of members (63%) stated that aspects of Techscaler’s marketing and promotion could be improved, **Table 3.17**.

Table 3.17: Could anything be improved?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
Yes	88	63%
No	52	37%

Source: EKOS Techscaler member survey. Base=140.

At the time of joining Techscaler, many members considered that the information on the Techscaler Programme was too ‘generic’ and ‘wide-ranging’. This resulted in them being unclear on whether the programme was for them, or how it could help. There was also some feedback which perceives marketing and promotional activity to be central but focussed.

Many also said that, at the time of joining Techscaler, they were unclear about the difference between Techscaler (the programme) and CodeBase (the delivery partner) or about how Techscaler segmented people/companies by stage. They suggested that making this clearer could help to ensure a shared understanding among potential members about what they can expect from Techscaler support.

Other points raised by members included that, at the time of joining Techscaler:

- the programme was at early stages of making connections and developing relationships with other players in the ecosystem.
- greater use of social media and other channels (for example, case studies) for marketing and promotion could have helped their understanding of Techscaler.
- they felt that Techscaler could have had a more visible presence at events not directly organised by them as a way to increase awareness of the programme.

A few members noted that promotion of Techscaler is better now compared to when they first joined.

3.5 Techscaler application process and initial engagement

Overall, the vast majority of Techscaler members expressed satisfaction with the application process and their initial engagement with CodeBase, as set out in **Table 3.18** below, including:

- the online application process (83% were satisfied or very satisfied).
- the responsiveness of CodeBase once you applied (83%).
- the initial contact and communication with CodeBase (81%).
- the time taken for support to start (79%).
- the ongoing communication from CodeBase (77%).

Only 13% of Techscaler members were dissatisfied with ongoing communication from CodeBase.

Table 3.18: How would you rate your satisfaction or otherwise with the following statements on the Techscaler application process and your initial engagement with CodeBase on a scale of 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied)?

Aspect of process/ engagement	Very satisfied - No.	Very satisfied - %	Satisfied - No.	Satisfied - %	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied- No.	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied- %
Responsiveness of CodeBase once you applied	108	62%	36	21%	18	10%
Initial contact and communication with CodeBase	105	61%	35	20%	18	10%
Time taken for support to start	94	54%	44	25%	18	10%
Ongoing communication from CodeBase	91	53%	41	24%	p16	9%
Online application process	86	50%	57	33%	21	12%

Aspect of process/ engagement	Dissatisfied - No.	Dissatisfied - %	Very dissatisfied- No.	Very dissatisfied- %	Don't know- No.	Don't know- %
Responsiveness of CodeBase once you applied	5	3%	5	3%	0	0%
Initial contact and communication with CodeBase	6	3%	6	3%	2	1%
Time taken for support to start	8	5%	7	4%	1	1%
Ongoing communication from CodeBase	17	10%	6	3%	1	1%
Online application process	2	1%	3	2%	3	2%

Source: EKOS Techscaler member survey. Base=173.

3.5.1 What worked well?

Some members said that the application process was '*straightforward*' and '*easy to understand*'. Information provided was considered comprehensive and gave companies an insight into Techscaler's offering and clarified their expectations from engagement. These members also note that the application process was quick and allowed them to begin the onboarding process swiftly.

Some members also felt that the onboarding process worked well, due to both the efficiency of the process and the support provided by CodeBase. Meetings or discussions with CodeBase at the outset were considered helpful, relevant and targeted and staff were also considered '*knowledgeable*' and '*responsive*'. These discussions allowed the team to get a good understanding of the business idea or company, the stage they were at, goals, needs, etc., and were able to then connect members with the appropriate support and networking opportunities.

3.5.2 What worked less well?

Around half of members who answered this question said that there was nothing that worked less well at the time of joining Techscaler, and a few others said that they could not recall any issues.

Where feedback is provided by members on aspects of their initial engagement with Techscaler that worked less well, the main points raised related to:

- a lack of upfront information upfront regarding the process, the support available, and what members could expect.
- issues with completing the online application form – for example, layout, a lack of guidance, and a preference for additional in-person contact/support.
- the time taken for applications to be processed and for contact to be made.
- issues in terms of accessing the Techscaler website – for example, the website being down or slow to access at times.

3.5.3 Relationship management

Over two-thirds of members (69%) rated Techscaler’s relationship management as very good or good, **Table 3.19**. However, a sizable proportion considered it average or worse.

Some members perceived that the Techscaler relationship management approach was overly reliant on email communications – terms such as ‘faceless’, ‘hands-off’, and ‘impersonal’ were used in responses. There was also a perception among some members that Techscaler is run by people who have not previously worked in startups or scaleups and that the support was not adequately tailored to their specific needs as a result.

Suggested areas for improvement in Techscaler relationship management included:

- more direct and personal contact with individual members – regular check-ins and follow-ups, and a single point of contact were suggested to help build trusted and ongoing relationships.
- greater Techscaler visibility at events.

Table 3.19: How would you rate Techscaler’s relationship management on a scale of 1 (very poor) to 5 (very good)?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
Very good	83	49%
Good	35	20%
Average	25	15%
Poor	16	9%
Very poor	8	5%
Don’t know	4	2%

Source: EKOS Techscaler member survey. Base=171.

3.6 Techscaler support accessed and satisfaction

3.6.1 Support accessed

Members reported that they have accessed a range of Techscaler support – the main types of support received have been mentorship (78%) and participation in education courses (Startup Basics and First Steps, both 50%). Few (2%) indicated that they are tenants of a Techscaler physical hub – **Table 3.20**.

Table 3.20: Which of the following support have you accessed from Techscaler?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
Mentorship	135	78%
Startup Basics	86	50%
First Steps	86	50%
Next Steps	44	25%
Attended community events, meetups, and networking opportunities	24	14%
International programmes (for example, San Francisco/Silicon Valley, Singapore)	20	12%
Reforge	11	6%
Use of a Techscaler hub to work and meet from (for example, flexible hotdesking or coworking space, access to meeting space)	10	6%
Funding readiness	4	2%
Tenant of a Techscaler hub	3	2%
Other	1	1%

Source: EKOS Techscaler member survey. Base=172.

Note: 'Other' response included: Discovery.

Multiple response question where respondents could select more than one option and all that applied. Percentages may total more than 100% as a result.

As noted in **Table 3.20** above, the vast majority of members do not use the regional hubs as a permanent or flexible workspace (only 8%).

The main reasons for not using the regional hubs include:

- a preference for home working, or that they already have their own office space which meets their needs (for example, equipment, quiet).
- others said that they have another job while they develop their idea and do not need access to a workspace.
- barriers to access factors, such as cost (considered prohibitive) and location (do not live near to a hub, particularly those in rural locations).

A positive finding is that around two-thirds of members (68%) said that they would consider using a regional hub in the future, mostly for flexible hotdesking or coworking (47%) or as a meeting space (37%), **Table 3.21**. Some members mentioned that that they have had a positive experience of hotdesking elsewhere in the past, that they value the networking opportunities this can provide, that they may need to access physical space as the company begins to employ people or grow, or that it could help to create professional premises for them.

