



# Befriending Networks

## **Annual Members' Survey 2019**

*'You put things forward to encourage those running schemes to challenge their working practices, check their own reasoning for why we work in the way we do and aim for best practice, thus improving services that are around. We have certainly used knowledge from befriending networks to challenge our methods and improve our service.'*

# Annual Members' Survey 2019

## Contents

	Page
<b>Introduction</b>	3
<b>Befriending Networks Services</b>	3
Face to Face Training	
Online Training	
Common Ground Meetings	
Volunteer Online Training	
Bespoke Training	
Consultancy	
Quality in Befriending	
Telephone Info/Advice	
Annual Conference	
Befriending Week	
<b>Befriending Networks Communications</b>	8
Network News	
Facebook	
Twitter	
Email Notifications	
<b>Any other services?</b>	9
<b>Progress against Strategic Aims</b>	10
Platform for Members' Voices	
Support for Frontline Organisations	
Increasing Communication	
<b>Conclusions</b>	14

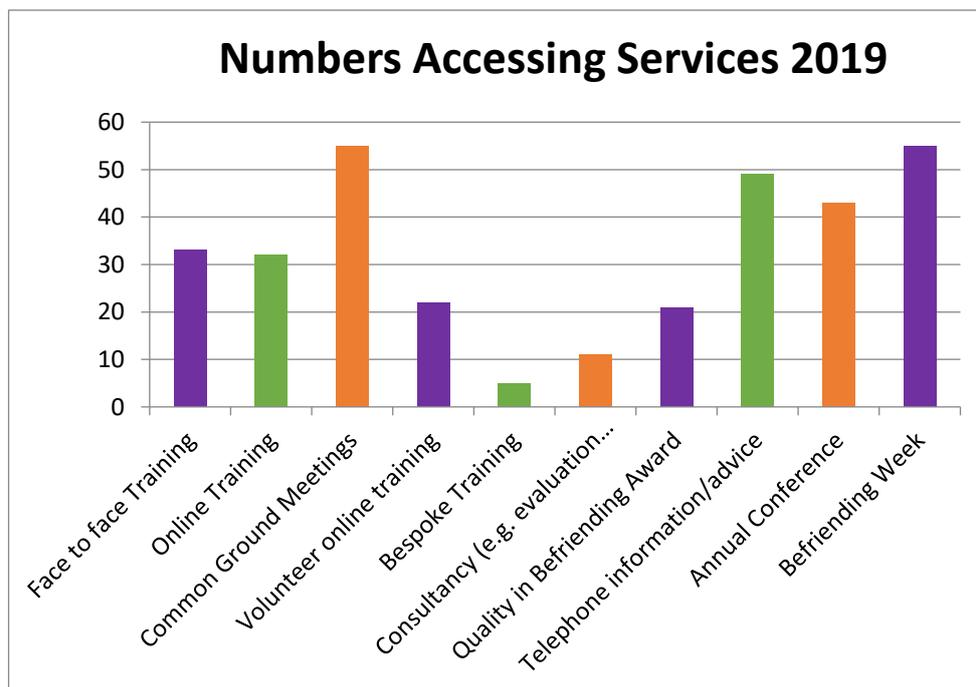
## Introduction

Following the 2018 Survey Befriending Networks wished to gain an idea, for 2019, of what services members are accessing and using, what they think about the services they do access/use and what, if anything, not currently provided that they would like to see. We sent out a short survey asking members what services they access and how they rate those. In addition we asked members how successful they thought we were in delivering our strategic aims.

At the point the survey was sent out Befriending Networks had 254 members. The response rate was 30% (n75).

As with the 2018 survey questions were asked on services; communications; what other services members would like; strategic plan aims.

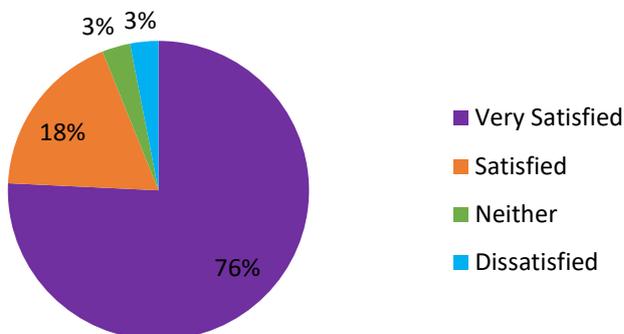
## 1) Befriending Networks Services



Most organisations had accessed/used 4 or more services, up from 3 or more accessed in 2018. Services that saw the greatest increases in numbers accessing were Common Ground meetings, Telephone Information/Advice, Annual Conference and Befriending Week. There were small drops in numbers of those accessing Face to Face training, Volunteer Online Training, Bespoke Training and Quality in Befriending. These reductions are likely, in part, to have been due to staff changes during that period which meant that some services were less available for part of the year.

