You Said/We Did & We Are Doing

Your feedback to us at Suffolk User Forum
How your voice makes a difference to what we do
July 2026

Suffolk user forum

your voice for emotional and mental health
nothing about us, without us

SUF Event Feedback:
You Said/We Did & We Are Doing Report

Feedback from our events in 2023–24, 2025–26 and 2026–27

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Purpose

This report shows what we have achieved by listening to and acting on feedback across three reporting years. It brings people's views together into recurring themes, explains what we have done in response, and sets out clear next steps for further improvement. It follows our reporting model by linking **You Said**, **We Did**, and **We Are Doing** to evidence our progress.

Feedback method

The source material covers event feedback from August 2023 to June 2026. For consistency with our reporting cycle, feedback collected from April to June 2026 is labelled 2026–27. Comments were reviewed and grouped by meaning rather than counted as unique people, because the records do not consistently identify respondent numbers and one person may have made more than one comment. "We Did" statements draw on the event records and additional evidence of our current practice. They show progress and established activity but do not imply that every request has been fully resolved.

Event reach: Our event reach increased significantly, from 74 attendees in 2024–25 to 210 in 2025–26—an increase of 136 people (184%), meaning attendance was nearly three times higher. By 30 June 2026, our events had already reached 109 attendees, exceeding the whole of 2024–25 by 35 people (47%).

2026 feedback-form return: Of the 109 people who attended events by 30 June 2026, 38 completed a feedback form. This represents an overall return rate of 35%. Return rates varied between individual events, from 22.5% to 43%.

Feedback volume: The report was informed by 250 recorded comments from our feedback forms.

- 50 comments from 2023–24
- 41 comments from 2025–26
- 159 comments from 2026–27

These figures count each recorded feedback entry as one comment, including positive feedback, suggested improvements, short responses and information about how people heard about an event. They do not represent 250 individual participants, as some people answered more than one question. However, for events held in 2026 up to 30 June, we received 38 completed feedback forms from 109 attendees—an overall recorded return rate of 35%, with individual event return rates ranging from 22.5% to 43%. This provides a useful baseline, while also showing that response levels are uneven. As our event reach grows, we want to maintain or improve the overall return rate and increase participation at events where fewer people currently provide feedback.

Most frequent feedback topics

These topics appeared most often across the three years of feedback:

- **Being heard through respectful, facilitated round-table discussion** — people repeatedly valued having space to speak, listen, debate and shape proposals.
- **Accessible venues, information and participation routes** — some feedback has highlighted problems with acoustics in large, open rooms. We recognise this challenge, as affordable venues that are accessible and well located for public transport are often in older, high-ceilinged buildings. We have made improvements by changing room layouts and leaving more space between tables to reduce distraction from nearby conversations. Central locations in larger towns, such as Bury St Edmunds and Ipswich, make events easier to reach by bus or train, but parking can be more limited for people who drive. People also asked us for clear, easy-to-read information in plain English and options to provide feedback after events.
- **Learning about services and future plans** — many participants valued gaining a clearer understanding of advocacy, commissioning and proposed neighbourhood mental health centres.
- **Networking and wider involvement** — people frequently valued meeting others and asked for more people with lived experience, carers, front-line staff, commissioners and service leaders to attend.
- **Closing the feedback loop** — people valued our "We Said" reports and wanted clear "We Did" responses from commissioners, explaining how feedback had been used, what action followed and what difference their involvement made.

Executive summary

Over the three years, people consistently valued our welcoming, face-to-face events, respectful facilitation, round-table discussions, networking, and opportunities to influence services. The strongest recurring requests were for more time to talk; accessible venues, clear information and different ways to contribute; wider attendance by people with lived experience and decision-makers; and visible evidence that feedback leads to action. Feedback also highlighted the practical balance between choosing central venues with good public transport and managing parking, noise and acoustics.

Growing reach: Attendance rose from 74 people in 2024–25 to 210 in 2025–26, an increase of 136 people (184%). By 30 June 2026, 109 people had already attended our events—35 more than in the whole of 2024–25. This growth demonstrates increasing reach and interest in our events.

Feedback return: In 2026, 38 of 109 attendees completed a feedback form. This equates to an overall return rate of 35%, although the rate varied substantially between individual events, from 22.5% to 43%. This gives us an evidence-based baseline and highlights where more targeted follow-up may be needed.

The evidence shows substantial progress and strong achievement. We have expanded Stepping Forward events across Suffolk, embedded facilitated round-table discussions, coproduced focused

agendas, improved accessibility and advance information, involved influential commissioners and service leaders, and promoted events through a wide range of channels. People have directly helped shape neighbourhood mental health centres, advocacy and crisis support. By 2026, attendees repeatedly said they felt heard, understood services and plans better, made useful connections and felt more hopeful. We have also strengthened the feedback loop by opening each Stepping Forward event with an update and sharing "We Said" reports widely. Further improvements are already planned, including an accessible online post-event feedback form and continued work to widen participation.

