



scottish social services  
**learning network**

# **Summary of Survey Responses**

**Communication & Knowledge  
Management**

**Strategy Review 2008 – 11**



## 1. Introduction

First steps in evidence gathering for the National Communications Review were agreed to be best achieved through short online surveys. These could be further developed in each region if required.

Discussions have been held on whether to have a national newsletter or not. To inform discussion on this it was agreed that a small survey to see how members felt about this should be carried out.

Some areas have already carried out surveys on their e-bulletins but it was agreed that to be able to evidence nationally the success of these e-bulletins an online national survey should be carried out with members.

Our vision, purpose and aims, drawn up in partnership between the Learning Networks, Scottish Government and SSSC, illustrate that our reach is vast and complex, again demonstrating the need for a well thought-through communication and knowledge strategy:

- ➔ **Who** do we need to communicate with?
- ➔ **How** do we communicate with them?
- ➔ **When** do we communicate with them?
- ➔ **What** do we communicate?



## Vision

Our vision is that the Network has a unique contribution to make to supporting the workforce learning and development of the Social Services Sector. The Network is funded specifically to **enable partnerships** to share knowledge and experience while being able to facilitate the development of models that demonstrate the sharing of resources across the social services sector. The Network will **act as a catalyst** for change in meeting the ongoing learning and development needs of the social services sector.

## Purpose

The Network provides an effective forum to enable workforce learning and development which is a key contributor to improving services in order to better meet the needs of services users and carers.

## Aims

The Network aims **to**:

- 1. bring together** appropriate stakeholders to agree and take forward strategic priorities and shared solutions for workforce development in the South East area;
- 2. enable** social services organisations to engage with and inform national initiatives affecting social service workforce learning and development;
- 3. act** as a key mechanism for employer engagement with the objectives for the Sector Skills Council; and
- 4. facilitate** effective communication of policy, knowledge, information and good practice.



For the national vision and outcomes to be realised it was agreed that we develop shared principles on which to build partner involvement. Policies for such things as the E-Bulletins, Equalities, Partnership etc have been jointly produced and are available at <http://www.learningnetworks.org.uk/show.php?id=219> or on request.

## 2. Surveys said...

In the summer of last year 2 surveys were sent out to members. These surveys were the beginning of our:

**Impact Evaluation** – measure impact on audiences and determine how to improve future messages/facilitation/etc.

The surveys we carried out were on:

### a. E-Bulletin

This is a publication that is designed and distributed locally. Each of the 4 Learning Networks produces one monthly. The survey was designed to have a general overview of members' opinions about this publication with a view to potentially carrying out a more detailed survey locally or modifying the publication to meet members' needs if required.

### b. National Newsletter

We currently do not have a national newsletter and through discussions across the 4 Learning Networks it was felt that there may be value in having one. To measure this need and to inform our



decision on whether or not to produce one, it was decided that we should carry out a small survey to gain members' views.

This section will take a look at responses to both surveys. It has been asked to be noted that the Learning Network - West did not have a large response rate and this was felt to be due to their members having been recently asked to complete a similar survey.