The survey asked - For all Befriending Networks services, you or others within your organisation have accessed/used please rate how satisfied you are on a scale from Very Satisfied to Very Dissatisfied

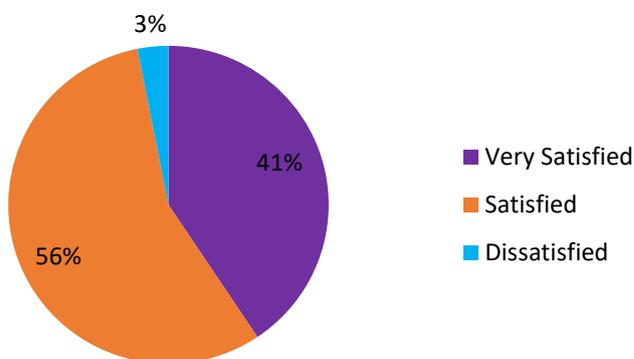
### Face to Face Training



For the 2019 year 33 organisations had accessed face to face training, a decrease of 7 from the 2018 year. Of those 94% stated that they were satisfied (6) or very satisfied (25). One respondent was neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and one was dissatisfied.

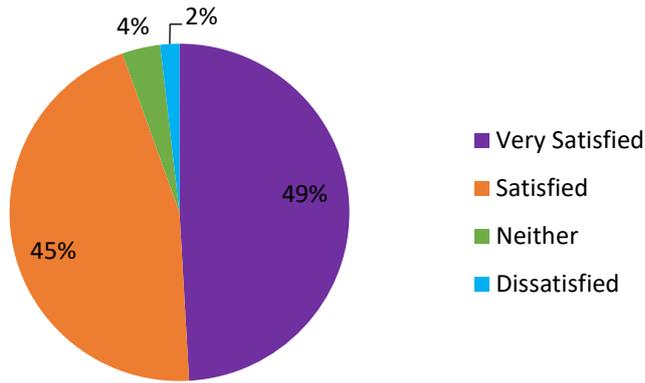
The reduction in numbers accessing this is likely to be, in part, due to fewer face to face training sessions being delivered. Levels of satisfaction are slightly lower, down from 98% in 2018 to 94% in 2019.

### Online Training



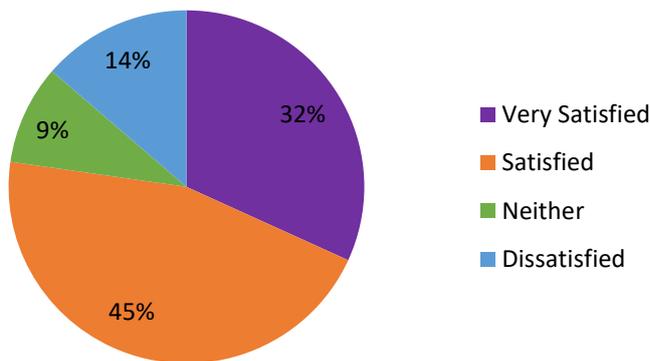
For the 2019 year 32 organisations had accessed online training, the same number as in the 2018 year. Overall levels of satisfaction had increased from 88% in 2018 to 97% in 2019 with 13 stating they were very satisfied and 18 were satisfied. One respondent was dissatisfied.

## Common Ground Meetings



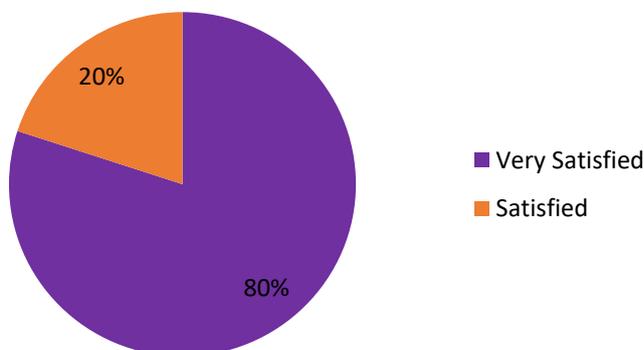
55 organisations accessed Common Ground meetings in the 2019 year. Levels of satisfaction expressed for the 2019 year are the same as for the 2018 year at 94% either satisfied (25) or very satisfied (27). Two were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and one was dissatisfied.