Three-year themes: You Said, We Did, What Next

1. More time for meaningful discussion

You Said: People valued presentations but consistently asked for longer table discussions, more time for debate and networking, shorter presentations, fewer discussion points and opportunities to hear feedback from other tables. They also asked for each event to focus on one topic so it could be explored in depth.

We Did / evidence of progress: For the past two years, we have focused each event on one main topic and consistently used round-table conversations supported by our facilitators and note takers. In 2026, people described these discussions as productive, useful and respectful, and many said the format helped them feel heard. Agendas include a presentation of around 50 minutes, followed by a short comfort break and table discussions.

What Next: Continue to focus each event on one topic and limit table discussions to no more than four or five questions. Ask guest speakers to keep presentations to around 30–40 minutes where the subject allows, protecting more time for discussion. At the start of table discussions, invite participants to introduce themselves if they wish. Retain one facilitator and one note taker per table, ideally with no more than eight participants.

2. Accessible venues, timing and ways to take part

You Said: People asked for events across Suffolk, including Ipswich and Stowmarket; central locations that are easy to reach by public transport; parking information; later start times; quieter rooms with less echo; microphones and readable slides; and, where possible, short videos using British Sign Language, easy-read information and plain English. Feedback also recognised that central venues could involve practical trade-offs: older, high-ceilinged buildings may be noisier, while locations with strong bus and rail links can have more limited parking. Some autistic and neurodivergent participants said that feedback forms could be difficult to process during an event and asked for time to reflect and respond afterwards. Some emailed their feedback, while others preferred a structured online form.

We Did / evidence of progress: We have held events in Stowmarket, Kesgrave, Bury St Edmunds and Ipswich, and our Get Heart Smart Programme was delivered across all Open Space locations in Suffolk libraries, including Newmarket, Haverhill, Woodbridge, Stowmarket and Felixstowe, as well as

Ipswich and Bury St Edmunds. We select venues that are accessible, include accessible toilets and, where possible, are well located for public transport. We provide travel information, including parking and bus details, in advance. Where a suitable central venue has challenging acoustics, we manage this by spacing tables apart, limiting table size and using microphones where needed. Later events used plain-language presentations and table support, and 2026 feedback shows that many attendees valued our established in-person format. We accept feedback by email after events and have agreed to introduce an accessible online post-event feedback form with our website maintenance supplier.

What Next: Arrange the accessible online post-event feedback form with our website maintenance supplier and make it available for an agreed period after each event. Continue to accept feedback by email, telephone or in writing. Record both unique feedback respondents and total attendance for every event. Use the 2026 baseline of 38 completed forms from 109 attendees—an overall return rate of 35%, with individual event rates ranging from 22.5% to 43%—to monitor improvement. Aim to maintain an overall return rate of at least 35% and increase the return rate at lower-response events. Review progress quarterly and use targeted follow-up to hear from under-represented groups. Use a standard accessibility checklist covering public transport, parking, noise and acoustics, hearing support, microphones, seating, readable slides and accessible toilets. When choosing venues, balance accessibility and public transport links with parking availability and room acoustics and explain these practical arrangements clearly in advance. Continue to send plain-English information, invite access requirements at registration and consider later start times or hybrid participation where these would improve access.

3. Clear information and stronger promotion

You Said: People wanted clearer event descriptions, venue details on tickets, agendas and topics in advance, explanations of acronyms, more information about us, and better promotion in person and through community networks. Some said Eventbrite was difficult to navigate or that joining an unfamiliar group could feel daunting.

We Did / evidence of progress: We ensure that every Eventbrite page includes the agenda and travel information, including parking and bus routes. Event agendas are coproduced in advance with our My Voice Champions and/or Lived Experience Group, using people's guidance on topics, format and accessibility. Eventbrite is not the only booking route: people can telephone or email us, and we add their name to the attendee list. Booking enables us to manage attendance safely within venue capacity and support proportionate event-safety planning. Our events are below the current 200-person standard-tier threshold set out in the statutory guidance for the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025, commonly known as Martyn's Law. Although the substantive requirements are not yet in force, we follow the spirit of the guidance and apply proportionate health and safety arrangements. By 2026, people were hearing about events through email, newsletters, Eventbrite, Facebook, our membership, advocacy, partner organisations and voluntary-sector bulletins. Feedback also shows that participants gained knowledge of services, commissioning structures and plans.

What Next: Continue to ensure every event page includes the purpose, intended audience, agenda, venue and travel details, timings, format, accessibility information, named contact and an

explanation of how feedback will be used. Keep offering telephone and email booking for people who do not wish to use Eventbrite. Continue using plain English and ask partners and community groups to promote events directly to people who may not be on our mailing list.

