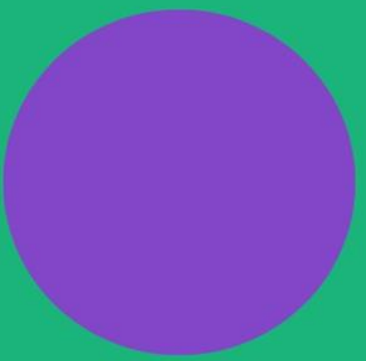


Members' View Annual Membership Survey 2023-24



**Befriending
Networks**



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Executive Summary

Annually Befriending Networks conducts a survey of our membership. The data in this report was gathered in February 2024 using a short online survey. The survey was designed to capture members' views on our services, our strategic objectives, and our future direction. The survey was fully anonymous, and we appreciate the time taken by members to share their feedback.

- **Activities** - The activities offered by Befriending Networks all received positive feedback ('excellent' or 'very good') from at least 80% of respondents.
- **Events** - At least 79% of respondents found the events offered by Befriending Services to be 'excellent' or 'very good'.
- **Training** – More than 70% of respondents rated each form of training offered by befriending services as 'excellent' or 'very good'.
- **Communications** - The communications from Befriending Networks all received positive feedback ('excellent' or 'very good') from at least 81% of respondents.
- **Strategic Plan Objectives** – Reflecting on the Strategic Plan 2021-24 objectives; 88% of respondents provided positive feedback on objective 1; 85% on objective 2 and 74% on objective 3.
- **Values and Impacts** - More than 70% of respondents agree ('strongly agree' or 'agree') with each impact statement on the work of Befriending Services.
- **Looking to the future** - 93% of respondents have a positive view of the future values (rating of 4 or 5) and 99% of respondents have a positive view of the future vision. At least 94% of respondents have a positive view (ratings of 4 and 5) of each of the ideas on future activities.



1. Methodology

The 2024 membership survey from Befriending Networks captures the reflections from members on services during the previous year and looks to gather feedback on services offered for the forthcoming year. In 2024 the survey gathered feedback on the following areas:

- Services – (Membership Support, Volunteer Training Toolkit, Good Practice Guide and Quality Awards).
- Events
- Training
- Communications
- Strategic plan
- Values and Impacts
- Looking to the future

The online survey received 81 responses from members of Befriending Networks. The data reported in this report reflect the views of the 81 individuals responding to the survey. However, the number of actual responses to individual questions is often less as respondents can skip less relevant sections of the survey.

Please note that figures on the charts are rounded to no decimal places, this can cause the totals to be more or less than 100%. For example, if we have 3 responses which all receive one third of the responses, i.e. they are all 33.3333%. Rounding to no decimal place gives 33%, 33%, and 33% which sums to 99%.

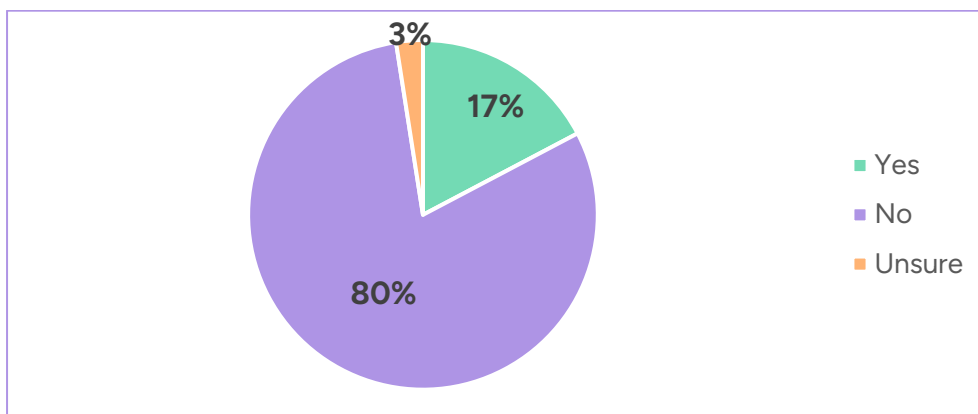
The survey was designed by Befriending Networks. The results were collated and analysed with the assistance, expertise and time provided voluntarily to Befriending Networks by Debbie Maltman, Research Officer, Volunteer Scotland.



2. Respondent Profiles

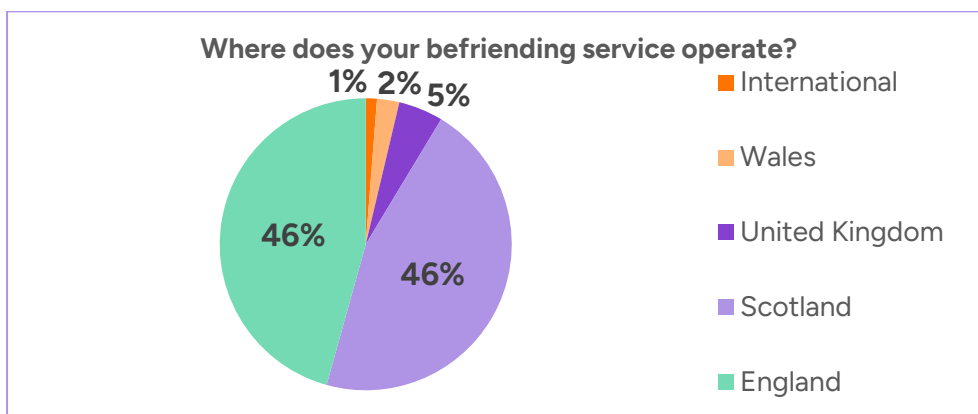
17% of respondents are in their first year of membership with Befriending Networks, 80% have been members for more than 1 year and 3% are unsure how long their organisation has been a member.

