

Membership Feedback 2025: Highlights Report December 2025



Supporting organisations to deliver
quality befriending services



**Befriending
Networks**

Introduction

This highlights report shares some of the findings from our 2025 annual membership survey. 30% of our members shared their views of services, activities, strategy and values. This report is the second publication from the survey. The first, our Sector Insight Report, was published in October 2025 and is available at www.befriending.co.uk

Findings of this survey encourage us to be bolder and louder in our championing of the befriending sector, so we will reflect on the learning of Befriending Week 2025 and seek to identify other opportunities across the UK where we can work with our members to increase sector profile.

Our team would like to express thanks to our members for their comments, compliments and constructive suggestions for how we improve and evolve. Befriending Networks, as a membership organisation, will continue to be informed by and shaped by the needs, experiences and perspectives of our members.

We are always open to feedback, create regular opportunities for feedback, and encourage members to work alongside us. Throughout 2026, we will continue this approach as we seek to review, develop and adapt our activities and services in line with our strategic plan and the financial resources available to us.

Susan Hunter

Chief Executive Officer, Befriending Networks

December 2025



About Befriending Networks

Befriending Networks is the network for befriending organisations. Established as a charity in 1994, we have thirty years of experience supporting and connecting befriending services.

Our vision is of a society where quality befriending support is available to everyone who needs it, and the importance of meaningful connection is recognised.

As an intermediary between our members, supporters and stakeholders, we strengthen the befriending sector. We aim to support organisations to deliver quality befriending services.



Key findings



Members rated their **overall satisfaction** with the support they receive from Befriending Networks as **4.7 out of 5**.



93% of members considered Befriending Networks membership as **good value for money**.



93% of members were likely to **recommend membership** of Befriending Networks to other organisations.



Members rated their satisfaction with the **accessibility of resources and services** as **4.6 out of 5**.



Members rated their satisfaction with the **inclusivity of our resources and services** as **4.6 out of 5**.



Members rated the **importance of continued membership** of Befriending Networks to support them through challenges as **4 out of 5**.

Key findings



Most Valuable Activities Offered by Befriending Networks.

Our Membership Top 5

1. Training Courses
2. Website and Digital Resources
3. Good Practice Guides
4. Befriender Training Toolkit
5. One-to-One Membership Support Enquiries



Demonstrating our Organisational Values

Support: **Always 70%**, Often 28%, Sometimes, 2%

Collaborate: **Always 73%**, Often, 26%, Sometimes, 1%

Lead: **Always 66%**, Often 30%, Sometimes 5%



Most Effective Delivery of Strategic Objectives.

Our Membership Top 3 (from a possible 7)

1. Supporting a Network of Quality Befriending Services, 89%
2. Sustaining a Valuable Network, 61%
3. Championing the Befriending Sector, 53%

What we do very well

High Satisfaction with Support and Resources

Most respondents rated their satisfaction with Befriending Networks' support, resources, and services very highly. Many gave top marks for the accessibility and inclusivity of resources (guides, toolkits, website) and services (training, events, membership support), indicating that the core membership offer is well received and valued.



"I just personally think Befriending Networks is a fab organisation and has helped me as a service co-ordinator to feel empowered in my role as I have so many resources to hand to help strengthen service delivery and ultimately make the service better for staff, volunteers and befriendees alike."

Value of Networking and Peer Support

Networking events, roadshows, and opportunities to connect with other organisations are consistently highlighted as some of the most valuable aspects of membership. Members appreciate the chance to share challenges, ideas, and best practices, which enhances their own service delivery.



"Being part of the network has been valuable in helping us feel connected."

"It's reassuring to connect with others facing similar challenges."

"I feel that the support Befriending Network really is invaluable in helping us maintain and develop standards as an organisation and support our growth."

Training and Toolkit Effectiveness

Training courses and the Befriender Training Toolkit are frequently cited as vital resources. Many organisations report that these tools have directly improved their ability to deliver quality services and support both staff and volunteers.



"The range of training opportunities has been helpful, and the quality of your webinars and toolkits has helped us improve practice and boost confidence."

"I love the Befriender Toolkit and the resources which are easy to read."