4. Wider and more representative involvement

You Said: People wanted more service users and carers to attend, greater inclusion of refugees and neurodivergent people, and attendance from GPs, link workers, front-line staff, community services, commissioners and senior NHS leaders. They also asked for our My Voice Champions and Lived Experience Group members to be involved. People from both coproduction groups do already attend our events, although not every participant on the day may have been aware of this.

We Did / evidence of progress: Events in 2025 and 2026 brought people with lived experience, carers, My Voice Champions, Lived Experience Group members, our trustees, professionals and influential decision-makers into the same conversations. In 2026, feedback specifically valued senior professional attendance, cross-service networking and the ability to keep carers visible in-service planning.

What Next: Continue to identify whose voices are missing from each event and work with the partners best placed to reach them. Make the roles of our My Voice Champions, Lived Experience Group members and trustees clearer to attendees. Monitor attendance by broad stakeholder group and geography, using voluntary equality monitoring where appropriate and protecting confidentiality.

5. Direct dialogue with decision-makers and service leaders

You Said: People valued commissioners, NHS leaders, managers, clinicians and grassroots services being present to hear lived experience directly, explain current pressures and plans, and work together on change.

We Did / evidence of progress: We convened events focused on crisis services, neighbourhood mental health centres and the all-age advocacy service, with senior and influential professionals present. Participants reported being able to discuss proposals, understand future commissioning and contribute ideas before services were finalised.

What Next: Continue to involve high-profile and influential commissioners and leaders so that people can share their views directly. Create space for people, commissioners and service leaders to talk together about shaping and improving services, while also understanding the pressure points experienced by professionals and their teams.

6. Closing the feedback loop and showing impact

You Said: People wanted to know how feedback was passed through the system, how it would be used and implemented, what decisions had been made, and what difference previous involvement had achieved. A commissioner suggested beginning each Stepping Forward event with an update from the previous event.

We Did / evidence of progress: All our Stepping Forward events now begin with an update on the previous event. We close the feedback loop by sharing “We Said” reports with commissioners and

attendees, and more widely through our website, membership communications and social media. We seek commitments from commissioners to return with the "We Did" response, enabling people to understand how their feedback was considered, what action was taken and what difference their involvement made.

What Next: Keep this successful approach embedded by starting every Stepping Forward event with an update, sharing "We Said" reports widely and continuing to seek clear "We Did" responses from commissioners. This will help people see how their contribution informed decisions, led to action and made a difference.

7. Future topics and practical support

You Said: Suggested themes for future events included carers and family support; transitions from children's to adult services; social prescribing; crisis support strategies; open dialogue; trauma; autism and neurodivergence; severe mental illness, including bipolar disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder and personality disorder; reforms to the Mental Health Act; community safe spaces; self-help; lifestyle; and social connection.

We Did / evidence of progress: In 2026, we delivered focused events on advocacy, crisis-care alternatives and proposed neighbourhood mental health centres. Feedback shows that these events increased knowledge, strengthened connections and gave some participants greater hope. We are considering further events for 2027 on topics identified as important by our members and people with lived experience.

What Next: Develop and publish a rolling programme shaped by people with lived experience and our members. Continue to share "We Said" reports and recommendations directly with commissioners where system change is needed. Design events so that, alongside influencing services, people can gain useful information, make connections and find routes to support.

Participant voices: impact across the three events

The following participant quotations illustrate the impact of our events; the value of coproduction and the improvements people want to see. Some quotations have been lightly edited for spelling, grammar or readability without changing their meaning.

Being heard and involved

- "It's very tough talking about your lived experience, but I was able to."
- "I did feel listened to; those on my table were respectful and allowed me time to speak, free of being challenged or interrupted."
- "It is nice to be able to have a say or input in future care."
- "The opportunity to openly share views about what works well and what improvements are needed."

Impact and hope

- "Reignited passion."

- "Feel more positive about the way forward. The mental health and community hub is going to be great if managed well."
- "It's nice to know I'm not the only person who feels like they've been pulled from pillar to post."

Coproduction and learning

- "Learning about the proposed plans and being part of shaping them."
- "Meeting others working in advocacy, being able to share views honestly and openly, and having confidence they will be listened to and considered in future planning."
- "Having the space to think and talk through how these could be shaped and being able to ensure carers are on the radar."
- "Being face to face and meeting new people—listening to what matters."

Key challenge and improvement

- "It would be great to hear how our feedback is going to be used and implemented."
- "Different ways to contribute after the event would also be good, as I may think of things later."
- "Can you explore the possibilities for people with lived experience to present something at our Stepping Forward events."