## Volunteer Online Training



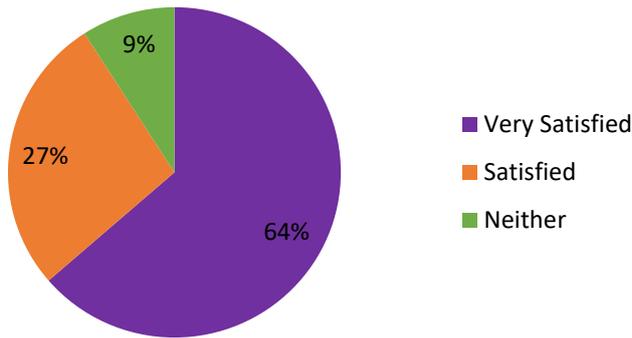
22 organisations had accessed the Volunteer Online Training in the 2019 year, down from 30 in 2018. Of those 77% were satisfied (10) or very satisfied (7). Two were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and three were dissatisfied.

## Bespoke Training



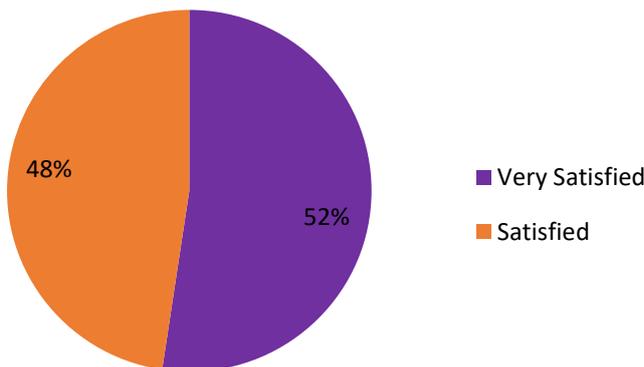
There was a significant reduction in the levels of organisations accessing Bespoke Training down from 14 in the 2018 year to 5 in the 2019 year. However 100% of those accessing this were satisfied (1) or very satisfied (4).

## Consultancy



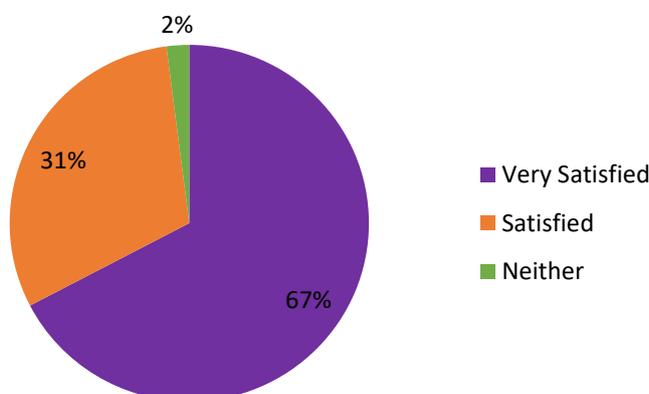
There was also a reduction in numbers accessing Consultancy down from 17 in 2018 year to 11 in 2019 year. Levels of satisfaction increased from 82% in 2018 to 91% in 2019 with 64% (7) very satisfied and 27% (3) satisfied. One was neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. Most of these respondents appear to have referred to consultancy undertaken in past years.

## Quality in Befriending Award



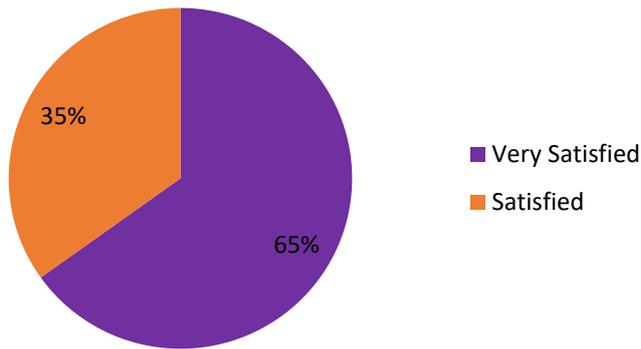
21 respondents have achieved or are working towards the Quality in Befriending Award, a slight reduction from 25 in the 2018 year. Satisfaction levels have increased from 80% in 2018 to 100% for 2019. 52% (11) are very satisfied and 48% (10) are satisfied.

## Telephone Info/Advice



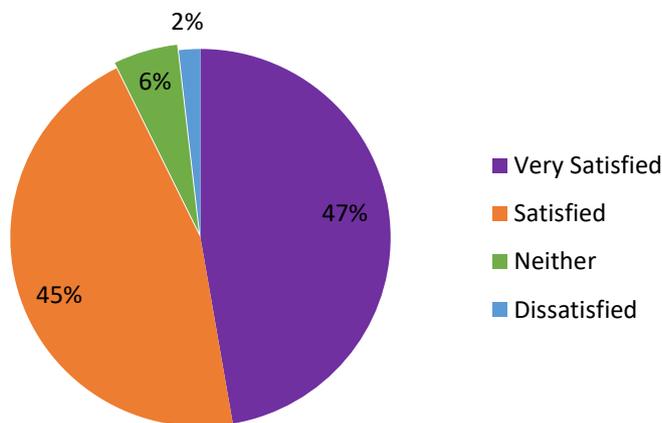
49 respondents had accessed Telephone Information/Advice, a drop from 57 in 2018. Satisfaction levels showed a small increase, 98% were very satisfied (33) or satisfied (15) One was neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

## Annual Conference



45 respondents had accessed the Annual conference, an increase from 39 in 2018. 100% were very satisfied (28) or satisfied (15). This shows an improved rate of satisfaction from 83% in the 2018 survey.

