

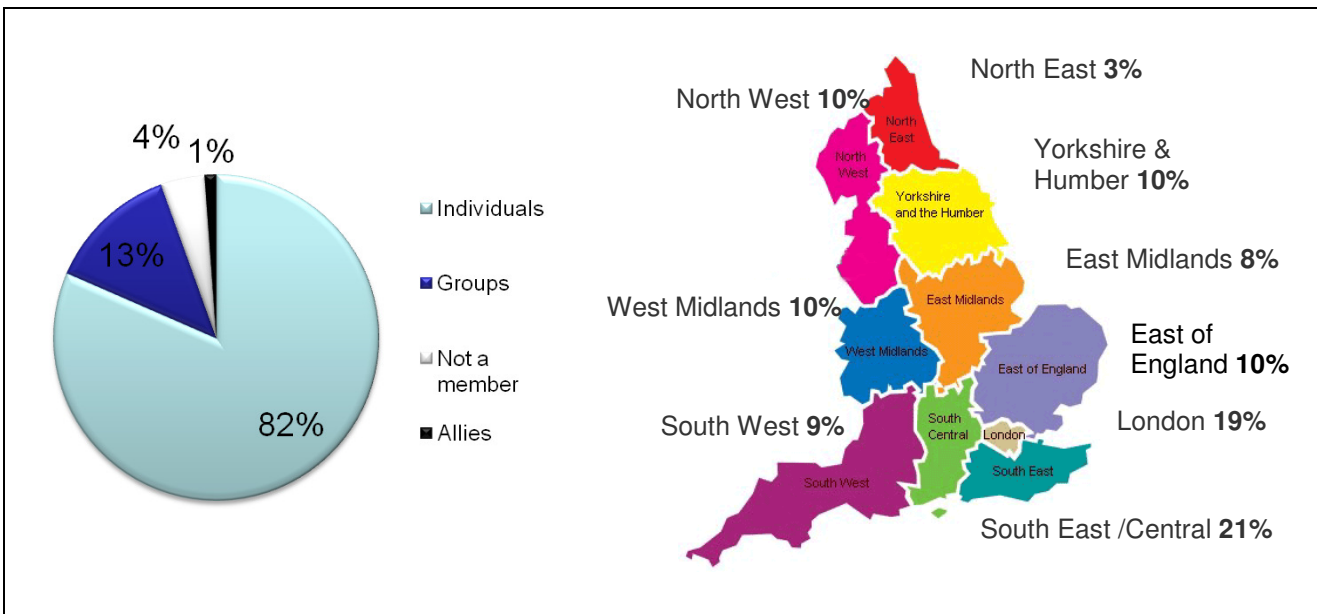


“I know NSUN is there for me the very presence is re-assuring. It is a vibrant and well organised network” member quote from survey

Introduction

Out of 500 questionnaires sent out, 95 members returned theirs and from these we were able to collect a great deal of information, so we are delighted with the results. Our members’ views will be incorporated into NSUN’s strategy, and we will be considering how to go forward with this in the context of our charitable status.

Below is the percentage of responses per membership type and per region.



NSUN’s Aim1. is.....

1. Facilitate active links between service user groups and individuals

And many members spoke in their own words of how much they value this and wish to see it developed further through information sharing, the website, in person at conferences, training events etc.

Aim 2. is.....