Figure 1 – Are respondents a first-year member.



The profile of respondents by area were England, 46% of responses; Scotland, 46% of responses; United Kingdom (operating in more than one nation), 5%; Wales, 2% of our membership; International (beyond the UK) 1%.

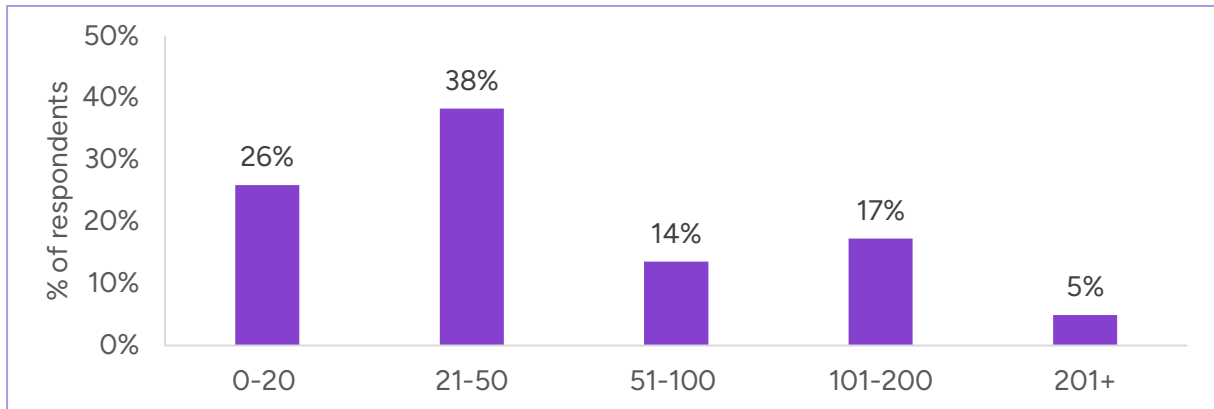
Figure 2 - Respondents' Organisations Area of Operation





Just over a quarter (26%) of respondent's organisations support 0-20 befriending matches; 38% support 21-50 matches; 14% support 51-1000; 17% support 101 -200 matches and 5% support 201+ matches.

Figure 3 - Number of befriending matches supported.

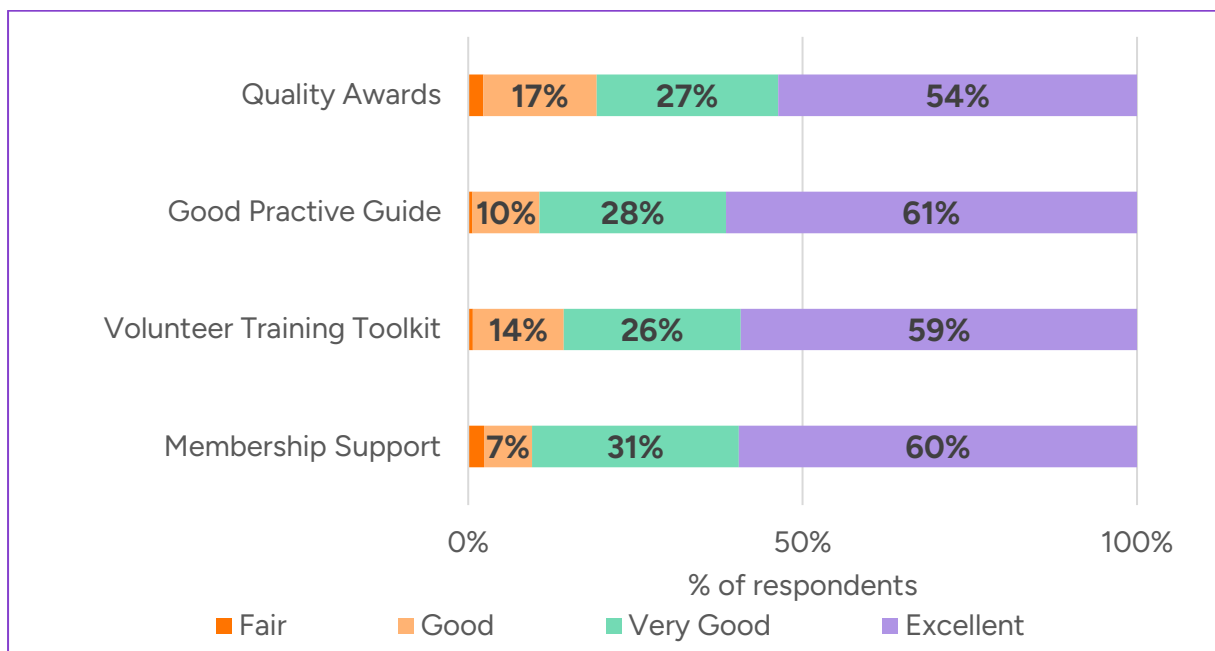




3. Reflections on Activities

Many respondents reflected positively on Befriending Networks key activities. Responses range from 91% who reflected positively ('excellent' or 'very good') on Membership Support to 81% who reflected positively on Quality Awards.