## Befriending Week

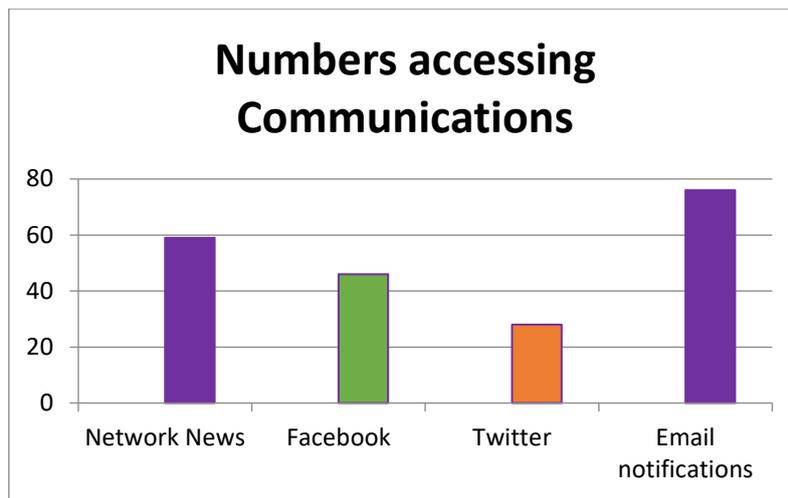


55 accessed Befriending Week, a small increase of 8 over the 2018 survey. Of those 92% were very satisfied (26) or satisfied (25), three were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and one was dissatisfied.

For each service accessed organisations were asked to make any additional comments if they wished. Examples of these include:

- Befriending Networks events are well-organised and cover relevant and interesting topics. We find the interaction and peer learning really useful. BN staff are friendly and helpful - whenever we have raised queries they come back with useful responses.
- We have just started on QiB process. I think it will be a challenge, but a positive one.
- The parliamentary reception was a highlight and we were delighted to be invited to be part of this.
- Never seems to be very much info or accessible promotional materials for befriending week.
- Happy with the service and support provided when required.
- I find all of the resources provided very useful and Befriending Networks are a fantastic support to us in various ways.

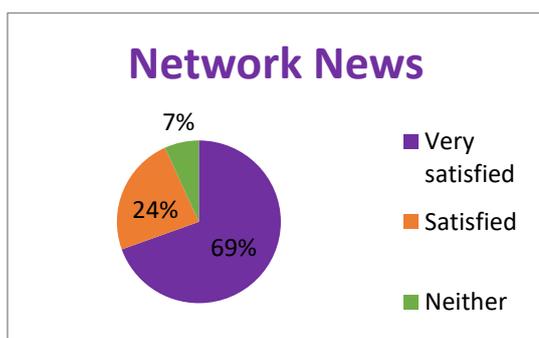
## 2) Befriending Networks Communications



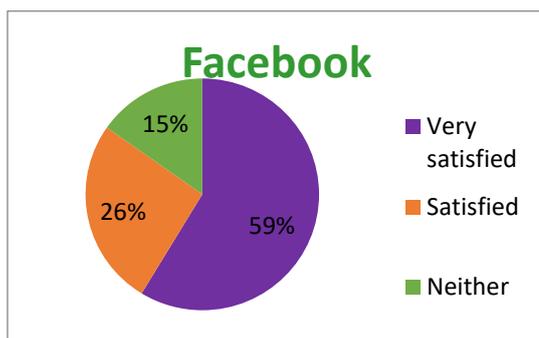
In common with findings from last year most respondents commented on Network News (59) and Email Communication (76). Numbers receiving Network News were down from last year as the implementation of GDPR led to a reduction in numbers on the mailing list. With the new website offering the opportunity to sign up direct we are already noticing an increase in numbers on the mailing list so we are anticipating an increased number for next year.

Fewer respondents commented on social media. However, the numbers of those accessing Facebook and Twitter have increased from 2017/18 with Facebook at 46 and Twitter at 28. In the past few months Befriending Networks have introduced a social media communications plan. This greatly increased level of use of social media has contributed to these increased numbers.