#### **a. E-Bulletin**

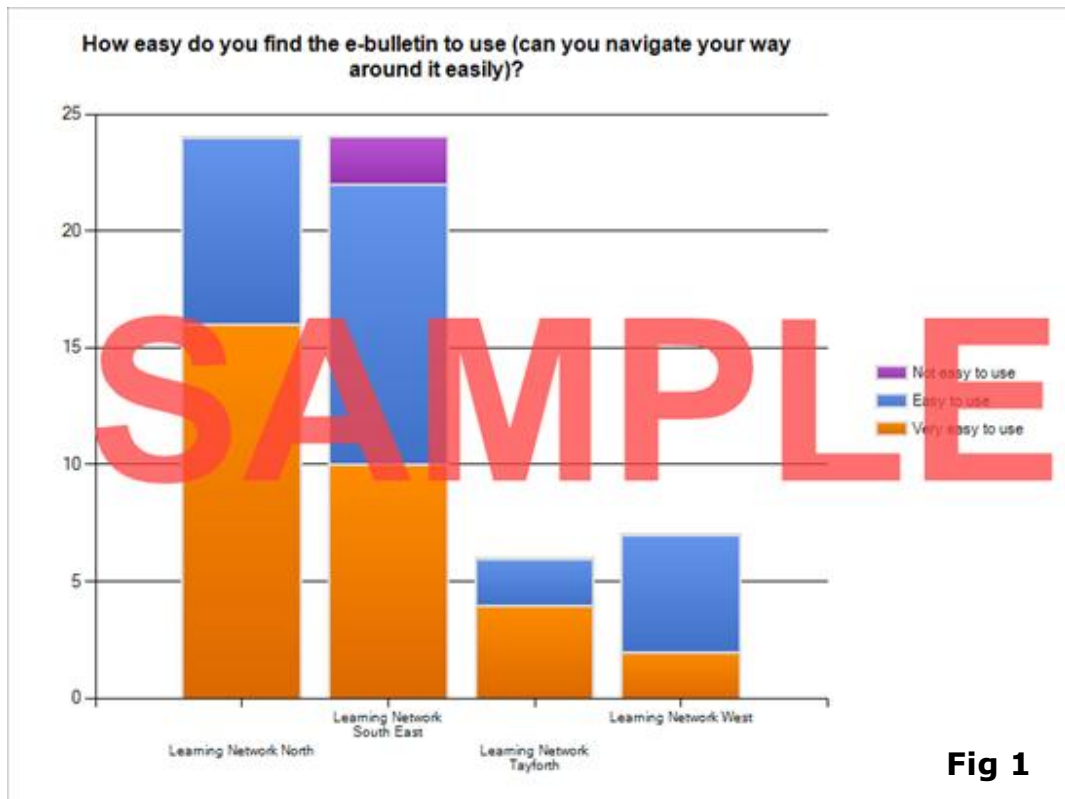
There were 51 responses to this survey. 4 of the respondents would like to sign up for all 4 with one asking about the differences between each. One respondent would like to sign up to Tayforth and one helpfully pointed out that –

*'If I want to read more about what is going on elsewhere in Scotland I have a look at their website.'*

- i. With regard to *how easy they are to use* we were given the following information:

From **Fig 1** we can see that the North and Tayforth are felt to be **very easy to use** and overall the 4 Learning Networks are **easy to use**, with the South East having 2 members saying it's **not easy to use**.

The South East already have in place a template for change and this will be implemented soon and reviewed during the year with the help of readers.



Please note that this chart is taken from the basic package and not our new professional package, hence the **SAMPLE** through the middle.

- ii. With regard to the question on 'how would you rate the layout of the e-bulletin you subscribe to' the responses were very similar to ease of use of the e-bulletin with the North having 71% saying it is **very user friendly** compared with 42 and 43% for the South East and West Learning Networks. The South East was again on its own with 1 subscriber saying it was **not user friendly**.

The South East hope their soon-to-be implemented template will



address this.

iii. The following question asked about the format subscribers would like to have their e-bulletins in and the answers are quite interesting. Attachments are the clear favourite at the moment but receiving in the body of e-mails and receiving just a link to the website are not completely ignored. Good promotion of the website will lead to an increase in the number of subscribers who want to link to the website for information. Although we have to be careful as the preference for attachments maybe more to do with access to and distribution of our information e.g. type face, lack of up-to-date technology or knowledge of use. Here are the results.

- ➔ The West had 71% for **PDF** and 29% for in the **body of the e-mail**.
- ➔ Tayforth were split evenly between **PDF, Word Doc** and in the **body of an e-mail** with just one subscriber opting for a **link to the website**.
- ➔ The North had 63% going for **PDF**, 21% for **Word Doc** and 8% for both in the **body of the e-mail** and **link to the website**.
- ➔ The South East with 35% for **PDF**, 22% for **Word Doc**, 30% for the **body of the e-mail** and 13% for **link to the website**.

iv. The question on content of the e-bulletin illustrates the differing



needs across regions but also highlights **common ground** with above **70%** of respondents finding information on **Events** the most useful.

**Training** for the North, South East and the West was considered useful by above 70%. In Tayforth 33% considered **Training** useful but 50% felt **Consultations, Publications and Tenders** were of interest.

No more than 17% of respondents in other areas thought information on **Tenders** was useful.

**Legislation** was of moderate interest to all with the lowest percentage being 33% and the highest 58%.

One comment was that the themes are *'all useful but not always included'*.

- v. The vast majority of respondents did not find the e-bulletins too long.
- vi. With regard to having shorter more concise e-bulletins, the majority said they did not want this.
- vii. The respondents who answered yes to shorter more concise e-bulletins were asked what topics they would like these to be. Only 18 people responded and their responses back the National picture for the majority of information to be on **Events** and **Training** with **Consultations** and **Legislation** being of high interest too.