Our prioritised action plan

Priority and action	**Action owners** / partners	**Review point**	Evidence of success
1. **Improve accessible event planning.** Use a checklist covering accessibility, public transport, parking, room acoustics, hearing support, seating, readable information and access requirements.	CEO and Communications Lead.	Before every event; review after each event	Checklist completed; access information sent in advance; fewer recurring access concerns in evaluations.
2. **Protect discussion time.** Ask guest speakers to keep presentations to around 30–40 minutes where the subject allows. Retain facilitated tables with one of our facilitators and a note taker.	CEO and Communications Lead; Guest speakers.	At every event; review after each event	At least half of the participatory session is discussion; attendees report enough time and fair opportunity to speak.
3. **Offer different feedback routes.** Arrange an accessible online post-event feedback form with our website maintenance supplier, while continuing to accept email, telephone and written	CEO and Communications Lead; SUF website maintenance supplier.	Arrange during 2026–27; review after the first three events	An accessible online form is available after events for an agreed period; alternative feedback routes remain available; attendance and unique feedback respondents are

contributions alongside in-person discussion.		using the form	recorded; the 2026 baseline of 38 forms from 109 attendees is used for comparison; the overall return rate is maintained at 35% or above; and lower-response events show improvement from the current 22.5%–43% range.
4. **Strengthen communication and promotion. Use a plain-English event information pack, continue to offer email and telephone booking through us, and promote events through partner networks and in-person outreach.**	CEO and Communications Lead; partner organisations.	Use for every event; review quarterly	All essential details are included; attendees know what to expect; referral routes are recorded.
5. **Broaden participation.** Identify missing communities and stakeholders for each event and use targeted outreach.	CEO and Communications Lead; community partners; My Voice Champions and Lived Experience Group members.	Plan for every event; review quarterly	Attendance is broader by geography and stakeholder group; lived experience and carers remain central.
6. **Publish a member-led topic programme.** Gather and rank suggested themes, then publish the next programme.	CEO and Communications Lead.	Publish during 2026–27; review twice yearly	Programme reflects member priorities and shows where each topic will be addressed or escalated.

Current status at a glance

- ✓ **Achieved and embedded:** We continue to deliver recurring Stepping Forward events in several Suffolk locations, each focused on one main topic with a coproduced agenda. Accessible venues and toilets, advance travel and event information, telephone and email booking alternatives, facilitated round-table discussions and multiple promotion routes are established practice. We balance public transport access, parking and room acoustics when selecting venues, and take practical steps to manage noise where needed. Commissioners, service leaders, My Voice Champions and Lived Experience Group representatives take part, every

Stepping Forward event begins with an update, and we share "We Said" reports with attendees, commissioners, members and the wider public.

- ✓ **Building on success:** Our event reach increased from 74 attendees in 2024–25 to 210 in 2025–26, with 109 people already reached by 30 June 2026. In 2026, 38 attendees completed a feedback form, giving an overall return rate of 35%; individual event rates ranged from 22.5% to 43%. We will continue widening attendance, increasing the involvement of front-line professionals, protecting discussion time and encouraging shorter presentations. An accessible online post-event feedback form has been agreed and will add another flexible way for people to contribute. We will maintain an overall return rate of at least 35% and focus follow-up on events with lower response rates, while improving the number and representativeness of responses.
- **Ongoing priorities:** secure timely "We Did" responses from commissioners; show clearly what changed because people contributed; monitor accessibility and communication improvements; maintain different ways to give feedback; and publish a rolling programme shaped by people with lived experience and our members.

Closing reflection

This three-year review demonstrates that we have delivered clear achievements against our own strategy, guided by what people have told us they want from us. We have listened carefully, acted consistently and strengthened the way people with lived experience influence mental health services. People have told us they want to be welcomed, heard and treated as equal partners, with accessible ways to take part and clear evidence that their involvement makes a difference. In response, we have expanded Stepping Forward events across Suffolk, coproduced focused agendas, improved accessibility and event information, protected facilitated discussion, brought people into direct dialogue with influential commissioners and leaders, and made the feedback loop increasingly visible.

These achievements show that our strategic commitment to lived experience, coproduction, inclusion and influence is being put into practice. We have built a strong and trusted model that responds directly to what people have asked of us and is already making a positive difference. Our next stage is to build confidently on this progress by introducing the agreed online feedback form as an option, widening participation further, protecting time for meaningful discussion and securing clear "We Did" responses from commissioners. Although 250 comments are not 250 unique participants, the 2026 data provide a clearer baseline: 38 completed forms from 109 attendees, giving an overall return rate of 35%, with individual event rates ranging from 22.5% to 43%. We will maintain an overall return rate of at least 35%, improve response levels at lower-return events and actively seek a broader range of voices. Recording actions, owners, timescales and outcomes will provide even stronger evidence that we are delivering our strategy in the way people want from us, and that their voices influence decisions, improve services and create lasting change.

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