Members who indicated that they would definitely not, or would be unlikely to, access a regional hub in the future raised similar points to those reported earlier (for example, no current requirement).

Table 3.21: Would you consider using a regional hub as a permanent or flexible workspace in the future?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
Yes, for flexible hotdesking or coworking space	78	47%
Yes, for accessing meeting space	61	37%
Yes, as a tenant	36	22%
No, unlikely	33	20%
No, definitely not	20	12%

Source: EKOS Techscaler member survey. Base=166.

Multiple response question where respondents could select more than one option and all that applied. Percentages may total more than 100% as a result.

3.6.2 Satisfaction with Techscaler support

For the majority of Techscaler members, the support is complete – **Table 3.22**. In part this reflects the time limited nature of education courses, etc. Other support, such as mentoring and use of regional hubs, is ongoing.

Table 3.22: Is this support complete?

Answer choice	Yes - No.	Yes - %	No - No.	No - %
First Steps (Base=86)	74	86%	12	14%
Startup Basics (Base=86)	62	72%	24	28%
Mentorship (Base=134)	61	46%	73	54%
Next Steps (Base=44)	34	77%	10	23%
International programmes (Base=20)	18	90%	2	10%
Reforge (Base=11)	8	73%	3	27%
Funding readiness (Base=3)	3	100%	0	0%
Regional hubs (Base=3)	1	33%	2	67%
Use of a Techscaler hub to work and meet from (Base=8)	2	25%	6	75%

Source: EKOS Techscaler member survey.

Multiple response question where respondents could select more than one option and all that applied. Percentages may total more than 100% as a result.

Members reported high levels of satisfaction with most types of support that they/their company accessed, particularly: international programmes (100% very satisfied or satisfied); Reforge (100%); attending community events and meetups (88%); and mentorship (86%) – **Table 3.23** below. The exception is the ‘use of a Techscaler hub to work and meet from’ with lower levels of satisfaction (50% very satisfied or satisfied), albeit absolute numbers are small.

Table 3.23: How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with each type of support you/your company has accessed?

Type of support	Very satisfied - No.	Very satisfied - %	Satisfied - No.	Satisfied - %	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied - No.	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied - %
Mentorship (Base=120)	76	63%	28	23%	1	1%
Startup Basics (Base=73)	37	51%	16	22%	3	4%
First Steps (Base=71)	37	52%	20	28%	2	3%
Next Steps (Base=36)	16	44%	13	36%	0	0%
International programmes (Base=17)	13	76%	4	24%	0	0%
Attended community events and meetups (Base=24)	10	42%	11	46%	1	4%
Reforge (Base=10)	6	60%	4	40%	0	0%
Use of a Techscaler hub to work and meet from (Base=10)	4	40%	1	10%	4	40%
Funding readiness (Base=4)	1	25%	3	75%	0	0%
Tenant of a Techscaler hub (Base=3)	1	33%	2	67%	0	0%
Other (Base=2)	2	100%	0	0%	0	0%

Type of support	Dissatisfied - No.	Dissatisfied - %	Very dissatisfied - No.	Very dissatisfied - %	Don't know - No.	Don't know - %
Mentorship (Base=120)	7	6%	5	4%	3	3%
Startup Basics (Base=73)	6	8%	3	4%	8	11%
First Steps (Base=71)	5	7%	4	6%	3	4%
Next Steps (Base=36)	3	8%	1	3%	3	8%
International programmes (Base=17)	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Attended community events and meetups (Base=24)	1	4%	0	0%	1	4%
Reforge (Base=10)	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Use of a Techscaler hub to work and meet from (Base=10)	0	0%	0	0%	1	10%
Funding readiness (Base=4)	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Tenant of a Techscaler hub (Base=3)	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Other (Base=2)	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

Source: EKOS Techscaler member survey.

3.6.2.1 What worked well?

Members frequently highlighted that the Techscaler support provided them/their company with tailored expertise, structured delivery and content, and increased opportunities to network and connect with the wider community and ecosystem, other founders and mentors.

Mentorship support was considered by members to add real value for founders – they emphasised the importance and quality of the mentor matching, with Techscaler matching them to skilled mentors that were relevant to their idea and sector. Crucially, mentors were often able to offer strategic insight and planning to provide ongoing, personalised support and actionable advice. This allowed founders to have a ‘sounding board for their ideas’ and ‘fill in gaps in their knowledge’. This is seen as instrumental in helping participants to increase their confidence and grow their project/business. Many said that they hope to continue accessing mentorship support going forward.

Those who accessed First Steps and Next Steps appreciated the flexible and hybrid delivery of these sessions. Members highlighted the effectiveness of the ‘well-designed and delivered’ structured content as well as the opportunities to connect and network with other founders at the early stage of their business. The content and advice helped participants to build confidence and fill knowledge gaps, particularly around entrepreneurial language (for example, ‘speaking the language’ of business). Networking, particularly in-person, was also said to have created a sense of community and shared learning in a supportive environment, which was supported by ‘knowledgeable’ and ‘approachable’ speakers.

Members note that the International Programmes provided a ‘unique opportunity’ to think about their business in an international setting. These members appreciated the balance of structured content and freedom to plan their day and organise meetings giving them responsibility to maximise their opportunity, which was said to increase both their personal and technical confidence and experience.

Some members emphasised the quality of support offered through Reforge. In particular, these members highlighted that Reforge is taught by people who have first-hand experience at scaling a business and therefore the support was highly relevant.

A small number of those who accessed Startup Basics viewed it as a simple, accessible online resource that supports self-paced learning which participants can return to. It was seen as a useful entry point, particularly for those who then progressed to First Steps.

3.6.2.2 What worked less well?

There is a call from members for more targeted and tailored support that is better aligned to their business stage and sector.

For example, the introductory support offered through First Steps and Startup Basics was considered 'too basic' and 'generic' for the needs and stage of some businesses who may be more advanced with their business idea – this meant that the content was sometimes less relevant. For Startup Basics, it is said that the content could be more tailored to tech startups in Scotland and the online delivery felt 'less personal' and 'less interactive'.

A few members note that the timing of sessions, particularly for First Steps and Next Steps, was a barrier to access (for example, those with full-time jobs or caring responsibilities). Greater flexibility in delivery (such as evening sessions) could allow a greater diversity of people to access this support.

While positive overall, some members have had a less positive experience with the Mentorship support. Points raised include:

- a lack of clarity on how to access and book mentoring sessions.
- not being clear on how many mentoring sessions they could access.
- delays in the matching process.
- limited mentor availability where they did not dedicate enough time or resources to support founders (for example, 'lots of last-minute cancellations').
- their mentor was not relevant enough for their business idea.
- poor communication and a lack of follow-up or continuity once the mentor sessions were complete (this is also an issue identified with the Next Steps where there is no follow-up from CodeBase once complete).
- reliance on members to follow up rather than CodeBase being more proactive.

For the International programmes, members noted that they were confirmed on the trip at 'short notice' which felt 'rushed' as a result – and they also felt not as prepared as they could have been.