2. Build capacity for service user groups

Likewise, members spoke about their desire for NSUN’s capacity to increase geographically, numerically (as in membership), reaching the diverse membership e.g. people from BME communities, people with long-term profound mental health problems

In particular the strong and many requests for more influencing and lobbying stands out, this connects with NSUN's third aim of

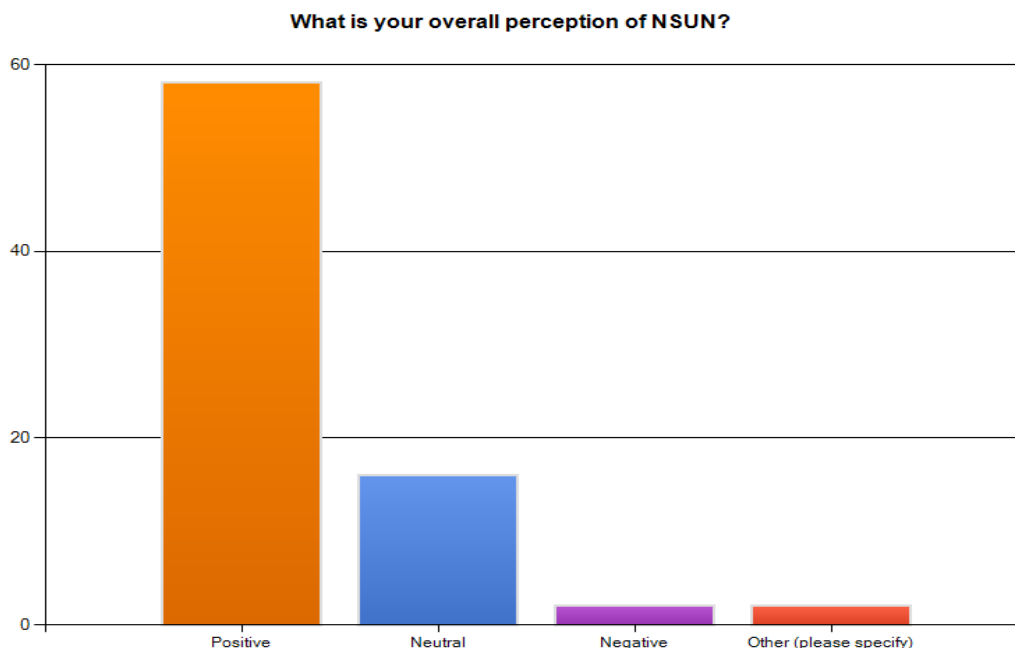
3. Broker and facilitate access to service users for purposes of influencing and informing policy-makers and planners

Survey questions

1. Are there any particular issues you face as an individual or group that you would like to share?

Many of the responses to this section speak movingly and clearly about discrimination, abuse, funding cuts (proposed or actual), closure of centres and the sense of powerlessness and not being heard by service providers or commissioners. This also therefore connects with the theme of NSUN developing its campaigning and lobbying work.

2.



3. What does NSUN actually do for you today?

Information sharing

28% of responses to this question, made very positive comments about the information they receive, ranging from the informative up to date email newsletter and bulletins, to photos, articles, educative and expertise on user issues and involvement.

There is a strong sense of connection with information sent out; its tone, quality and usefulness, and some members spoke about how it helps them to feel part of a larger group, a national link and to feel less isolated.

Some members liked the style, the up to date feel and regularity of information and felt it gives them an expertise on user issues which they can use in user groups and networks.

However, 7% feel that NSUN does nothing or very little for them or they are not sure what it does. Of these some would like a bigger membership and improved credibility.

Networking

8 % made positive comments about how NSUN helps them to network, including enabling members to make links with other groups and to know about other groups in the region

Lobbying/policy influence

"There is a real need for a national group who will empower, equip and enable users to become actively involved in service provision and development. It lets me know that I am not alone in the fight for improvements."

This quote seems to represent the views of many members. 4 members spoke at length and eloquently about this.

4. What do you want NSUN to be doing in 1- 3 years time?

Overall many members made positive comments about the next few years such as *"More of the same as it is a long journey" "grow and be recognised more widely and respected for its work"*

Lobbying/policy influence

14 % of respondents spoke loud and clear about their wish to see NSUN campaigning against cuts to come, promoting inclusion and raising the profile of mental health service users and prioritising mental health services in health spending. Influencing government and GPs given their new commissioning role are also mentioned

Partnership working

2 % requested NSUN to work with leading charities such as MIND to support service users

Working regionally

11% of respondents felt that work in regions should be continued, expanded and strengthened – even going global!