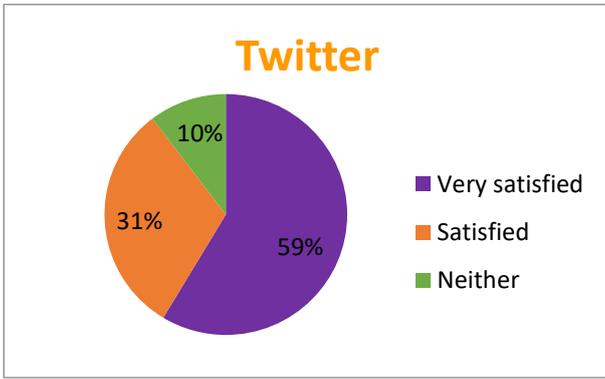
The survey asked respondents to identify which communications they and/or their staff accessed and to rate how satisfied/dissatisfied they are with those accessed.



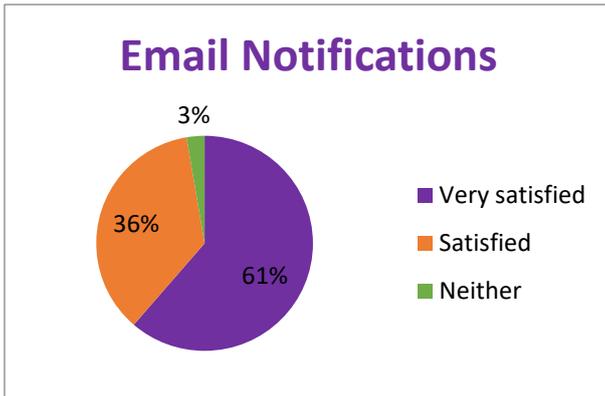
Of the 59 respondents who had accessed Network News 93% were either Very Satisfied (41) or Satisfied (14). 4 were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.



46 respondents rated Facebook posts. Of those 85% were Very Satisfied (27) or Satisfied (12), 7 were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied



As in the last survey fewer respondents (28) rated BNs' Twitter communications. Of those 90% were Very Satisfied (17) or Satisfied (9), 3 were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.



100% of respondents rated Email Notifications. Of these 97% were Very Satisfied (46) or Satisfied (27), 2 were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

For each communication method respondents were asked for any comments. Examples include:

- The BN newsletter is informative, topical and always worth reading.
- I find the contact from Befriending Networks very good and not overdone. In particular I enjoy the Network News.
- I love receiving tweets and Facebook news from Befrienders Networks they keep me informed and share some really good stories from other groups, which are often inspiring.
- I have been impressed over the last 12 months of how BN communications has evolved for the better.
- Varied and informative content.

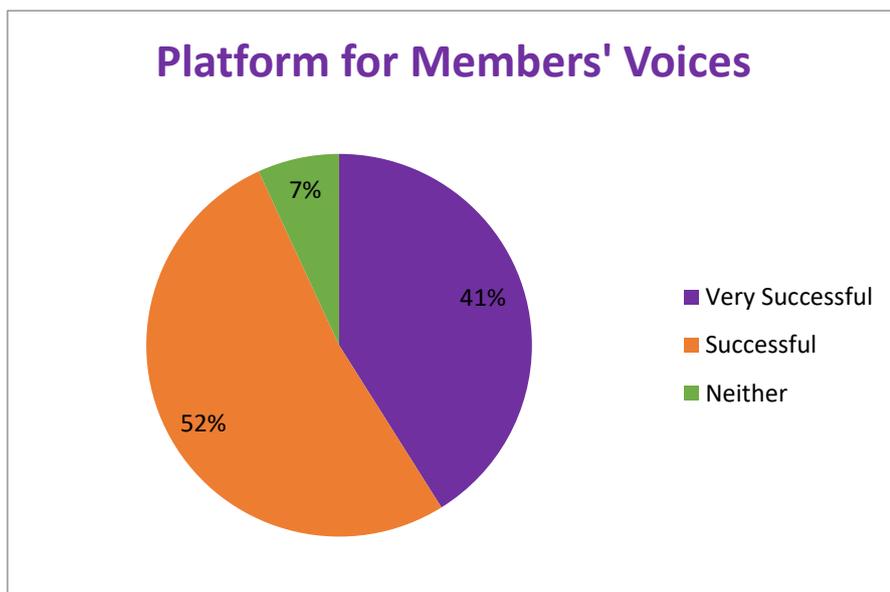
### 3) Are there any other services you would like to see Befriending Networks provide?

Once more the majority of respondents either skipped this question or had no suggestions. There were a few suggestions for template policies. Several mentioned additional training including Bid writing training and safeguarding training. The suggestion for updated video of befriending stories was repeated.

#### 4) Progress against strategic aims

Once again members were asked, in addition to their views of services and communications, their views on how successful, or otherwise, Befriending Networks has been in relation to our Strategic Plan aims. They were asked to rate our performance from Very Successful through to Very Unsuccessful. They were also asked for any comments on these aims.

**We aim to be a platform for member voices;** raising awareness, representing them and influencing national and local policy.