Other points raised included that members had expected Techscaler to facilitate greater access and connections to funding and investor networks – but that this has not happened to the extent they envisaged at the outset. There is feedback that this type of support is needed to help grow their business.

Feedback from Techscaler members is fairly mixed in relation to whether they consider the package of support accessed has been of most value or whether one form of support has been of most value to them personally or to their business –

Table 3.24.

Table 3.24: Did one form/type of Techscaler support benefit you/your company the most or do you feel that the 'package' of support accessed has been of most value?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
One type of support	96	57%
Package of support	72	43%

Source: EKOS Techscaler member survey. Base=168.

Where one form of support is considered to have been of most value, mentorship in particular is mentioned – **Table 3.25**. This likely reflected the high proportion of members who have accessed this form of support. The feedback emphasised the one-to-one and personalised nature of mentoring support, including the ability to ask mentors questions and for advice, and that mentors were a useful and knowledgeable sounding board.

The most valuable aspects of the support identified by members are broken down by support type (where there is adequate qualitative feedback):

- First Steps (most valuable support for 16% of members) was considered to be 'engaging' and 'interactive', with some members highlighting the value of watch parties and in-person elements. These engaging elements offered opportunities to network and created a sense of community and peer support among fellow founders. Other highly rated aspects included the knowledge and advice gained by participants to apply to their business idea as well as the time commitment which helped to have a greater impact.
- the connections made through the international programmes (10%) were most valuable to some members as it has already benefitted their business and has informed future business plans (for example, 'now looking to get certification from Singapore to integrate').
- the ability to ask questions and advice through Startup Basics (7%) was beneficial to these members as well as making connections (for example, one respondent 'found [their] co-founder' at this stage).
- Next Steps (4%) was said to provide a good understanding and knowledge for growing the business.

Where members felt that the package of support was most valuable (43% of members), the main reasons included that the support is considered complementary and holistic, that it included a mix of one-to-many and one-to-one support (and caters for different learning styles), and that it is tailored (to a certain extent) to a business's stage of development.

Table 3.25: Type of support of most value

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
Mentorship	56	58%
First Steps	15	16%
International programmes (for example, San Francisco/Silicon Valley, Singapore)	10	10%
Startup Basics	7	7%
Next Steps	4	4%
Reforge	2	2%
Attended community events, meetups, and networking opportunities	1	1%
Funding readiness	0	0%
Tenant of a Techscaler hub	0	0%
Use of a Techscaler hub to work and meet from (for example, flexible hotdesking or coworking space, access to meeting space)	0	0%
Other	1	1%

Source: EKOS Techscaler member survey. Base=96.

Note: 'Other' responses included: discovery.

3.6.3 Perceptions of Techscaler support

The vast majority (80%) of members reported that Techscaler had met their expectations ('very much so' or 'to some extent') as well as helped them/their company to address barriers (73%) and met their/their company's needs (70%),

Table 3.26. However, a sizeable proportion of Techscaler members indicated 'in a limited way' or 'not at all' to these questions.

Table 3.26: To what extent has Techscaler...?

Perceptions of support	Very much so - No.	Very much so - %	To some extent - No.	To some extent - %	In a limited way - No.	In a limited way - %
Met your expectations from accessing the support (Base=171)	70	41%	67	39%	21	12%
Met your/your company's needs (Base=170)	59	35%	60	35%	34	20%
Helped you/your company to address the barriers you faced to startup, growth or scaleup (Base=172)	55	32%	70	41%	29	17%

Perception of support	Not at all - No.	Not at all - %	Don't know - No.	Don't know - %
Met your expectations from accessing the support (Base=171)	12	7%	1	1%
Met your/your company's needs (Base=170)	16	9%	1	1%
Helped you/your company to address the barriers you faced to startup, growth or scaleup (Base=172)	17	10%	1	1%

Source: EKOS Techscaler member survey.

Where positive feedback is provided by Techscaler members, this centred on:

- the extent to which the support has further developed their knowledge, confidence as well as skills for application in real-world situations.
- the quality of the support provided by Techscaler – in terms of content, resources, materials, as well as the added value of mentoring advice, guidance, and support in particular to help address specific issues or challenges.

Another point raised is that Techscaler had helped members to navigate the entrepreneurial ecosystem, especially for startups with little or no prior knowledge – prior to engaging with Techscaler, the ecosystem was considered to be 'intimidating' and a barrier for some members.

Where support has not met needs or expectations, the main points raised include that some members:

- continue to be unclear on Techscaler processes and support.
- would like more in-person support and follow-up.
- had expected more signposting to, and connections made with, funders and investors (for example, one-to-one meetings).
- felt that more time is needed with mentor to have greater impact.
- are more likely to use regional hubs become if cost and accessibility barriers are removed.
- state that Techscaler could be more organised.

3.7 Benefits and impacts

The benefits and impacts questions were split in the survey into two categories – one for those at the ideation or early stage at the time of joining Techscaler, and the other for those at the growth or scaling stage.

3.7.1 Ideation and early stage

Overall, a vast majority (96%) of members at the ideation or early stage have achieved, or expect to achieve, personal benefits as a direct result of the Techscaler support – **Table 3.27**. The main benefits achieved to date are reported as:

- improved knowledge of startup fundamentals (how to go about starting a business) (77%).
- new relationships, contacts, and networks developed (74%).
- increased confidence (70%).

Similarly, more than half of members (55%) at the ideation and early stage expect to achieve at least one personal benefit in the future as a direct result of the Techscaler support, most notably:

- new relationships, contacts, and networks developed (63%).
- skills development (58%).
- improved knowledge of startup fundamentals (how to go about starting a business) (52%).

Table 3.27: Have you achieved to date any of the following personal benefits as a direct result of the Techscaler support accessed or received?

Personal benefit	Achieved to date - No.	Achieved to date - %	Expect to achieve in the future - No.	Expect to achieve in the future - %
Improved knowledge of startup fundamentals (how to go about starting a business)	84	77%	57	52%
New relationships, contacts, and networks developed	81	74%	69	63%
Increased confidence	76	70%	55	50%
Increased motivation	73	67%	52	48%
Improved mindset	69	63%	53	49%
Skills development	66	61%	63	58%
Part of the Techscaler 'community'	66	61%	56	51%
Higher quality of pitches delivered	47	43%	52	48%
Other	3	3%	5	5%
It is too early to tell	2	2%	5	5%
No personal benefits	4	4%	14	13%

Source: EKOS Techscaler member survey. Base=109.

Multiple response question where respondents could select more than one option and all that applied. Percentages may total more than 100% as a result.

Note: 'Other' responses included: connection to industry and information on investors in the Techscaler network.

Overall, a vast majority of members (95%) at the ideation and early stage have achieved, or expect to achieve, business benefits as a direct result of the Techscaler support – **Table 3.28**. The main business benefits achieved to date are reported as:

- it helped me to startup a business (43%).
- improved understanding of ecosystem support (41%).
- improved access to ecosystem support (39%).

Similarly, just less than half of members (44%) at the ideation and early stage expect to achieve at least one business benefit in the future, most notably: enhanced investor readiness (39%); and improved understanding of ecosystem support (35%).