Membership

2 % of the views want NSUN to be a bit more focused on individual members and to strengthen and increase its membership

Profile

4% would like to see NSUN develop a higher profile but

"I think more of what it is doing now. It certainly seems to be 'taking off' in the right direction"

Equality & diversity

4% had views about NSUN keeping up to date with developments and sharing with e.g. Mind. 1 member felt that people with enduring mental health illness should be engaged with as they get less. 1% suggested NSUN drive the "why aren't you employing service users?" agenda. 1 & member wanted BME and LGBT issues included in the agenda

5. Is there anything NSUN needs to be doing that it is not doing currently?

Lobbying/influencing and campaigning

5 % spoke of their wish for these functions to be taken up more effectively, particularly in a time of cutbacks and uncertainty. E.g. campaigning, lobbying talking to government meeting service users and survivors in the network. There is a real concern to preserve and strengthen the independent user voice.

Equality & diversity

5 % members made comments, including “be inclusive to all groups” to “having separate groups e.g. BME, gay lesbian”

Profile

Visibility and promote more widely, advertise its existence more widely are some of the comments from 4% of respondents.

Website

There was a request to “keep the website up-to-date, up-to-date minutes and trustees details on website more responsive to enquiries”

Involvement

The question was raised of how many members are being active in NSUN in one way or another and to reflect on the reasons for this.

Local/regional work

Better connections and local events in local areas such as Kent and Sussex are requested. 1 member wrote “it seems to be London based and does not cover much of the rest of England/UK”

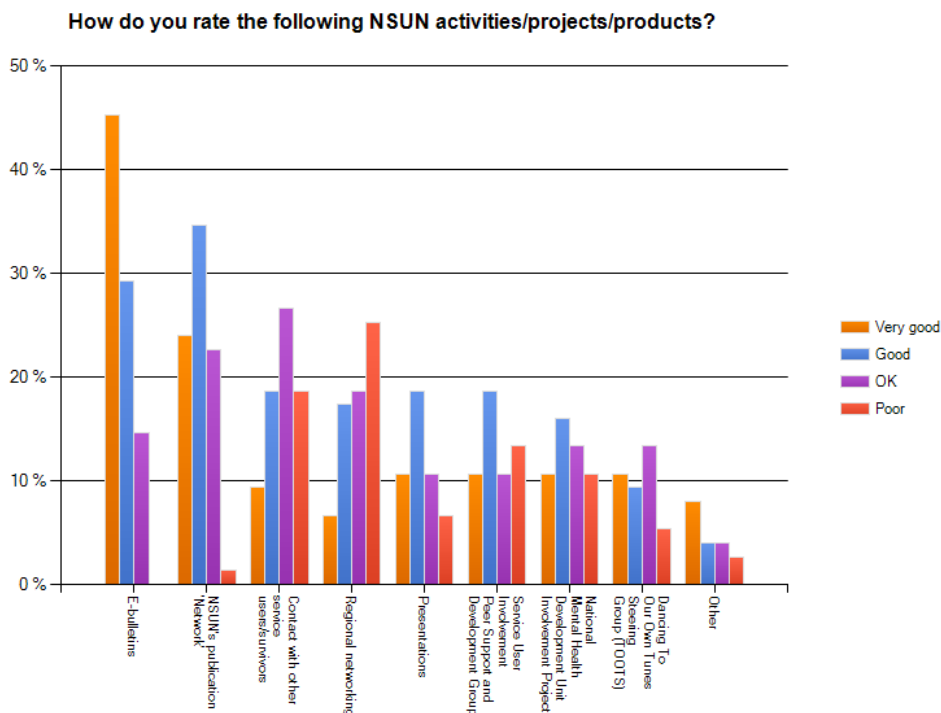
Partnership working

There were suggestions that NSUN create better partnerships with trusts, universities (to bid for research funding) and national organisations such as MIND, Rethink.