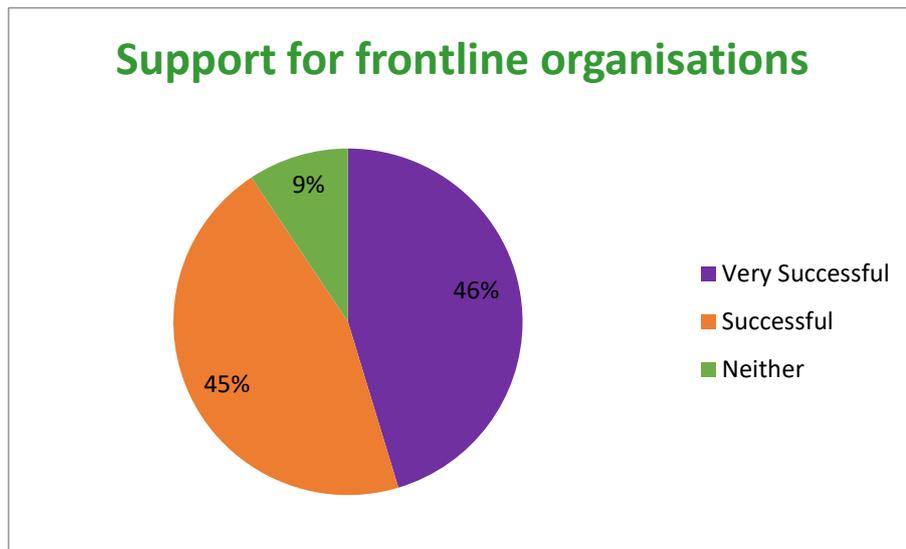
93% of respondents, up from 82% in 2018, felt that BNs was Very Successful (30) or Successful (38). 7% of respondents (5) felt we were neither Successful nor Unsuccessful, a reduction of 11% (8) from 2018.

Once again there were a number of positive comments including the following:

- Work on the Loneliness Strategy has really helped to raise the profile of our work.
- Always feel BN give the sector a very strong, dynamic voice.
- I think BN has a strong voice in Scotland and North of England.
- It feels like things are coming together, creating a stronger voice and sharing best practice.
- I suppose because our service is based in Ireland I am a little removed from influencing UK policy but the work being done is really good.
- BN input into the TTT campaign and influence in the government consultation around loneliness has been impressive.

One member from England said '*Strong Scottish bias, and don't believe that England is adequately represented.*' However another English member responded '*It is great to hear that you have been helping shape befriending on a national scale.*' These varying views may, in part, be as a result of differences in accessing BNs' communications. One member's comment suggested they felt somewhat removed from the work of BNs – '*I have seen information following your consultations with politicians etc but I am unsure how you (make) the views of your membership to feed into these consultations....befriending supports a broad client group*'

**We aim to support frontline organisations to deliver well** through providing information and support, encouraging organisational development and capacity building, promoting good practice within the Befriending sector.



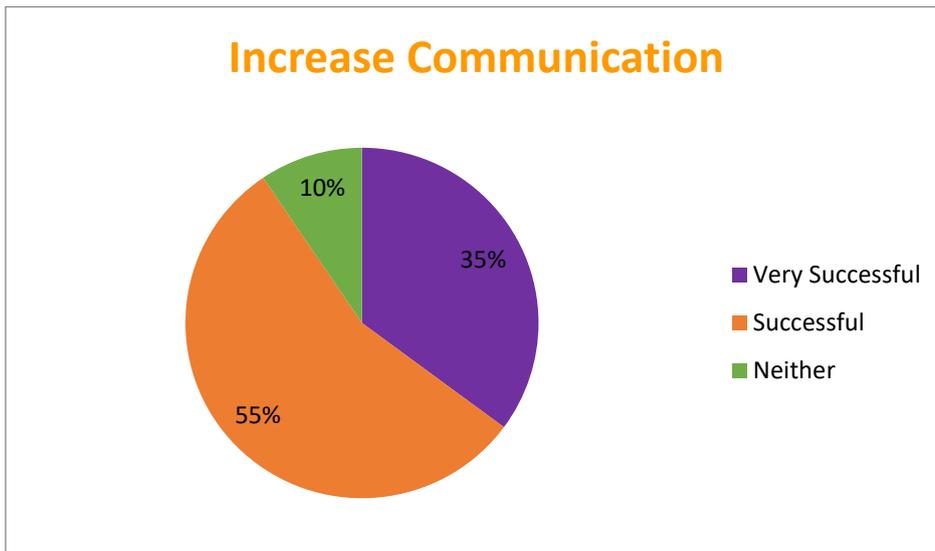
91% of respondents felt that BNs was Very Successful (34) or Successful (34) in supporting frontline organisations. 7 felt that we were neither successful nor unsuccessful. These are the same proportions as 2018.