Table 3.28: Have you achieved to date any of the following business benefits as a direct result of the Techscaler support accessed or received?

Business benefit	Achieved to date - No.	Achieved to date - %	Expect to achieve in the future - No.	Expect to achieve in the future - %
It helped me to startup a business	42	43%	21	22%
Improved understanding of ecosystem support	40	41%	34	35%
Improved access to ecosystem support	38	39%	29	30%
Signposted/referred to other complementary partner activity	34	35%	29	30%
Access to workspace and meeting space with like-minded people and founders	28	29%	27	28%
Greater confidence in company resilience/sustainability	27	28%	31	32%
Enhanced investor readiness	21	22%	38	39%
New or improved products or services	19	20%	30	31%
Funding raised/secured	9	9%	30	31%
Increased number of funding/investment deals completed	5	5%	28	29%
Other	2	2%	0	0%
It is too early to tell	3	3%	2	2%
No business benefits	3	3%	2	2%
Not applicable (for example, not registered a company)	2	2%	1	1%

Source: EKOS Techscaler member survey. Base=97.

Multiple response question where respondents could select more than one option and all that applied. Percentages may total more than 100% as a result.

Note: 'Other' responses included: helped me to find a voice.

The majority of members had started their business prior to joining Techscaler and are still trading (65%). A positive finding is that almost one-fifth started their business after joining Techscaler and accessing support (18%) – **Table 3.29**.

Table 3.29: Which of the following statements best reflects your current situation?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
I started my business prior to joining Techscaler and it is still trading	62	65%
I started my business after joining Techscaler, and it is still trading	17	18%
I started a business, but it is no longer trading	4	4%
I am in the process of starting up/thinking about starting up a business	9	9%
I decided not to start up a business	4	4%

Source: EKOS Techscaler member survey. Base=96.

3.7.1.1 Members in the process of starting up a business

Many of those who are in the process or thinking of starting up a business (six members) are likely to start their business in 2025 – **Table 3.30**.

Table 3.30: When do you think you will start a business?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
2025	6	67%
2026	2	22%
2027	1	11%

Source: EKOS Techscaler member survey. Base=9.

3.7.1.2 Members whose business is no longer trading

Those who responded that their business was no longer trading said that this was due to:

- a lack of customer demand.
- their idea was too early stage.
- they were given another opportunity for a different startup.

While absolute numbers are small, there is some feedback that greater networking with peers could have been beneficial. Some, but not all, are either considering working for another startup or starting a business.

Table 3.31: No longer trading – additional questions

Additional question	Yes - No.	Yes - %	No - No.	No - %	Don't know - No.	Don't know - %
Would any other additional support have helped?	2	50%	1	25%	1	25%
Are you considering starting a different business?	1	25%	2	50%	1	25%
Are you considering working for another startup?	4	100%	0	0%	0	0%

Source: EKOS Techscaler member survey. Base=4.

3.7.1.3 Members who decided not to start up a business

Those who subsequently decided not to start up a business said that this was due to factors including:

- they decided to take up another employment opportunity.
- they did not want to work as a sole trader.
- they lacked access to early-stage capital.

While absolute numbers are small, some members noted that additional support with next steps, funding and early-stage capital could have been beneficial.

Some, but not all, are considering starting a different business, whilst some are considering working for another startup – **Table 3.32**.

Table 3.32: Decided not to start up a business – additional questions

Additional question	Yes - No.	Yes - %	No - No.	No - %	Don't know - No.	Don't know - %
Would any other additional support have helped?	3	75%	1	25%	0	0%
Are you considering starting a different business?	1	25%	2	50%	1	25%
Are you considering working for another startup?	2	50%	2	50%	0	0%

Source: EKOS Techscaler member survey. Base=4.

3.7.2 Additionality of the support for ideation and early stage members

Overall, the number of companies in the early and ideation stage reporting that the benefits and impacts achieved/forecast were either fully or mostly attributable to Techscaler was relatively low (13%), see **Table 3.33**.

Table 3.33: What proportion of the reported impacts do you think can be attributed to the Techscaler support?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
None	21	20%
A small amount of the impacts (up to 10%)	18	17%
Some of the impacts (up to 25%)	18	17%
Up to half of the impacts (up to 50%)	18	17%
Most of the impacts (up to 75%)	7	7%
Almost all of the impacts (up to 90%)	4	4%
All of the impacts (100%)	2	2%
Don't know/ Not sure	19	18%

Source: EKOS Techscaler member survey. Base=107.

Most members (75%) in the ideation and early stage said that they would have still started their business in the absence of Techscaler support, though this would have taken longer (39%) or been on a smaller scale (24%) – **Table 3.34**. For example:

- timing additionality ranged from six to 24 months, with a median average of 12 months.
- scale additionality ranged from 90% to 500% with a median average of 100%.

Table 3.34: What do you think would have happened if you had not received Techscaler support?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
I would have started in business anyway, but it would have taken longer without this support	10	29%
I would have started in business anyway, but it would have been on a smaller scale without this support	10	29%
I would have started up a business anyway	6	17%
I would not have started in business without this support	5	14%
Don't know/ Not sure	4	11%

Source: EKOS Techscaler member survey. Base=35.

Multiple response question where respondents could select more than one option and all that applied. Percentages may total more than 100% as a result.

3.7.3 Growing and scaling companies

This section presents the benefits and impacts for growing and scaling companies. The feedback received is broadly similar to that presented above for ideation and early-stage Techscaler members.

Overall, a vast majority of members (95%) who are in the growth or scaling stage have achieved, or expect to achieve, personal benefits as a direct result of the Techscaler support – **Table 3.35**.

The most commonly reported benefits achieved to date include:

- new relationships, contacts, and networks developed (82%).
- increased confidence (67%).
- skills development (64%).

Similarly, a majority of members (87%) expect to achieve personal benefits in the future, most notably:

- new relationships, contacts, and networks developed (56%)
- skills development (51%)

Table 3.35: Have you achieved to date any of the following personal benefits as a direct result of the Techscaler support accessed or received?

Personal benefit	Achieved to date - No.	Achieved to date - %	Expect to achieve in the future - No.	Expect to achieve in the future - %
New relationships, contacts, and networks developed	45	82%	31	56%
Increased confidence	37	67%	25	45%
Skills development	35	64%	28	51%
Improved mindset	34	62%	23	42%
Increased motivation	30	55%	21	38%
Part of the Techscaler 'community'	30	55%	20	36%
Higher quality of pitches delivered	24	44%	22	40%
It is too early to tell	0	0%	1	2%
Other	3	5%	1	2%
No personal benefits	4	7%	4	7%

Source: EKOS Techscaler member survey. Base=55.

Multiple response question where respondents could select more than one option and all that applied. Percentages may total more than 100% as a result.

Note: 'Other' responses included: more knowledge.

Overall, a vast majority (95%) of growth or scaling stage Techscaler members have achieved, or expect to achieve, business benefits as a direct result of the Techscaler support – **Table 3.36**. The most common business benefits achieved to date are:

- signposted/referred to other complementary partner activity (other ecosystem support) (44%).
- helped me to grow and/or scale the business (40%).
- improved understanding of ecosystem support (40%).