Figure 4 - Reflections on services:



- ♥ Membership Support – 91% 'excellent' or 'very good'.
- ♥ Good Practice Guide – 89% 'excellent' or 'very good'.
- ♥ Volunteer Training Toolkit – 85% 'excellent' or 'very good'.
- ♥ Quality Awards - 81% 'excellent' or 'very good'.



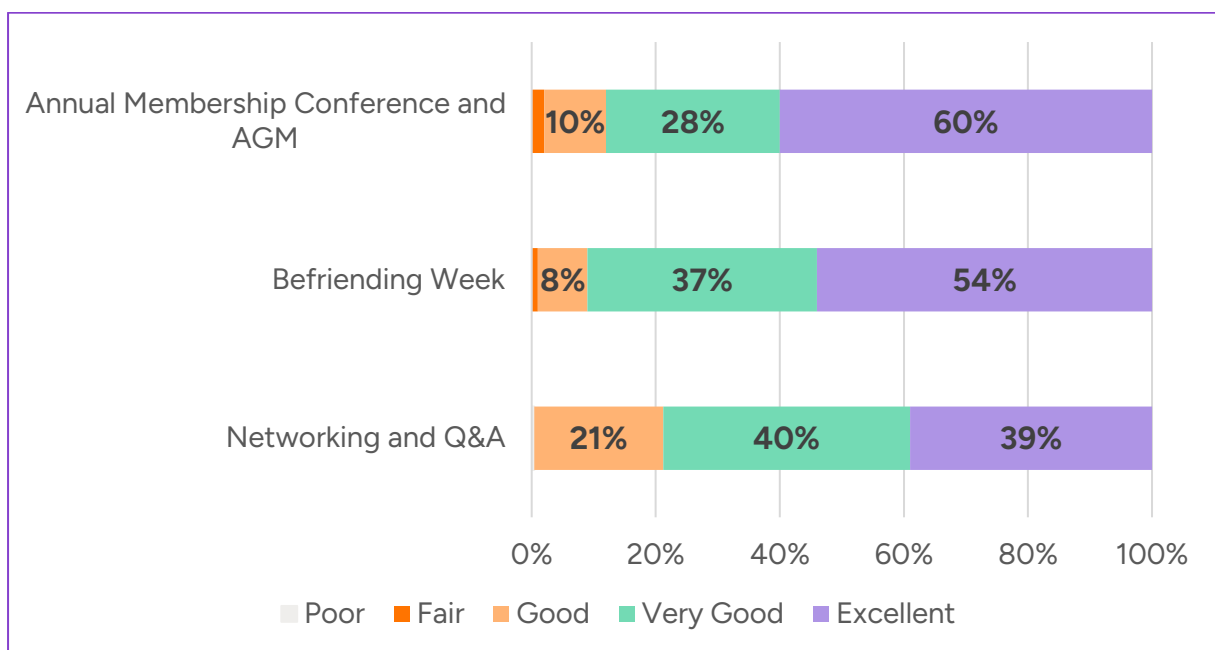
Specific examples of positive member feedback included:

- ♥ "As a new member I find the resources a massive wealth of information to reach into. It is the cushioning every Befriending service needs."
England member
- ♥ "Being a member of the Befriending Networks has been an incredibly rewarding and beneficial experience. While I'm not currently working towards the quality award, the resources, training opportunities, and community networking have proven invaluable."
Scotland member
- ♥ "As a new member we haven't experienced all of the supports yet. The ones we have experienced have been excellent."
International member
- ♥ "I am relatively new, but so far so good. I am impressed with the team, the communication, and the resources available to us."
UK member
- ♥ "I find your organisation very useful to me when I have been setting up my service. It includes a lot of valuable information and resources."
Scotland member
- ♥ "Resources are excellent and very useful to set up a new Befriending service."
England member

4. Reflections on Events

Most respondents also reflected positively on Befriending Network Events. Responses range from 91% who reflected positively ('excellent' or 'very good') on Befriending week to 79% who reflected positively on Networking and Q&A.

Figure 5 - Reflections on Events



- ♥ Networking and Q&A – 79% 'excellent' or 'very good'.
- ♥ Annual Membership conference and AGM – 88% 'excellent' or 'very good'.
- ♥ Befriending Week – 91% 'excellent' or 'very good'.