- viii. Although there isn't high interest in short concise e-bulletins there was a resounding YES to this question with **80%** of respondents wanting **News Flash E-mails**.

### **b. National Newsletter**

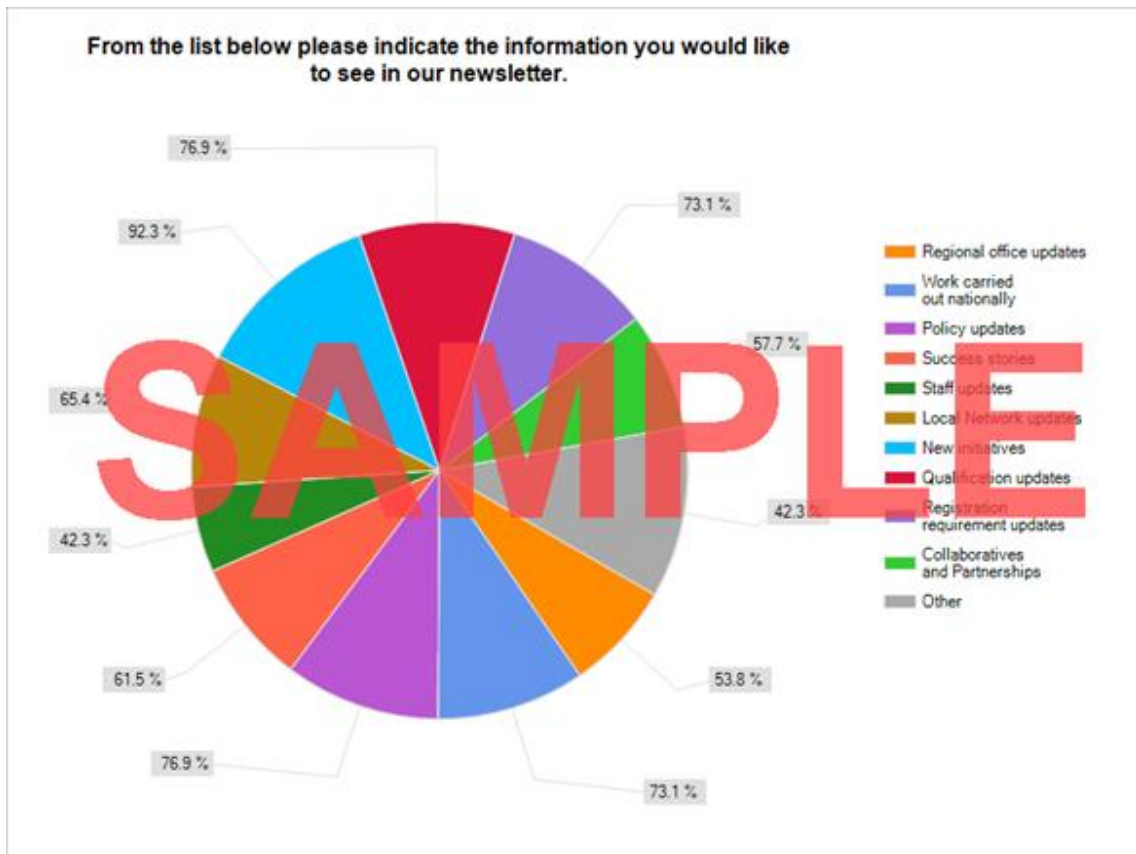
We currently do not have a national newsletter and this survey was designed to uncover whether or not a National Newsletter is what our subscribers want.

- i. We had **100%** of respondents giving us their postal and e-mail **addresses** with **100%** saying **YES** to a **National Newsletter**.
- ii. **78%** said that they would like it **quarterly** with only **4%** saying **yearly** – I would suggest that this needs to be investigated more closely as resources are limited.
- iii. We asked about the information that they would like the Newsletter to contain and responses are detailed in **Fig 2** below. At the lowest point we have **42%** for **Staff Updates** and at **92%** we have **New Initiatives**.