Similarly, a majority of members (78%) at the growth or scaling stage expect to achieve business benefits in the future as a direct result of the Techscaler support, most notably:

- helped me to grow and/or scale the business (44%).
- signposted/referred to other complementary partner activity (other ecosystem support) (40%).
- increased outbound international startup productivity (customers/suppliers) (40%).

Table 3.36: Have you achieved to date any of the following business benefits as a direct result of the Techscaler support accessed or received?

Business benefit	Achieved to date - No.	Achieved to date - %	Expect to achieve in the future - No.	Expect to achieve in the future - %
Signposted/referred to other complementary partner activity (other ecosystem support)	24	44%	21	38%
Helped me to grow and/or scale the business	22	40%	24	44%
Improved understanding of ecosystem support	22	40%	18	33%
Skills development – wider team	20	36%	17	31%
New or improved products or services	19	35%	20	36%
Improved access to ecosystem support	17	31%	17	31%
Access to workspace and meeting space with like-minded people and founders	15	27%	17	31%
Enhanced investor readiness	13	24%	13	24%
Increased inbound international inquiries	7	13%	18	33%
Increased outbound international startup productivity (customers/suppliers)	6	11%	21	38%
Funding raised/secured	5	9%	15	27%
More inbound investor activity	4	7%	12	22%
Increased number of investment deals completed	1	2%	13	24%
Other	1	2%	0	0%
It is too early to tell	1	2%	5	9%
No benefits	6	11%	4	7%

Source: EKOS Techscaler member survey. Base=55.

Multiple response question where respondents could select more than one option and all that applied. Percentages may total more than 100% as a result.

Note: 'Other' responses included: changed product after identifying gap in the market.

3.7.4 Additionality of the support for growth and scaling stage members

Overall, the number of companies reporting that the benefits and impacts achieved/forecast were either fully or mostly attributable to Techscaler was relatively low (16%), see **Table 3.37**.

Table 3.37: What proportion of the reported impacts do you think can be attributed to the Techscaler support?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
None	1	3%
A small amount of the impacts (up to 10%)	5	16%
Some of the impacts (up to 25%)	16	50%
Up to half of the impacts (up to 50%)	3	9%
Most of the impacts (up to 75%)	4	13%
Almost all of the impacts (up to 90%)	0	0%
All of the impacts (100%)	1	3%
Don't know/ Not sure	2	6%

Source: EKOS Techscaler member survey. Base=107.

A vast majority of members (92%) in the growth and scaling stage said that Techscaler support helped them realise their impacts earlier. Further, more than two-fifths (42%) of members reported their impacts happened on a larger scale as a direct result of Techscaler support, see **Table 3.38**. For example:

- timing additionality ranged from three to 24 months, with a median average of six months.
- scale additionality ranged from 15% to 80%, with a median average of 50%.

Table 3.38: Did the Techscaler support help these impacts happen...?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
Earlier	22	92%
On a larger scale	10	42%
Neither	2	8%

Source: EKOS Techscaler member survey. Base=24.

3.8 Any other support accessed at or around the same time as Techscaler support

Half of members (51%) have received other assistance to support business startup, growth or scaleup – **Table 3.39**.

Table 3.39: Since joining Techscaler, have you or your company received any other assistance to support business startup, growth or scaleup (for example, grants, loans, advice, etc)?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
Yes	87	51%
No	81	47%
Don't know/not sure	4	2%

Source: EKOS Techscaler member survey. Base=172.

A positive finding is that over one-third (38%) were signposted to other forms of support either by CodeBase or their mentor, see **Table 3.40**.

Table 3.40: Were you referred or signposted to this other support from CodeBase and/or a Techscaler mentor?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
Yes	33	38%
No	50	57%
Don't know/not sure	4	5%

Source: EKOS Techscaler member survey. Base=87.

Many members received other support from enterprise agencies, such as Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and South of Scotland Enterprise (41%). This was followed by banks (16%), with some noting that they received support through the Barclays Eagle Labs programme – **Table 3.41**.

Table 3.41: Who did you receive this other support from?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
Enterprise agency (Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, South of Scotland Enterprise)	36	41%
Banks	14	16%
Scottish universities	13	15%
Business Gateway	11	13%
Innovation Centres in Scotland	10	11%
Sector bodies or organisations	10	11%
Scottish Development International	6	7%
Local authority (council) in Scotland	5	6%
Public sector organisations based outside Scotland	2	2%
Venture capital deals	0	0%
Other	17	20%

Source: EKOS Techscaler member survey. Base=87.

Note: 'Other' responses included: publishers, female founders, previous employers.

Multiple response question where respondents could select more than one option and all that applied. Percentages may total more than 100% as a result.

More detailed feedback on the nature of other support accessed was limited. Where provided, growth and scaling Techscaler members said that other support was primarily financial support such as from the Accelerator Fund or a SMART Grant. Some specifically mentioned accessing programme support such as the A1 Navigator programme, GrandScale, and IP Hatch support. Other support such as education and training, mentoring, advice (generally and specialist), and networking opportunities are also mentioned in responses.

3.9 Would you recommend Techscaler support to others

Table 3.42 sets out the responses to the question which asked Techscaler members 'How likely are you to recommend Techscaler to other people?'. This results in a NPS of **42 which is great** (61% promoters – 19% detractors).

Table 3.42: How likely are you to recommend Techscaler to other people?

Score	Number	Percentage
1	6	4%
2	3	2%
3	3	2%
4	2	1%
5	11	6%
6	7	4%
7	13	8%
8	22	13%
9	14	8%
10	90	53%

Source: EKOS Techscaler member survey. Base=171.

3.9.1 Detractors – unlikely to recommend Techscaler (rating of 1 to 6)

Some members said that they would be unlikely to recommend Techscaler to other people. This view is largely based on their personal experiencing of accessing Techscaler support. For example, they said that it did not meet their expectations, and that the support was largely aimed at those at a very early stage.

3.9.2 Passives – may recommend Techscaler (rating of 7 to 8)

Some Techscaler members indicated that they may recommend Techscaler to other people/founders – based on their experience of it – but caveated their response, noting that it would depend on the type of business as well as the type of support the individual/business was looking for.

These members also consider the Techscaler Programme to be mostly aimed at those at a very early stage in their startup journey, as so said they would be unlikely to recommend the programme to growth or scaling businesses.

3.9.3 Promoters – likely to recommend or have already recommended Techscaler (rating of 9 or 10)

A majority of members (61%) gave ratings that suggest they are likely to recommend Techscaler, with more than half (53%) reporting that they have already recommended Techscaler to others. Their feedback broadly notes that this is due to them having a positive experience in engaging with Techscaler. These members feel that Techscaler is 'helpful' and a 'good starting programme' for those at an early stage in their startup journey.