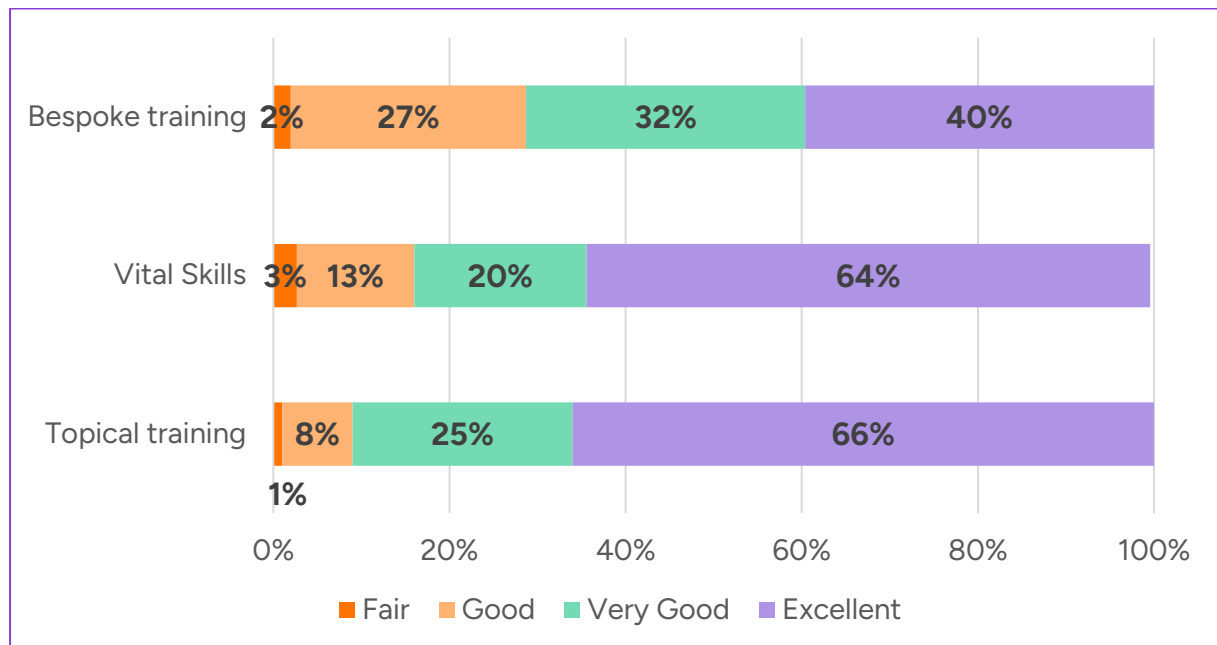
When considering the reflections on events by membership length

- ♥ Networking and Q&A – Reflections of ‘excellent’ or ‘very good’ increased with length of membership – 66% for first year members and 82% for members longer than one year. 100% good for members unsure of membership length.
- ♥ Befriending Week – Reflections of ‘excellent’ or ‘very good’ also increased with length of membership – 83% for first year membership, 92% for members longer than one year. No responses received for members unsure of membership length.
- ♥ Annual Membership Conference and AGM - 93% ‘excellent’ or ‘very good’ for first year members and 88% for members longer than one year. No responses were received for those unsure of membership length.

5. Reflections on Training

Over 70% of respondents reflected positively on Befriending Network Training. Topical Training was rated excellent or very good by 91% of respondents.

Figure 6 - Reflections on Training



- ♥ Bespoke training – 72% 'excellent' or 'very good'.
- ♥ Vital skills – 84% 'excellent' or 'very good'.
- ♥ Topical training – 91% 'excellent' or 'very good'.



Specific examples of positive member feedback included:

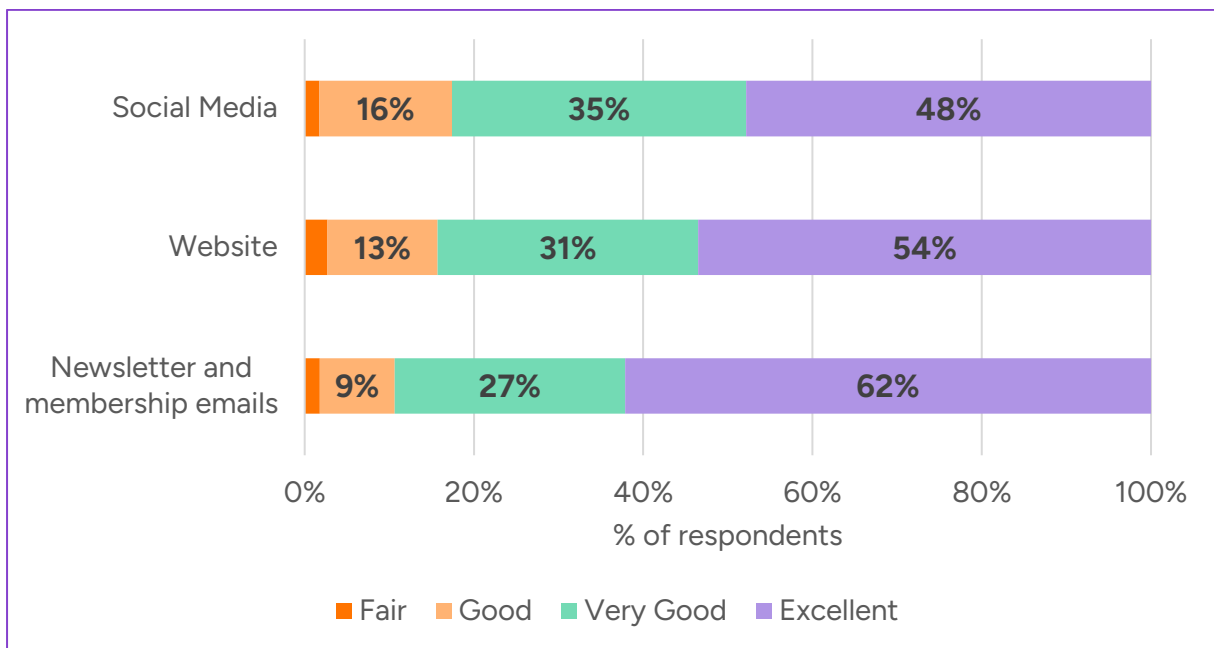
- ♥ "As I am new to this, I have only attended one networking event to date, but I enjoyed it and look forward to attending more."
UK member
- ♥ "Great to hear from other organisations and be able to keep abreast of what's happening and sharing ideas/ best practice"
Scotland member
- ♥ "I have found the free networking online events useful and have established links with another befriending organisation as a result. This organisation then assisted me in pulling together my argument to our Trustees to move our befriending to a time limited 2 years, after which the match moves to a friendship. Without this link, I am sure the Trustees would never have agreed to moving to time limited befriending."
England member
- ♥ "The follow up after training is appreciated, with the offer of Befriending Networks feeding back on any resources developed by our organisation after the training."
UK member
- ♥ "The training we have attended has been extremely good, engaging and well delivered."
England member
- ♥ "Again, we've not experienced everything but, what we have experienced has been excellent"
International member