Funding

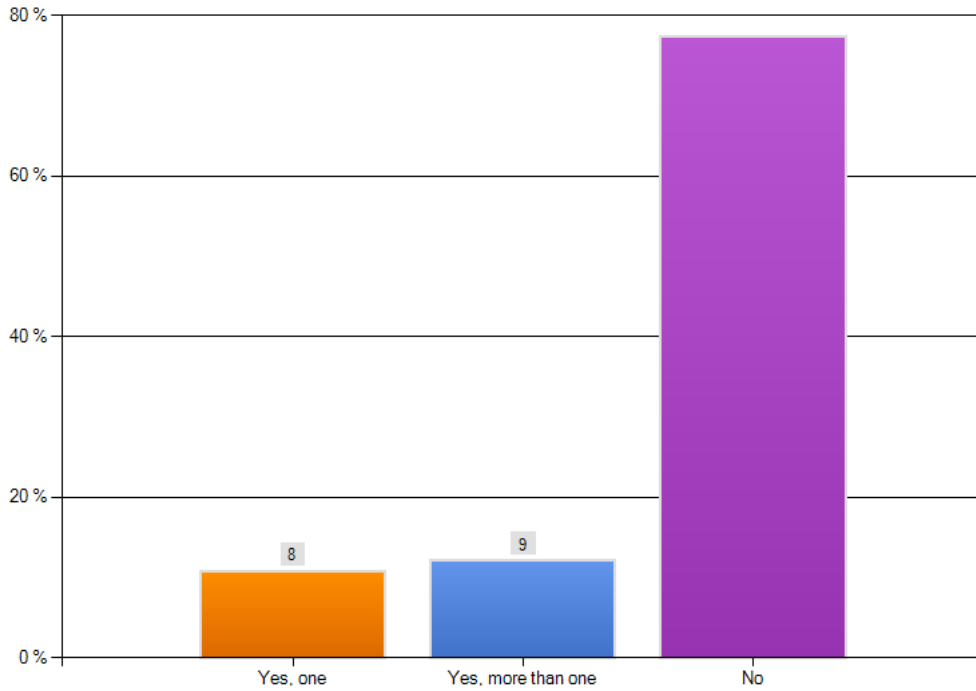
There were ideas of actively looking for support to gain further funding financial backing across the network so no groups go under in the current financial climate.

6.



7.

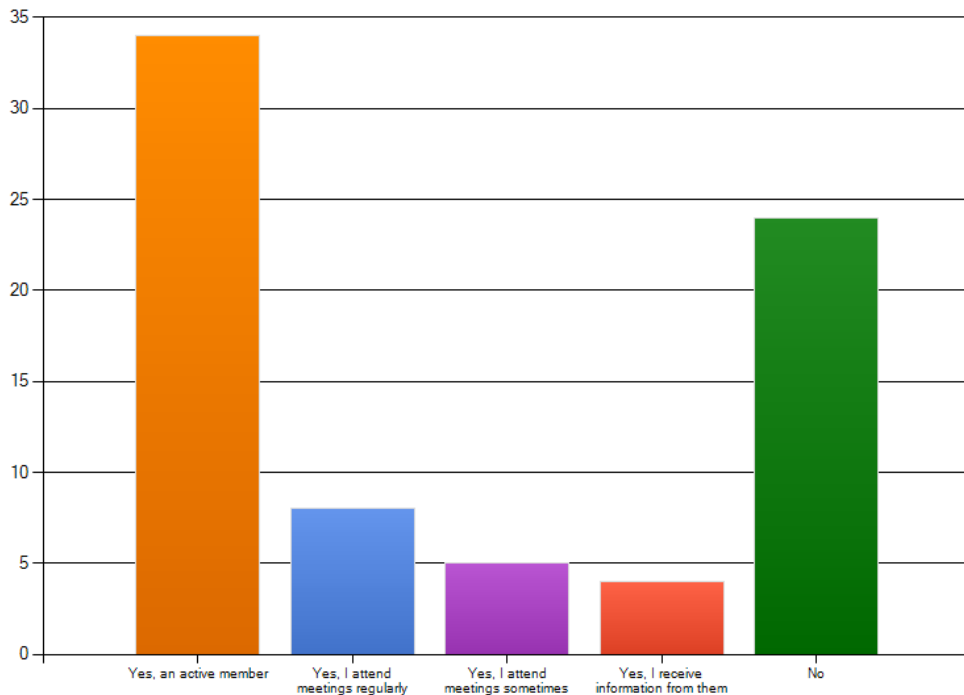
Have you ever contacted another NSUN member after hearing about them through NSUN?