Other feedback from these members included:

- accessing Techscaler support benefitted their progress as it allowed them to access mentorship and support which kept them 'accountable' and 'productive' in working on their idea/project and progressing their business.
- Techscaler allowed members to develop networks and connections through mentor guidance and access to the tech ecosystem. This would have been more difficult to do in the absence of Techscaler support, as it would have required greater time and resources.
- Techscaler helped to improve members' confidence in their idea/business as members were supported to develop a structured idea with clear next steps, improving their confidence in their startup journey.

3.10 Accessing Techscaler support in the future

The vast majority (89%) of Techscaler members said that they are likely to access Techscaler support in the future, see **Table 3.43**. The main reasons for expressing this view include that:

- the support received is considered helpful and valuable – members said that they are happy with the support received to date (for example, quality and range of support) and their experience of engaging with the programme.
- continued support is required to gain additional knowledge – members said they benefitted from the knowledge they received through their engagement with Techscaler and would continue to access this support to further their knowledge.
- may look at additional ideas or developing a new startup – some members indicated that they may consider introducing additional ideas or look to develop a new startup in the future. These members noted that, as they had a positive experience with Techscaler, they would use Techscaler support in the future for additional ideas/startups.

Members who said that they do not plan to access Techscaler support in the future, or are not sure, said that Techscaler does not provide support that is relevant to their business/idea and/or that the support geared toward early-stage startups. Other feedback, albeit not raised to a great extent, is that it was considered time-consuming to access the support or that they felt that aspects need updated.

Table 3.43: Do you plan to access Techscaler support again in the future?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
Yes, definitely	114	66%
Yes, maybe	39	23%
No	11	6%
Not sure	9	5%

Source: EKOS Techscaler member survey. Base=173.

Members were asked what type of support they think they will require over the short-term (within the next year) and medium-term (within three years). Responses were varied, with many providing broad suggestions, whilst others noted specific support which is tailored to their business/ideas.

Table 3.44 provides an overview of the support types most frequently mentioned by members. Additional points to note include:

- those who will require mentorship highlighted the benefits of engagement with Techscaler members, including helping to develop networks and connections, providing advice/answering queries, and help with sourcing grant funding.
- those who will require financial support stated that they will be looking to apply for grant funding within this timescale and require support to be *'investor ready'* and submit funding applications.
- members requiring networking support said that Techscaler helped them to develop networks and connections with those in the industry and potential funders and would like this support to continue.
- some members highlighted that they will be in the growth and scaling stages within the next three years, and as such, they would require support to facilitate this business growth.

Future support required (short-term and medium-term)

Short-term support

- Mentorship
- Financial support
- Networking support

Medium-term support

- Support for growth and scaling
- Mentorship
- Financial support

Source: EKOS Techscaler member survey.

3.11 Gaps in the Techscaler or wider ecosystem

Members were asked if they feel there are any gaps in the Techscaler, or wider ecosystem, support offer to accelerate the growth of tech startups and scaleups.

Members provided a wide range of feedback, though common points raised include that there are gaps in:

- support for companies in the growth and/or scaling stages – members expressed that Techscaler support is tailored to those in the early startup stage, as such, they feel that there is a gap in support for existing businesses who require support for further growth/scaling. These members would like to see additional longer-term support to follow businesses/ideas from the early stage through to the growth and scaling stages.
- funding available to start ups – responses broadly referred to a lack of funding available to startups overall, though some note additional areas which are lacking, such as funding for female owned businesses and/or disability owned businesses.
- signposting and advertising of available funding – responses suggested that there needs to be better signposting and advertising of funding available to ensure startups are aware of and able to apply for all of the financial support that is available to them.
- fostering stronger networks for founders – members said that there are gaps surrounding support for harbouring connections between founders, suggesting that there could be further support provided to connect founders with peers who are at a similar stage to them, to provide a sense of community. Additionally, these responses highlighted a gap in support for connecting startups to investors that could provide support for their business.

Some members also provided feedback on gaps in specific sectors/areas – such as video games and hardware. These comments were tailored to their business needs and ideas of these members, as such, these were only mentioned by a small number of members.

3.12 Final comments

Around half of members (53%) provided final comments. These responses varied vastly and covered a range of issues.

Many members used the final comments section to provide praise for Techscaler and reiterate their positive experience in accessing support.

These responses often referenced the mentorship, saying this has been 'invaluable' and praising the Techscaler mentors and staff for being 'enthusiastic', 'helpful' and having the knowledge and understanding required to support startup businesses from an early stage.

Some members provided additional feedback on Techscaler and any critiques or improvements they would like to see. Key points to note from these responses include:

- Techscaler could offer greater engagement and more in-person offerings – these members felt that the Techscaler programme could have offered greater levels of engagement, namely in-person engagement and one-to-one support. Some noted that the initial startup stages can be 'lonely' and so more in-person engagement with the cohort could have provided a support network.
- greater signposting and advertising of available support – some members said that there could have been more done to advertise the full range of support that was available both through and outside Techscaler. These members noted that they were unaware of certain aspects of the support they were able to access or were receiving and feel that this should be made clearer to benefit those accessing support.
- more support is needed for those looking to grow and scale their business – similar to the feedback given elsewhere in this chapter, members suggested that there is a need for additional support for companies who are looking to grow/scale their business. These members namely refer to support with funding, investment and networking connections.
- the international programmes could have been better organised and advertised – some members felt that the trips to Singapore, Silicon Valley and San Francisco had issues with being unorganised. Some said that they found out about the trips on short notice and were unable to attend due to this.

4 Non-engaged member surveys

4.1 Introduction

The non-engaged Techscaler member online survey was undertaken in two stages.

First, an online survey aimed at company members (that is, founders or main points of contact for Techscaler member companies) who have not engaged with Techscaler activities and support was issued by CodeBase on 21 March 2025 to 335 key company contacts³. This short online survey asked mainly closed-ended questions related to:

- reasons for joining Techscaler.
- views on the application process.
- the support companies were interested in accessing from Techscaler.
- the reasons why have not yet accessed Techscaler activities and support.
- barriers faced in accessing Techscaler activities and support.
- likelihood of accessing Techscaler support in the future.
- suggestions for how Techscaler support could be improved.

An email reminder was issued by CodeBase on 7 April 2025, and the survey closed on 18 April 2025. A total of nine responses were received⁴.

Second, and as described in **Chapter 3**, another online survey with routing was issued by CodeBase on 19 May 2025 to 871 contacts, comprising:

- 438 engaged company members who did not take part in the telephone survey – feedback from survey respondents is captured in **Chapter 3**.

³ The Techscaler Annual Report 2024 reports that there are 978 company members – based on a CodeBase internal coding of key company contacts by level of service engagement, it was identified that 648 have been engaged (to varying degrees) and 330 have not yet engaged with Techscaler.

⁴ From a review of the online survey responses it would, however, appear that two respondents have accessed support, albeit on a very limited basis, from Techscaler.

- 433 individual members⁵, most but not all have likely not engaged in Techscaler support yet – feedback from these survey respondents is captured and reflected in this chapter.

This online survey asked a similar set of questions and closed on 6 June 2005. One response was received from an individual who reported that they had not yet engaged in Techscaler support.