6. Reflections on Communications

Over 80% of respondents reflected positively on Befriending Network communications. Responses range from 83% who reflected positively ('excellent' or 'very good') on Social Media to 89% who reflected positively on Newsletter and membership emails.

Figure 7 - Reflections on Communications



- ♥ Social media – 81% 'excellent' or 'very good'.
- ♥ Website – 83% 'excellent' or 'very good'.
- ♥ Newsletter and membership emails – 89% 'excellent' or 'very good'.



Specific examples of positive member feedback included:

- ♥ "Always feel well-informed"
Scotland member
- ♥ "I have found lots of useful information through your communications and online, I follow you on social networks and your website is very informative."
UK member
- ♥ "I personally don't have any social media accounts, but always encourage those I tell to look for on them. I do however use You Tube for videos etc. I recently spoke to a Health and Social Care group in the college and showed them the two videos on Davie to explain the importance of volunteering and how it can benefit someone's life."
Wales member
- ♥ "Informative and provides relevant updates needed to reach membership and a wider audience."
England Member
- ♥ "So far very good..."
England member
- ♥ "Social media engagement is great - we appreciate the likes/shares and comments that we get that supports our service."
England member

7. Reflections on Strategic Plan Objectives 2021-24

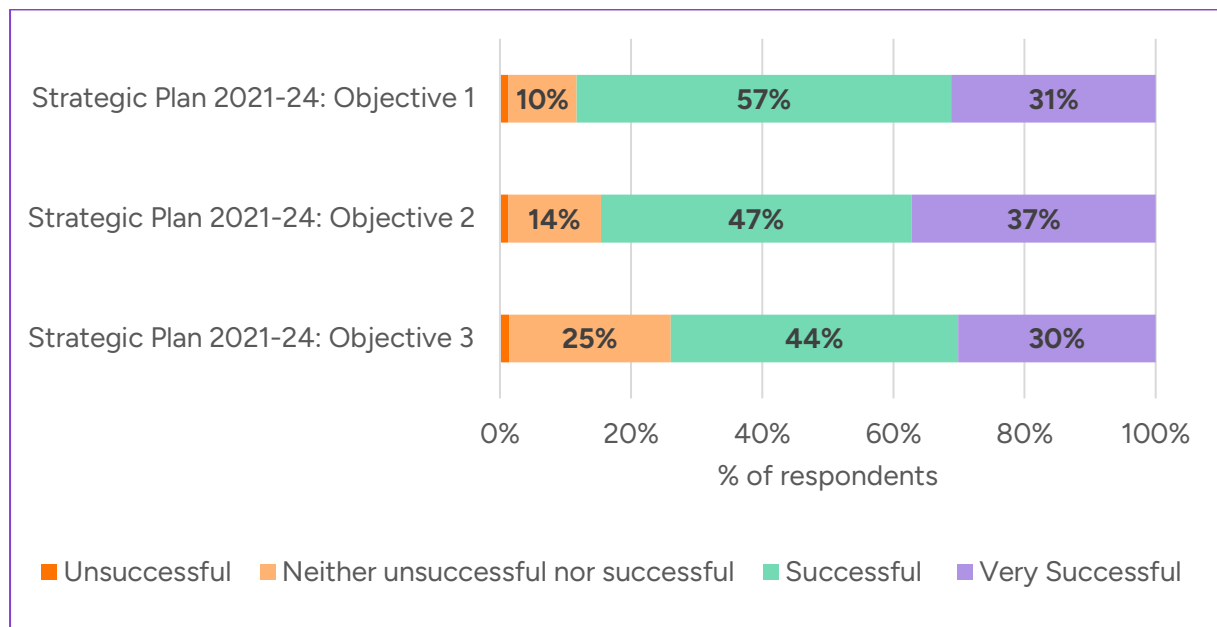
At least 74% of respondents rated each Strategic Plan 2021-24 objective as successful ('very successful' or 'successful'), ranging from 88% for objective 1 to 74% for objective 3.

Objective 1 - "We aim to **Support Front Line Organisations to Deliver Well** through providing information and support, encouraging organisational development and capacity building, and promoting good practice within the Befriending Sector."

Objective 2 - "We aim to **Increase Communication and Networking**: provide a network for communication and sharing, develop an evidence base for befriending."

Objective 3 - "We aim to **Provide a Platform for Member Voices**; raising awareness, representing them and influencing national and local policy."

Figure 8 - Reflection on Strategic plan objectives.