|   |              |
|---|--------------|
| Regional office updates                 | 53.8%        |
| <b>Work carried out nationally</b>      | <b>73.1%</b> |
| <b>Policy updates</b>                   | <b>76.9%</b> |
| Success stories                         | 61.5%        |
| <b>Staff updates</b>                    | <b>42.3%</b> |
| Local Network updates                   | 65.4%        |
| <b>New initiatives</b>                  | <b>92.3%</b> |
| <b>Qualification updates</b>            | <b>76.9%</b> |
| <b>Registration requirement updates</b> | <b>73.1%</b> |
| Collaborations and Partnerships         | 57.7%        |



**Service User and Carer involvement 73.1%**



**Fig 2**

*(Please note that this is a sample diagram to illustrate some of what Survey Monkey can offer.)*

From this we can see that the range of information our subscribers require is vast and varied. I would suggest that this is investigated further to allow scope for quarterly thematic newsletters to facilitate our subscribers' needs and safeguard our limited resources.

- iv. The last question asked what format they would require such a



newsletter in and surprisingly only **8%** requested that it be in **hardcopy**. The other **92%** wanted it either in **PDF** format via e-mail or a link to the website to enable them to download a PDF.

I would again suggest that this is investigated in more detail but would not discourage the electronic format as this helps hugely with costs and other resources.

## 2. Conclusion

Throughout the whole of the communication and knowledge management strategy we will aim to have:

- ➔ **Planning and Continuity** – the ability to change conditions, plan for continuity and self-sufficiency.

This is of vital importance if we are to promote a positive concept of communication and knowledge management with our stakeholders and members.

### a. E-Bulletin

E-bulletins are greatly appreciated by our subscribers and should be continuing, although the South East and the West may have to consider slight changes with regard to ease of use and user friendliness.



Points to be considered:

- i. The e-bulletin format needs to continue to be **PDF** or **Word Doc**, with members linking to the website to download it. This element of having a link to the website in the body of the e-mail that members click on to download the e-bulletin from the website appears not to have been well understood in this survey. This element will be reviewed in the proposed survey for early 2010, and giving members time to get used to going to the website to download the e-bulletin will hopefully benefit us with more measureable responses.
- ii. **Events, Training, Consultations** and **Legislation** have been voted the main topics of interest. I would suggest that the other areas are not ignored but reviewed again later in the year both nationally and locally.
- iii. With **80%** of respondents saying **yes** to **News Flashes** we should look at what we are doing locally, if anything, and develop a template from what's already there to be used across the 4 Learning Networks.
- iv. These surveys were carried out 8 months ago and the level of exposure to the regional areas is not clear. It is offered that the survey questions are reviewed and refined and sent out to all members again for completion in March 2010.

## **b. Newsletter**

Although some areas have in the past had Newsletters there hasn't



been a national one. From this survey we can absolutely say that our subscribers feel there is a need for one, with **100%** saying **yes** to a National Newsletter.

Points to be considered:

- i. With nearly **80%** saying they **would like** to have a **quarterly newsletter** I would suggest that we investigate further.
- ii. The range of information our subscribers require is vast and varied. I would suggest that this is investigated further to allow **scope for quarterly thematic newsletters** to facilitate our subscribers' needs and safeguard our limited resources.
- iii. I would suggest that formatting the **Newsletter** in a **print friendly PDF** is ideal, as it can easily be printed off but can also be easily hosted on the website. This is an efficient way of using resources and is in an electronic format recognised by our members. We could reduce costs further by asking people to print it themselves for anyone who can't access it online or we could print on request. This would also help to meet user needs in that we wouldn't be forcing people to read the newsletter online if they actually prefer to print and read on paper.
- iv. **The top 3 requests** for information in the newsletter are interesting and revealing. Way out in front is a) **New initiatives** followed by joint second of b) **Policy updates** and b) **Qualification updates**. The qualification updates in particular perhaps shows a gap in information provision across the sector which the Learning Networks are ideally placed to address.



Policy updates would be in line with in-house suggestions and can be pulled from things like CareKnowledge and SSKS (when this is further developed).

Then in joint third we have c) **Work carried out nationally** c) **Registration requirement updates** c) **Service User and Carer involvement**. Again these third place elements are revealing as they show a high level of desire to see how we work on a national basis but also show interest in perhaps case study examples of service user and carer involvement, as well as demonstrating that people are looking to the Learning Networks to give a steer in relation to Registration.

These surveys have shown that the work we carry out to share information with our membership is valuable and desired. The surveys have illustrated the importance of **evaluation** and the need for **planning and continuity**. We should be looking forward to what we can **improve, develop** and **sustain** with regard to **information and knowledge sharing** for the sectors we support.