The responses from the non-engaged company contact and individual member surveys have been combined and written up in aggregate form below. The total number of responses received to the non-engaged member surveys is 10. The absolute number of responses is small, and it represents a very limited response rate (1.3%). The findings from these surveys cannot be treated as representative of the total population of the Techscaler non-engaged membership. Rather, it provides a snapshot of views and experiences from this cohort of the membership.

4.2 Non-engaged member survey respondents

All of the non-engaged Techscaler members who responded to the surveys are Founders of Co-founders, see **Table 4.1**.

⁵ The Techscaler Annual Report 2024 reports that there are 1,411 individual members and 978 company members. The 978 company contacts are included in the 1,411 individual membership number. We subtracted the 978 from 1,411 to give 433 other individual members. CodeBase confirmed that the 433 contacts are a mix of additional employees from the companies and very early-stage ideation members. Most of this latter group are likely unengaged, either because they are too early in their journey to access Techscaler services, or their interaction has been minimal (for example, attending a single mentorship session alongside a founder, or completing a Reforge cohort).

Table 4.1: Which of the following job titles best reflects your role?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
Founder or Co-founder	10	100%
C-Level Management (for example, Chief Executive Officer, Chief Technology Officer, Chief Marketing Officers)	-	-
Department Head	-	-
Team Leader	-	-
Team Member	-	-
Other	-	-

Source: EKOS non-engaged online surveys. Base=10.

Forty percent of the non-engaged Techscaler members who responded to the surveys are at an early stage, while 60% have a registered company and are at the growth or scaleup stage, see **Table 4.2**.

Table 4.2: Which of the following stages best describes your/the company's situation now?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
Ideation stage – an individual with an idea but no clear focus or commitment to building a company	-	-
Early stage – an individual focused on a specific market or problem space. May/may not have a registered business, prototype, or Minimum Viable Product (MVP) but are dedicating time to advancing their idea	4	40%
Growth – a company with a live product looking to acquire customers. They may/may not have existing customers at this stage	4	40%
Scaleup/scaling – a company with a live product, revenue, and a team which includes department heads/specialists (e.g. product team, engineering team, growth team)	2	20%
Other	-	-

Source: EKOS non-engaged online surveys. Base=10.

4.2.1 Awareness of Techscaler and your engagement

Word of mouth (30%) is the main way non-engaged survey respondents first became aware of Techscaler, see **Table 4.3**. The remainder of respondents either said they had an existing relationship with CodeBase, were signposted by another agency, sought out information about Techscaler online, or approached Techscaler directly for support.

Table 4.3: How did you first find out about Techscaler?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
Word of mouth from family or friend	3	30%
Had an existing relationship with CodeBase	2	20%
Signposted by another agency or organisation (for example, Enterprise Agency, Business Gateway, local authority)	2	20%
Saw information on the Techscaler website or social media	2	20%
Directly from CodeBase	-	-
Online search/approached Techscaler directly to find out more	1	10%
Saw information on the Scottish Government website or social media	-	-
Saw an advertisement	-	-
From attendance at an event or conference	-	-
Don't know/can't remember	-	-
Other	-	-

Source: EKOS non-engaged online surveys. Base=10.

The majority (70%) of non-engaged Techscaler members who responded to the survey joined Techscaler in 2024, with the remainder joining in the previous year, see **Table 4.4**.

Table 4.4: When did you/your company join Techscaler?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
2023	3	30%
2024	7	70%

Source: EKOS non-engaged online surveys. Base=10.

4.3 Barriers and motivations for joining Techscaler

The main barriers non-engaged Techscaler members faced to startup, grow or scaleup at that time of joining Techscaler are reported through the survey as: access to finance (90%); did not know which organisations to approach for support (80%); and not investor ready (70%), see **Table 4.5**.

Table 4.5: What were the main barriers you/your company faced to startup, grow or scaleup at that time of joining Techscaler?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
Access to finance	9	90%
Didn't know which organisation(s) to approach for support	8	80%
Not financial/investor ready	7	70%
Limited understanding of the tech support ecosystem	5	50%
Lacked wider ecosystem connections	5	50%
Lacked connections with fellow founders and startup peers	3	30%
Lacked access to affordable physical space/hubs to work or meet from (for example, flexible hotdesking, coworking, office, and meeting room space)	3	30%
Other	2	20%
Lacked the core skills to support the growth and scaleup of the business	1	10%
Time taken to generate a return	1	10%
Lacked the core practical skills to startup a business	-	-

Source: EKOS non-engaged online surveys. Base=10.

Multiple response question where respondents could select more than one option and all that applied. Percentages may total more than 100% as a result.

'Other' responses include time constraints, and access to customers opportunities to generate more sales both in Scotland, the UK and internationally.

The main motivating factors for joining Techscaler are reported by non-engaged members as:

- to attend events to meet fellow founders, expand our network, and hear from industry experts (80%).
- to access one-to-one mentoring support (70%).
- to connect with like-minded founders and peers (70%).
- to increase investor connectivity (70%).
- to help access finance (70%), **Table 4.6**.

Table 4.6: What were your main motivations for applying to Techscaler for support?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
To attend events to meet fellow founders, expand our network, and hear from industry experts	8	80%
To access expert mentorship advice, guidance, and support	7	70%
To meet and connect with like-minded founders and peers (part of the 'community')	7	70%
To help access finance (for example, grants, self-funding/bootstrapping, fundraising – in exchange for equity or convertible debt, bank loans, crowdfunding, Series A, B, and C funding rounds)	7	70%
To increase our investor connectivity	7	70%
To increase our understanding of, and ability to navigate the tech support ecosystem in Scotland	6	60%
Wanted to access skills development support for myself/founder/co-founder	6	60%
To enhance our financial readiness	6	60%
To access resources and tools to help startup a business	4	40%
To increase our understanding of, and ability to navigate the tech support ecosystem outside Scotland	4	40%
To start/increase our internationalisation	4	40%
Wanted to access skills development support for our wider team	2	20%
To access an affordable place to work or meet from	2	20%
To test the viability of my business idea	1	10%
Other	1	10%

Source: EKOS non-engaged online surveys. Base=10.

Multiple response question where respondents could select more than one option and all that applied. Percentages may total more than 100% as a result.

'Other' response includes to access support that was specifically aimed at tech companies.

4.4 Satisfaction with the application process

Overall, non-engaged Techscaler members who responded to the surveys are broadly satisfied with the application process and their initial engagement with CodeBase. This ranges from:

- 70% who express satisfaction (that is, either satisfied or very satisfied) with the online application process and with initial contact with the team.
- 80% who express satisfaction with the responsiveness of CodeBase, see **Table 4.7**.

Table 4.7: How would you rate your satisfaction or otherwise with the following statements on the Techscaler application process and your initial engagement with CodeBase on a scale of very dissatisfied to very satisfied?

Answer choice	Online application process - No.	Online application process - %	Responsive-ness after applying - No.	Responsive-ness - %	Initial contact & communication - No.	Initial contact - %
Very dissatisfied	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dissatisfied	1	10%	1	10%	2	20%
Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	2	20%	1	10%	1	10%
Satisfied	2	20%	3	30%	2	20%
Very satisfied	5	50%	5	50%	5	50%
Don't know	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: EKOS non-engaged online surveys. Base=10 (each statement).