Does this imply that NSUN needs to improve networking processes? E.g. To have a message board, blog or email group? Strengthen regional networking in other areas?

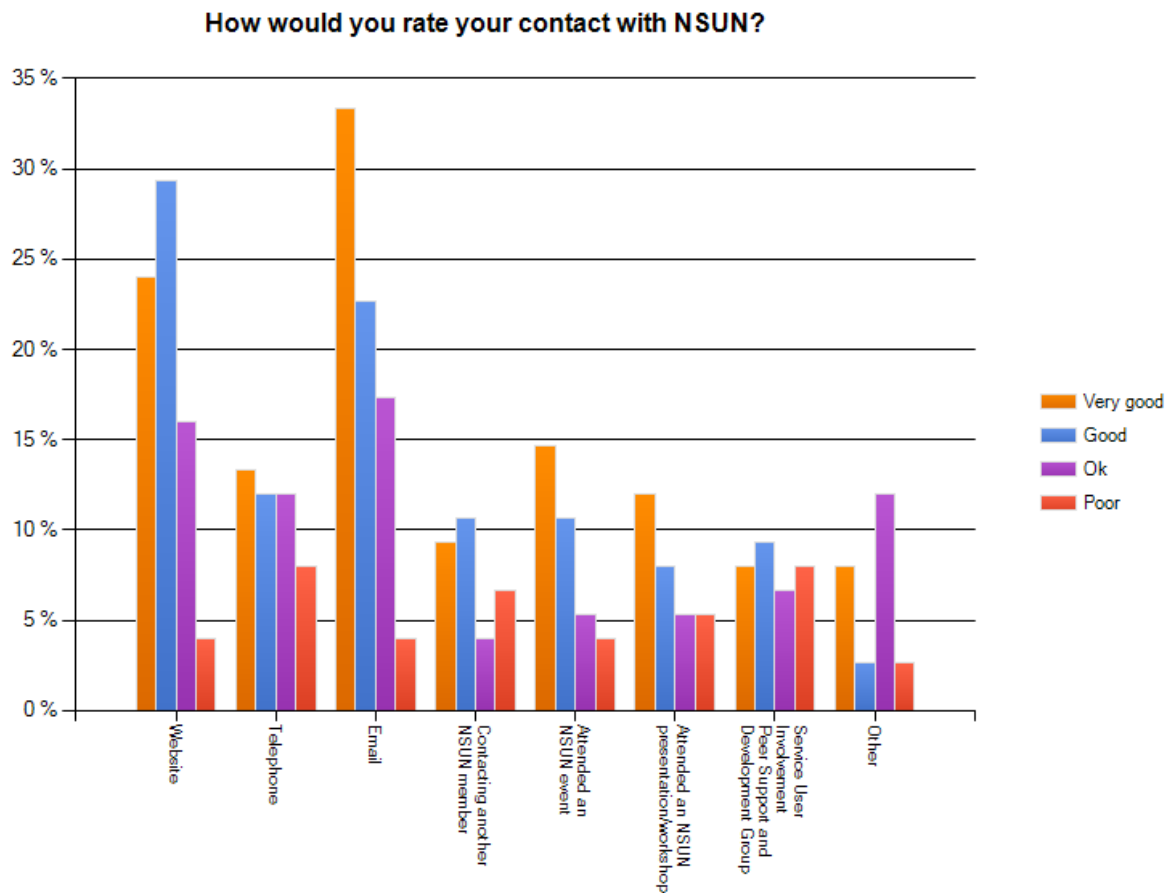
8.