Comments on this question include the following:

- Befriending Networks have been very helpful in supporting our Dementia Befriending Service and helping us to improve practices.
- BN are always my first point of contact for any organisational advice and guidance.
- The team is knowledgeable and helpful, always happy to help and support us. Please continue like this!
- At a time when the Mentoring and Befriending arm NCVO seems to be shrinking, it is really good just that Befriending Networks is still continuing. Getting a second worker for England should help.
- Your Masterclass in Befriending was really good and gave a really good look at what should be required for a successful befriending service. We have been befriending for over 7 years and it is great to have learned new things.
- The encouragement I have received from befriending networks has been, at times; everything I needed at that moment.

One respondent, thinking about how support could be improved, commented '*I wonder if there would be capacity for leaders/managers to meet and discuss bigger issues more strategically and we could help/benefit one another on key issues such as capacity/recruitment etc...*'

**We aim to increase Communication and Networking:** provide a network for communication and sharing; develop an evidence base for befriending.



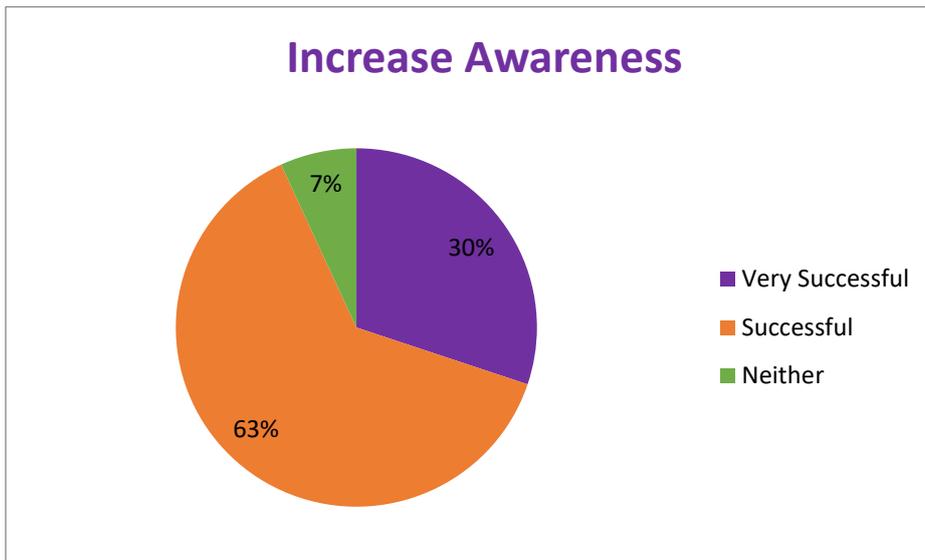
90% of respondents felt BNs was Very Successful (26) or Successful (41). This shows a small increase over the 87% of 2018 respondents. 7 felt we were neither successful nor unsuccessful, the same number as in 2018. No respondents felt we were unsuccessful unlike the 2 such answers received in 2018.

While not all respondents added comments to their responses, all that were added were positive. Examples include:

- As a lone worker I deeply value the Common Ground meetings for their networking and keeping connected/up dated with the befriending sector.
- Excellent social media presence!
- Befriending Networks I feel does a great job in this area.
- Have made useful contacts through this.
- My team have commented on the value of them attending befriending common ground meetings. They also access the pro formas and information on the website.
- From common ground meetings to the annual conference and befriending week to training events and social media, all complimented by a comprehensive website, Befriending Networks continuously strives to keep the membership connected.

Common Ground meetings are referenced throughout the comments, one English member did say *'I would like to see more venues available in England.'* As a result of the Building Connections fund award we are beginning work to deliver increased numbers of Common Ground meetings in England.

**We aim to increase awareness and understanding of befriending** across the UK and more widely.



93% of respondents felt BNs was Very Successful (22) or Successful (46) up from 87% in 2018. 5 felt we were neither successful nor unsuccessful, down from 9 in 2018.

Additional comments on this topic include:

- Befriending Networks works really hard in this area and we ourselves are constantly working on this in an Irish context.
- Keep going along the same lines which should help to raise awareness and an understanding of Befriending.
- It is clear from BN communications that the organisation has increased awareness across the UK. The uplift in members in England and the increased number of events illustrates this.

## 5) Conclusions

Results from the 2019 Annual Members' Survey are very similar to the 2018 Survey. The response rate was 30% of members, a small increase on the 29% rate for 2018. The majority of responses were positive with the majority of responding members stating that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the services they had accessed. Overall, responses showed similar or increased levels of satisfaction for most services.