Responsiveness and Approachability of Staff

Numerous comments praise the professionalism, friendliness, and responsiveness of Befriending Networks staff. Members feel supported and know where to turn for help, which enhances their overall experience.



"You have a fantastic team who are professional, friendly and on hand to support."

"A wonderful, responsive, caring organisation which listens to the voices of the members to shape services provided."

"Your team is always so approachable, and the breadth of what you offer is incredible. It's sometimes hard not to want to look at everything!"



Where we can make improvements

Content and Clarity of Communications

Email communications and newsletters are widely praised for being timely and clear. Most members agree that social media, newsletters, and digital content are relevant and inclusive. However, some respondents feel overwhelmed by the volume or length of emails, and a few mention duplicate messages to multiple addresses, which can lead to important information being missed.



Our communication methods intend to reach members in a timely and informative way. With so many opportunities to share, this can lead to longer emails. We encourage all members to subscribe to our monthly newsletter. All contacts within a member organisation will receive a membership email each month and a learning and development email each month. At busy times, such as befriending week, we will increase the frequency of emails. We encourage all members to keep their email contacts up to date and let us know when staff leave. Our social media offers members a bite-sized way to learn about our opportunities. If you can only prioritise one thing each month, we would signpost you to our monthly newsletter, sent during the first week of each month.

Digital Accessibility and User Experience

While digital resources and the website are generally seen as user-friendly and easy to access, there are calls for improvements, especially for visually impaired users and those who struggle with keyword searches. Suggestions include more plain-text documents, better labelling, and broader keyword ranges for resource searches.



We are committed to making new Befriending Networks resources and publications available in plain-text documents. If there are any older documents that a member would like converted to plain-text, we can do this on request. Wherever possible we aim to use digital tools which offer customised accessibility tools such as contrast, font size, and languages.

We are aware that there is more we can do to help our members navigate, locate and identify the fantastic resources and events that are already available on our website, and we will work to make changes to our website search and navigation throughout 2026.

Desire for More Customisation and Peer-Led Content

Members express interest in more editable, customisable resources (e.g., volunteer induction materials) and opportunities to share or pool resources across organisations. There is a desire for more tailored resources, especially for organisations working with specific communities (e.g., refugees, people with complex needs). There's also a call for more peer-led sessions and reflective practice groups.

We welcome the suggestion of developing reflective practice groups and offering more peer-led content. We currently offer free peer to peer networking opportunities at least once a month, often more frequently. Should funding be available, we will support or facilitate thematic and local or regional networking opportunities.

Our Befriender Training Toolkit contains fully customisable learning and development resources for members to use as volunteer induction. Since the survey was carried out we have also introduced e-learning for volunteer befriender training. We continue to work to find the balance between building capacity, providing templates and examples, offering complete products, and supporting organisations to identify the best resources for their setting. There is a rich diversity and variation between befriending services and we always try to find the common ground of content that will be valuable to most members.

Cost of Training and In-Person Events

The quality of training, learning and development was highly regarded by those who have used this service. There are requests for more in-person events and for Befriending Networks staff to visit member organisations. Some members, particularly small organisations, can find the cost of training a barrier to their involvement.

We understand that all organisations are under financial constraint, we aim to offer a membership experience which is good value for money. Wherever possible our activities, resources and support is included free to our members. In 2025 and in 2026 we will offer in-person events in key locations across the UK for both members and non-members. Ahead of Befriending Week 2025 our staff visited a small number of member projects for 'coffee and collaborate' sessions. We are constrained by funding and the location of our staff team to deliver a higher volume of in-person opportunities.

We keep our fees under continuous review, and members receive a 25% discount on all events in our training programmes; all other fees are scaled proportionately to the annual income of the member organisation. Our fee for training includes more than just the delivery session as all courses include additional learning materials, exclusive resources, and some also have self-paced e-learning. Train the Trainers, whilst our most expensive course, is cheaper than most market equivalents and can save your organisation hours (or days!) of work and lead to increased volunteer retention and skilled volunteers.

Income generated from our products and services are re-invested directly back into the network and are a crucial element to our own financial sustainability.





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