Qualitative feedback from survey respondents on what works well with the application process and initial engagement with Techscaler includes that:

- CodeBase are welcoming, supportive and genuinely interested in supporting founders – for example, they took time to get to know the company and to connect the founder with people and resources to help.
- the onboarding process was straightforward and happened in a timely fashion – and initial conversations with CodeBase were positive and including opportunities for members to ask questions.

In terms of what could be improved survey respondents suggested that:

- there could be improvements in Techscaler communications – for example, greater use of accessible language (such as, minimising the use of jargon and acronyms), and ensuring responsive and timely replies to emails received from members.
- CodeBase could undertake more activity to increase awareness of the Programme and the support it can offer – a related point raised is that communications and messaging could clearly set out how Technical differs from other accelerators and support that exists in Scotland and the UK.
- there could be more events – for example tech-related events and investor connections events are mentioned in the responses.

4.5 Techscaler support sought

Non-engaged Techscaler member survey respondent indicated that they were primarily interested in accessing:

- bespoke forms of support such as mentoring, funding readiness and international programmes.
- education courses and support aimed at growth and scaleup companies.
- networking events and opportunities, see **Table 4.8**.

Table 4.8: What Techscaler support where you interested in accessing when you joined as a member?

Education support	Number	Percentage
Startup Basics	1	-
First Steps	1	-
Next Steps	5	44%
Reforge	1	11%

Bespoke support	Number	Percentage
International programmes (for example, San Francisco/Silicon Valley, Singapore)	6	56%
Mentorship	7	67%
Funding readiness	7	67%

Regional hubs	Number	Percentage
Tenant of a Techscaler hub	2	22%
Use of a Techscaler hub to work and meet from (for example, flexible hotdesking or coworking space, access to meeting space)	2	22%
Community events, meetups, and networking opportunities	6	67%

Other support	Number	Percentage
Other	1	22%
Don't know/unsure	1	11%

Source: EKOS non-engaged online surveys. Base=10.

Multiple response question where respondents could select more than one option and all that applied. Percentages may total more than 100% as a result.

'Other' response includes being curious to find out more about what Techscaler offered and how the programme could help the company.

Non-engaged Techscaler member survey respondents typically selected 'Other reasons' when asked why they did not access the support they were interested in accessing when they joined Techscaler, see **Table 4.9**.

Table 4.9: Why did you not access this support?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
Othe reasons	7	70%
Limited understanding of what the Techscaler offer was and how it could help me/the company	3	30%
Time constraints	3	30%
The support was not relevant to my company and its needs	2	20%
Other priorities	2	10%
My application for Techscaler support (for example, an international programme) was unsuccessful	1	10%
Changed my mind	-	-
Found alternative support elsewhere	-	-

Source: EKOS non-engaged online surveys. Base=10.

Multiple response question where respondents could select more than one option and all that applied. Percentages may total more than 100% as a result.

Points raised can be summarised as:

- there are some members who said they found it difficult to engage with Techscaler in a meaningful way – for example, points raised include that: they are not clear on the offer and that it can be difficult to navigate; it is a large team and, at times, members are confused about who may be best to speak with; perceptions that CodeBase’s engagement can be reactive as opposed to proactive; early conversations/communications with members were not followed up on; geographic barriers to attending in-person events (that is, distance and time involved); felt that they were only invited to attend certain events (for example, events aimed only a women which felt they were segmented into a narrower funnel of support).
- a perception that Techscaler support is mainly for early-stage individuals/companies and that there is limited guidance and support to help companies to grow and scaleup – as well as perceptions that the support is one-size fits all as opposed to a tailored offer by company stage.

The survey respondent who had applied to go on an international programme and was unsuccessful indicated that they were dissatisfied with the feedback they received Techscaler on their application, see **Table 4.10**.

They noted that they received limited explanation about why their application had been unsuccessful, and that given the scale of Techscaler Programme funding their view is that they could be increased focus on international programmes and supporting more companies to take part.

Table 4.10: How would you rate your level of satisfaction with the feedback you received from Techscaler on your unsuccessful application?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
Very dissatisfied	-	-
Dissatisfied	1	100%
Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	-	-
Satisfied	-	-
Very satisfied	-	-
Don't know/unsure	-	-

Source: EKOS non-engaged online surveys. Base=1 (that is, the person selected that they applied to go on an international programme and this was unsuccessful as presented in **Table 4.9**).

4.6 Plans for future engagement with Techscaler

A positive finding is that the majority (70%) of non-engaged Techscaler member survey respondents indicate that they would/may access Techscaler Programme support in the future – the remainder (30%) say they are unsure, see **Table 4.11**.

Table 4.11: Do you plan to access Techscaler support in the future?

Answer choice	Number	Percentage
Yes, definitely	5	50%
Yes, maybe	2	20%
No	0	0%
Not sure	3	30%

Source: EKOS non-engaged online surveys. Base=10.

Table 4.12 provides details of the types of support survey respondents think they may require over the short-term (in the next year) and over the medium-term (in the next three years).

Table 4.12: What type of support do you think you will require over the medium-term (in the next three years)?

Over the short-term	Over the medium-term
Mentorship	Funding readiness and/or support to attract funding, finance and investment
Support to attract funding, finance and investment	Support with business growth/scaling and market expansion
Networking and community building	Mentorship
Marketing	Tech support

Survey respondents were asked whether they consider there to be any gaps in the Techscaler or wider ecosystem support offer to accelerate the growth of tech startups and scaleups. Points raised by Techscaler members who have not engaged with the programme included:

Techscaler specific points: it is suggested that there could be increased collaboration between Techscaler and other agencies; and the Techscaler slack channel type approach is said to be insufficient – and that there could be much better interaction with members. Other points raised include that some members may miss notifications from the Mighty Networks platform that Techscaler uses (for example, due to having so many channels to monitor).

Wider ecosystem points:

- a perceived gap is for support for growth and scaleup companies (companies with the greatest potential) – holistic support from strategies to scale a business, finding new customers, or growing them team.
- there could be more support around investor connectivity, investment readiness, deeper tech-focused events, international connections to the major tech companies, and IP/regulatory/compliance aspects of a company's innovation.

- the tech eco-system tends to lump companies together as 'tech' – software, app, Deeptech, business to business, business to consumer, cyber security etc. – as such, it is suggested that a one size fits all approach may not be appropriate and there could be a better appreciation of the differences in the Tech eco-system. A wider example provided is that not all companies in the ecosystem are suited to, or want to, fundraise through venture capital or angels.
- support with funding applications and processes – for example, a member mentioned that they found application processes for venture capital schemes such as Seed Enterprise Investment Scheme (SEIS) and Enterprise Investment Scheme (EIS) challenging and that they had to pay for specialist input – help to make application processes easier for founders would therefore be welcomed as they can act as a barrier.
- practical skills development support – examples provided include technical, graphic design, video production.



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