### **BNs services**

Most organisations had accessed/used 4 or more services, up from 3 or more accessed in 2018. Services that saw the greatest increases in numbers were Common Ground meetings, Annual Conference, and Befriending Week. There were small drops in numbers of those accessing Face to Face training, Volunteer Online Training, Bespoke Training and Quality in Befriending. These reductions are likely, in part, to have been due to staff changes during that period which meant that some services were less available for part of the year.

Levels for face to face training showed a small decrease while satisfaction levels for online training showed a significant increase from 88% up to 97% in 2019. This finding is in contrast to the findings from 2018 in which respondents indicated greater levels of satisfaction for face to face over online training. There have been limited opportunities for face to face training in the past year with a staffing change. The arrival of the new Learning Development Officer presented the opportunity to review the online training resulting in changes being made to content and delivery. Work has been underway recently in developing new complementary training modules which we anticipate will lead to increased take up and levels of satisfaction for the face to face training.

Numbers of members accessing Bespoke Training showed a significant reduction over 2018, down from 14 to 5, however 100% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with this. In the past few weeks we have received increasing numbers of queries about bespoke training and so expect this to be reflected in the 2020 survey.

Respondents also expressed satisfaction in consultancy, 91% in 2019 compared with 82% in 2018. However there was very limited consultancy undertaken in the year up to the 2019 survey so it is likely that some respondents were referring to consultancy undertaken in previous years.

Once again Common Ground meetings were popular with 94% of respondents expressing satisfaction with these meetings. Members commented on how useful these were for learning and networking, *'The team finds really useful common ground meetings. they are not only great for networking but also to keep up to date with some of the work other charities and companies are doing!'* Despite the expressed popularity of these meetings, from the BNs perspective numbers attending remain disappointingly low.

One of the most popular services was telephone information and advice. Numbers accessing this service were lower than in 2018 however satisfaction levels showed a small increase with 98% expressing satisfaction. Members reported that BNs staff were usually quick to respond and helpful. One member commented *'...BN staff are friendly and helpful - whenever we have raised queries they come back with useful responses.'*

There was a small reduction in the numbers stating they had accessed the Quality in Befriending Award, down to 21 from 25 in 2018. However 100% of those accessing QiB were satisfied or very

satisfied with this. One respondent commented *'We have just started on QiB process. I think it will be a challenge, but a positive one.'*

Increased numbers of respondents had accessed the Annual Conference and Befriending Week. Of these 100% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the Annual Conference and 92% were satisfied or very satisfied with Befriending Week. During Befriending Week 2018 BNs hosted a Parliamentary Reception, on respondent commented on this *'The parliamentary reception was a highlight and we were delighted to be invited to be part of this.'*

In response to the question of what, if any, additional services members would like to see most respondents either skipped the question or answered saying they could not think of anything. There were mentions of additional training including Bid Writing and Safeguarding.

## **BNs Communications**

Members were asked once again about their views on BNs' communications. As in the 2018 survey the Network News was well received as were Facebook posts, Twitter and Email Notifications. Fewer respondents had accessed social media, a greater number appear to use Facebook than Twitter. One respondent commented *'I have been impressed over the last 12 months of how BN communications has evolved for the better.'*

## **Views on the aims of the Strategic Plan.**

93% of respondents felt that BNs was successful in providing a platform for members' voices, up from 82% in 2018. Several respondents mentioned the work on the Westminster and the Scottish loneliness strategies, one respondent commented *'Work on the Loneliness Strategy has really helped to raise the profile of our work.'* Reference was also made to the Take the Time Campaign with Bauer Radio and on local as well as national awareness. *'Always feel BN give the sector a very strong, dynamic voice.'*

In common with the results of the 2018 survey 91% of respondents felt that BNs was successful in providing support for frontline organisations in their work. *'BNs are always my first point of contact for any organisational advice and guidance.'* In addition to supporting frontline organisations 90% of respondents felt that BNs was successful or very successful in increasing communication and networking for members. This was a small increase over the 87% rating in 2018. *'From common ground meetings to the annual conference and befriending week to training events and social media, all complimented by a comprehensive website, Befriending Networks continuously strives to keep the membership connected.'*

Finally 93% of respondents felt that BNs was successful or very successful in increasing understanding and awareness of befriending. This too was an increase over the 2018 rate of 87%. *'It is clear from BN communications that the organisation has increased awareness across the UK. The uplift in members in England and the increased number of events illustrates this.'*

## **Growing English Membership**

Responses include 35% of the total English membership. Views from the English membership were comparable to those of Scottish and other membership. An English member, in response to the question on increasing awareness, commented *'It is clear from BN communications that the organisation has increased awareness across the UK. The uplift in members in England and the*

*increased number of events illustrates this.’ Another English member commented ‘At a time when the Mentoring and Befriending arm NCVO seems to be shrinking, it is really good just that Befriending Networks is still continuing. Getting a second worker for England should help.’*