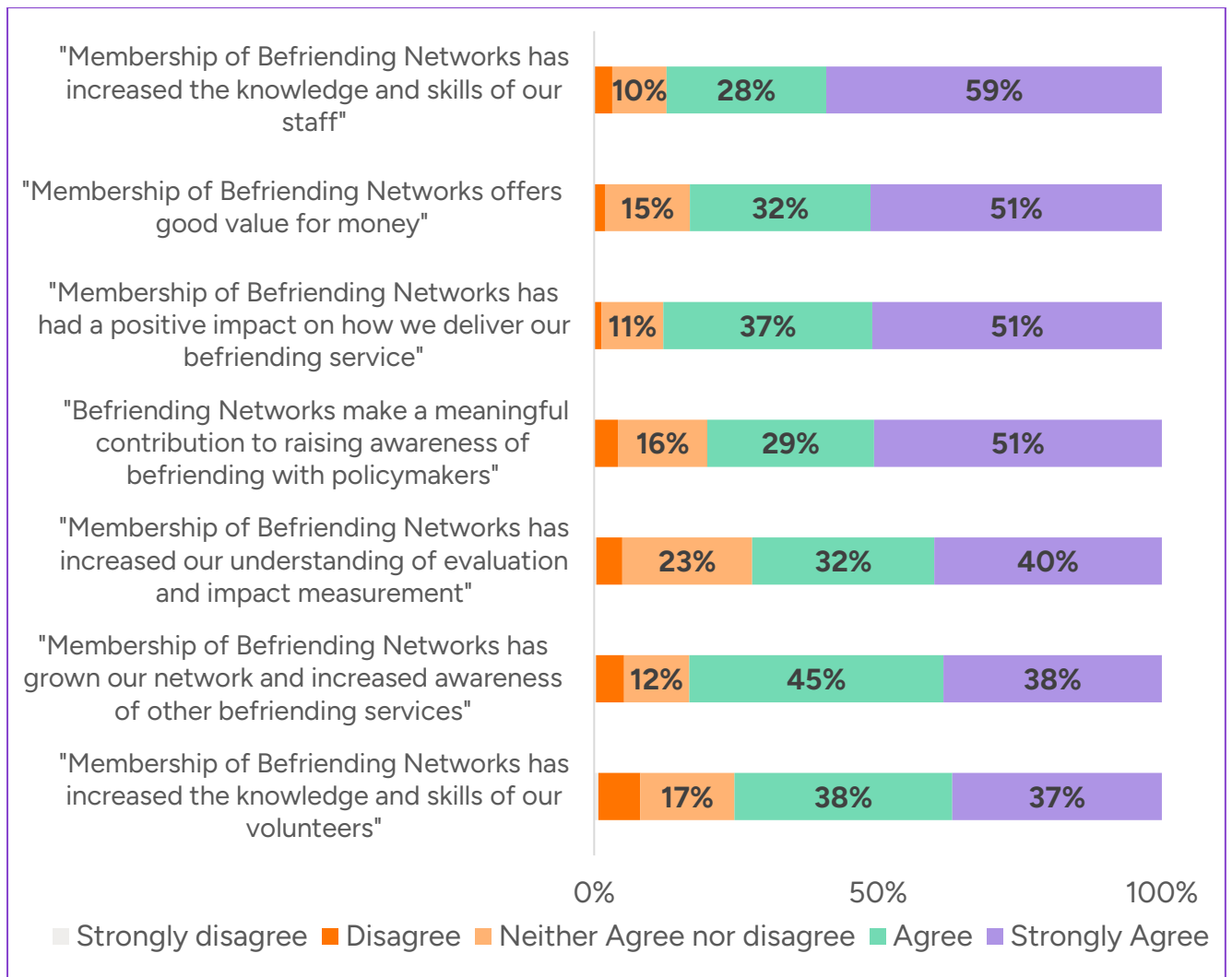
Specific examples of positive member feedback included:

- ♥ “Based on the strategic plan's objective statements, it's evident that they have achieved success.”
England member
- ♥ “Befriending Networks represent the befriending sector well at national, and international events, and feed back to members. Befriending Networks also signposts to useful academic research and events. They are excellent at sharing good practice and encouraging peer support.”
England member
- ♥ “Clear communications and see membership views. Evidence using examples good practice in communications and networking wider social/political landscape”
Scotland member
- ♥ “In our limited, new experience, this has been excellent...”
International member.
- ♥ “Communication has always been great, even though presently I do not engage as much as I would like to due to our current work demand within the authority. Would like to step this up a gear moving forward for the next year and meet up with other local organisations for peer support”
Wales member
- ♥ “I think we have particularly benefited from Objective 3 and have been delighted to be invited to represent Befriending activity within Edinburgh. Sharing the stories of those working on the ground seems like the most impactful way to engage influencers within and beyond the sector.”
Scotland member

8. Reflections on Impact

More than 70% of respondents agree ('strongly agree' or 'agree') with each impact statement, ranging from 72% who agree that membership of Befriending Networks has increased our understanding of evaluation and impact measurement to 88% who agree that Befriending Networks make a meaningful contribution to raising awareness of befriending with policymakers.

Figure 9 - Reflections on Impacts





- ♥ "Membership of Befriending Networks has had a positive impact on how we deliver our befriending service" - 88% 'strongly agree' or 'agree'.
- ♥ "Membership of Befriending Networks has increased the knowledge and skills of our staff" - 87% 'strongly agree' or 'agree'.
- ♥ "Membership of Befriending Networks has grown our network and increased awareness of other befriending services" - 83% 'strongly agree' or 'agree'.
- ♥ "Membership of Befriending Networks offers good value for money" - 83% 'strongly agree' or 'agree'.
- ♥ "Befriending Networks make a meaningful contribution to raising awareness of befriending with policymakers" - 80% 'strongly agree' or 'agree'.
- ♥ "Membership of Befriending Networks has increased the knowledge and skills of our volunteers" - 75% 'strongly agree' or 'agree'.
- ♥ "Membership of Befriending Networks has increased our understanding of evaluation and impact measurement" - 72% 'strongly agree' or 'agree'.