Are you or your group part of another wider network?



36% of responses indicated that the majority are involved with a network, so NSUN's information may be reaching far more people than the membership implies. But it is important to consider the 25% (green) isolated members and how to reach them.

9.



10. What in your opinion would be the 'ideal' for a service user/survivor network? How will it look, what will it be doing?

There were a wide variety of visions and ideals. As with other sections, many members wanted stronger influence on policy and campaigning, and for NSUN to take up a more national role, beyond the South East, with a stronger regional and local presence. *“NSUN has got the potential to be able to link people and charities across the nation”*

Improvements in the website were suggested and some members wanted more face – to – face contact through training, meetings and conferences. Many members were keen on more information and regular updates. Other ideals were to be more involved with research, reach out and offer support to service users, be more inclusive and link to other statutory and voluntary organisations.

“It would be a comprehensive far reaching network, sharing best practice across all regions and helping local networks to build on this.”

11. What is the single most important issue for you regarding mental health? and What single thing could the present Government do to help mental health

service users and survivors?

The main issues from both of these sections were, challenging and removing, stigma and discrimination, resourcing service user/survivor led services and groups, benefits and welfare and service users/survivors having a voice at government level.

In conclusion

Monitoring and evaluation needs to show whether there is change over time from the original perceptions of NSUN. Representatives of service user groups meeting at NSUN in November 2008 described perceptions of NSUN. These points were recorded as a baseline against which to compare perceptions of NSUN at later points when carrying out evaluations.

Perceptions 2008	Progress 2010	Indicators of achievement
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Not entirely or authentically service user led & independent 2. With low awareness 3. Lack of clarity of what it does and is for 4. Not representative or effective 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Entirely & authentically service user led & independent 2. Increased awareness 3. Increased clarity of what it does and is for but conflict in expectations of what it should do 4. Not completely representative or effective 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Perception of NSUN as authentically service user led and independent 2. Awareness among groups 3. Clarity of what NSUN does and is for 4. Perception of NSUN as useful and effective

There has been considerable progress since 2008 but clearly from the survey there is still much to do to demonstrate success. NSUN continues to complete quarterly evaluations of its work and conduct an annual membership survey. This forms a basis of learning and evaluation of NSUN's effectiveness and impact. It also monitors NSUN's inputs which include:

1. The number of staff and their roles
2. A rough breakdown of staff time allocated between key areas of work e.g. development of NSUN, networking of groups and partners
3. Any volunteer time spend on the project
4. Key areas of expenditure, which are:
 - a. Website development
 - b. Updating, servicing and maintenance of the website
 - c. Newsletters, communication, publicity
 - d. Events, training, conferences

If NSUN is successful, by the end of the current funding period the situation will be:

1. An increase in the **number** of survivor/ service user groups overall and particularly of young people and in criminal justice - filling gaps and prioritising those without access to groups at the moment
2. Increased **networking**, with groups more able to learn from each other and contact other groups as needed/ wanted. In particular, closer working between BME and generic survivor/ user groups

3. Some **regional hubs or specialist** groups with the capacity to support survivor and user groups in their area (a formal regional structure nationwide is a longer term aim, beyond the current funding period).
4. **More effective** groups and local networks: both stronger/ with increased capacity and achieving their own intended outcomes, whatever those are.

The responses for this survey will be used to influence NSUN's vision and five year strategy.