When considering the reflections on impacts by membership length:

- ♥ "Membership of Befriending Networks has had a positive impact on how we deliver our befriending service" – Reflections of 'strongly agree' or 'agree' are 82% for first year members and 89% for members longer than one year. 100% for members unsure of membership length.
- ♥ "Membership of Befriending Networks has increased the knowledge and skills of our staff" - Reflections of 'strongly agree' or 'agree' are 86% for first year members and 87% for members longer than one year. 100% for members unsure of membership length.



- ♥ "Membership of Befriending Networks has grown our network and increased awareness of other befriending services" - Reflections of 'strongly agree' or 'agree' are 84% for first year members and 80% for members longer than one year. 100% for members unsure of membership length.
- ♥ "Membership of Befriending Networks offers good value for money" - Reflections of 'strongly agree' or 'agree' are 77% for first year members and 84% for members longer than one year. 100% for members unsure of membership length.
- ♥ "Befriending Networks make a meaningful contribution to raising awareness of befriending with policymakers"- Reflections of 'strongly agree' or 'agree' are 76% for first year members and 82% for members longer than one year. 100% neither agree nor disagree for members unsure of membership length.
- ♥ "Membership of Befriending Networks has increased the knowledge and skills of our volunteers" - Reflections of 'strongly agree' or 'agree' are 80% for first year members and 74% for members longer than one year. 100% for members unsure of membership length.
- ♥ "Membership of Befriending Networks has increased our understanding of evaluation and impact measurement" - Reflections of 'strongly agree' or 'agree' are 91% for first year members and 69% for members longer than one year. 100% neither agree nor disagree for members unsure of membership length.

9. Looking to the future

The survey introduced emerging ideas to our membership, and the responses would inform our Strategic Plan for 2024-29.

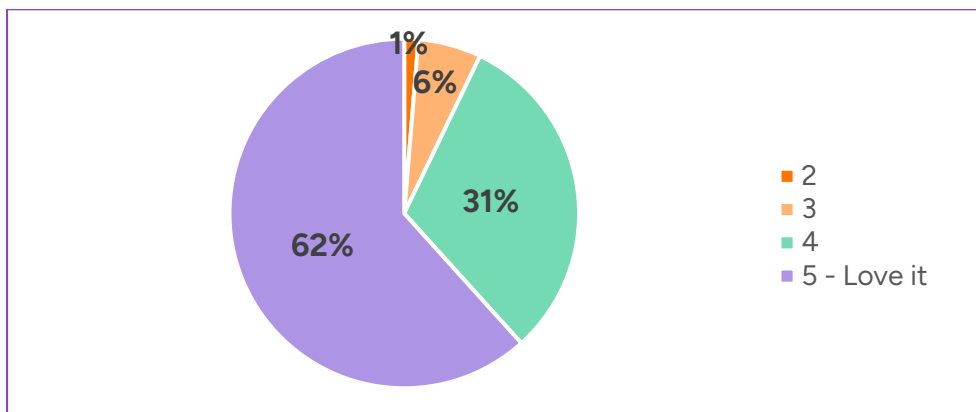
Befriending Networks organisational values of:

- ♥ Collaborative.
- ♥ Supportive.
- ♥ Sector-Leading

were proposed to members, and views sought on these.

93% of respondents have a positive view of the future values (Rating of 4 or 5), with no responses of indifferent.

Figure 10 – Reflections on 2024-29 Organisational values.

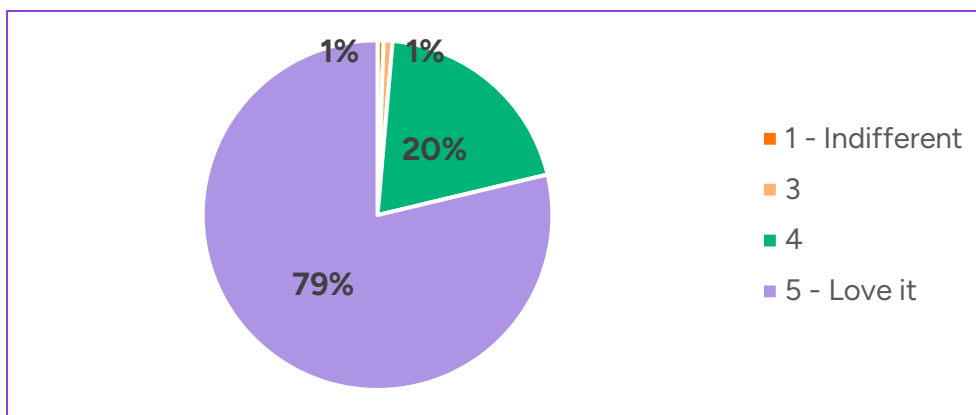




In 2024-29 Befriending Networks vision will be: "a society where quality befriending support is available to everyone who needs it, and the importance of meaningful connections is recognised."

99% of respondents have a positive view of the future vision (Rating of 4 or 5), with only 1% of responses of indifferent.

Figure 11 - Reflections on 2024-29 Vision



93% of first year members, 100% of members longer than 1 year and 100% for members unsure of membership length have a positive view of the 2024-29 Vision.

Additional strategic activity ideas were proposed for members to consider. These would be in addition to the existing core offering of training, networking events, resources, and quality award:

Our Activities: Membership Support - We should review our membership benefits, and membership structure to make it more transparent, accessible, and valuable to existing and new members.

Our Activities: Networking and Connection - We should explore ways in which our members can connect directly with one another, through opportunities such as peer support, leadership exchanges, and micro-networks within the larger network.

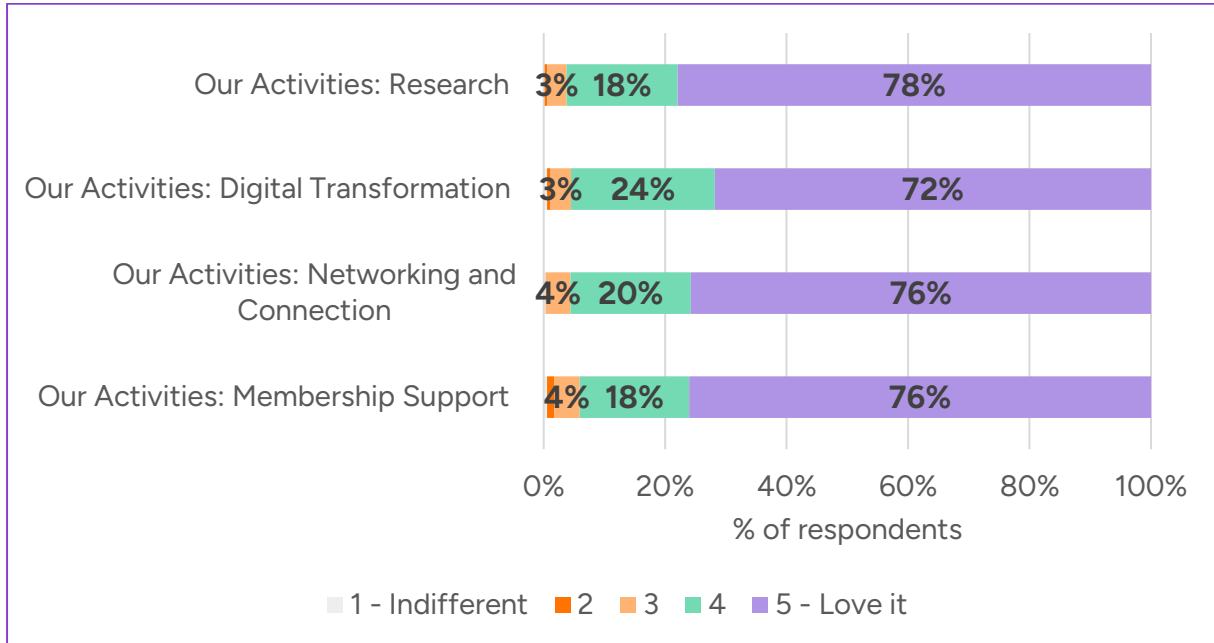
Our Activities: Digital Transformation - We should develop our digital presence through an improved website, interactive membership directory, searchable resources, and through use of podcasts, blogs, and videos to support our members and to widen the reach of Befriending Week.

Our Activities: Research - We should build capacity and seek out opportunities for research and evidence to support the befriending sector, and work with our membership to better understand the scale and impact of our sector.

At least 94% of respondents have a positive view (ratings of 4 and 5) of each of the ideas on future activities.

- ♥ Our Activities: Membership Support - 94% positive.
- ♥ Our Activities: Networking and Connection - 96% positive.
- ♥ Our Activities: Digital Transformation - 95% positive.
- ♥ Our Activities: Research - 96% positive.

Figure 12 - Reflections on future ideas for activities:



When considering the reflections on ideas for future activities by membership length:

- ♥ Research – positive (rating 4 or 5) for 90% of first year members, 97% of members longer than 1 year and 100% for members unsure of membership length.
- ♥ Digital Transformation – positive (rating 4 or 5) for 88% of first year members, 97% of members longer than 1 year and 100% for members unsure of membership length.
- ♥ Networking and Connection - positive (rating 4 or 5) for 95% of first year members, 97% of members longer than 1 year and 63% for members unsure of membership length.
- ♥ Membership Support - positive (rating 4 or 5) for 100% of first year members, 93% of members longer than 1 year and 100% for members unsure of membership length.



The survey concluded with an opportunity for respondents to share or feedback anything else they would like to Befriending Networks.

Specific member feedback included:

- ♥ "I am greatly grateful for the enriching experiences and look forward to further collaboration and growth within this supportive network. It made my new position easier to understand, and I felt more confident knowing where I could ask questions and receive training and support. Thank You!"
Scotland member
- ♥ "I feel like the direction the Befriending Networks is going in is extremely positive and it is a great time to be involved with the organisation."
UK member.
- ♥ "I think you are all doing a great job, and we are proud to be members."
UK Member
- ♥ "The additional ideas above that are being formulated, alongside the core services of training, networking events, resources, and quality awards, demonstrate a promising focus and indicate a positive direction for the strategic plan for 2024-2029."
England member
- ♥ "Fantastic organisation"
England member



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