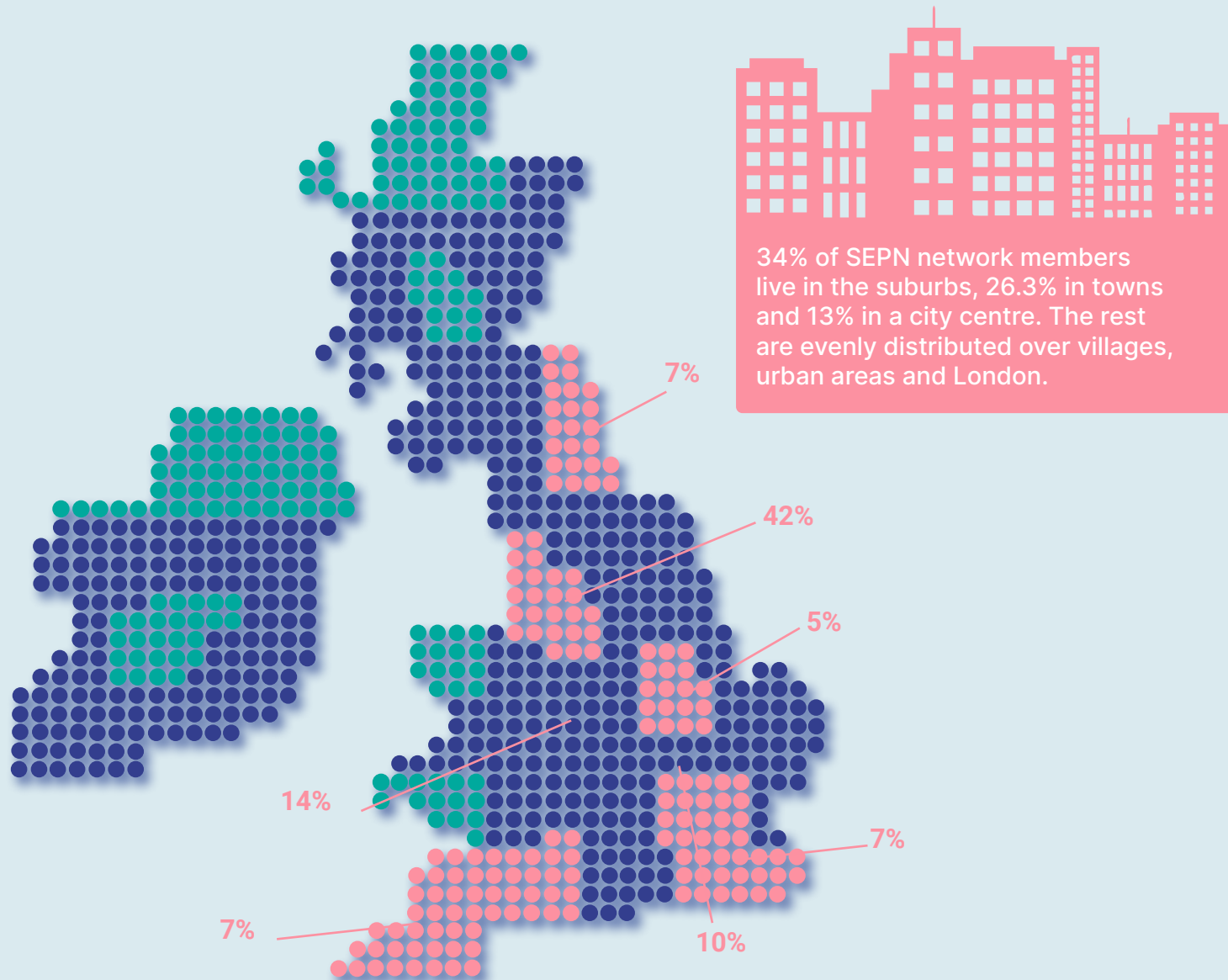


# Socially Engaged Photography Network 2025 Survey

Working with organisations, photographers, community groups, academics and curators from across the country, we have been building a network to discuss and accelerate the practice of socially engaged photography.

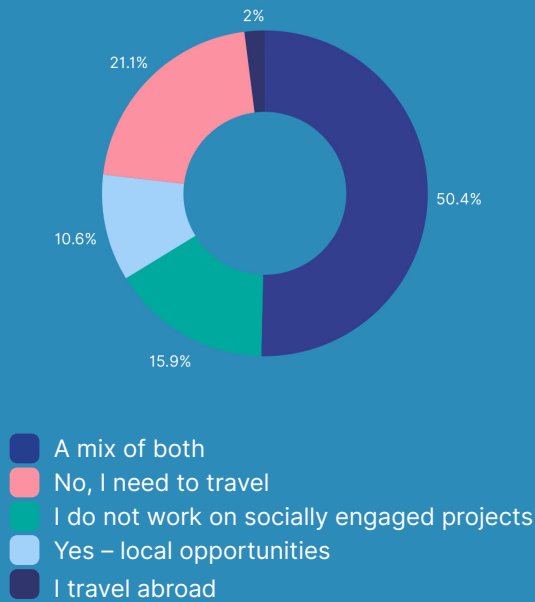
In the spirit of social practice, the network is shaped collaboratively by its users and has been running as a distributed network since October 2019. We now have over 500 members and 25 organisational partners supporting its development and delivery.

2025 marks the 5 year anniversary of SEPN. To mark this milestone we sent out a survey to our members and to the wider cultural sector to find out how the network can support your practice further. Here are the findings - thank you for helping up shape our future.

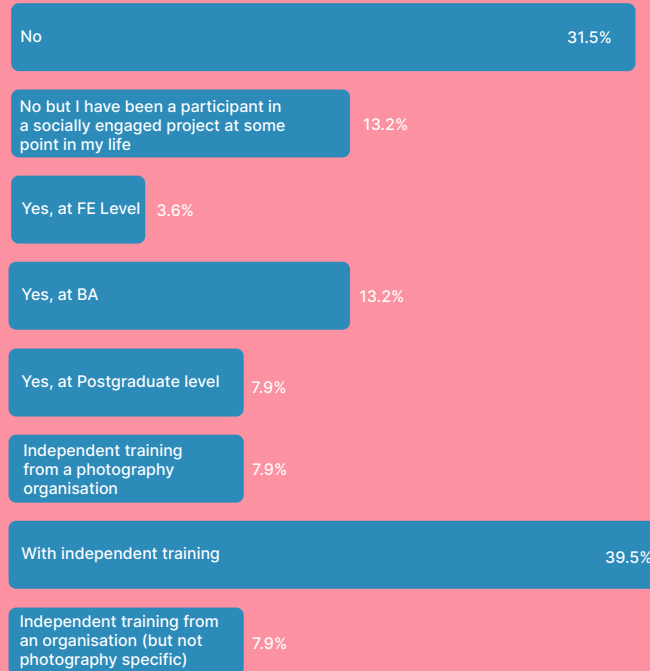


Our members are located all over the UK!

### Are there work opportunities for you to deliver socially engaged photographic projects in your area or do you need to travel?



### Have you had any training in socially engaged photographic practice?



### What is your definition of socially engaged photographic practice?

It was clear from the survey that socially engaged practice does and should always mean slightly different things to different people. It is a practice, after all, that adapts to the context of the people and places it is engaging with. Some key phrases which tied the practice together, however were **“collaboration, empathy, trust building, participatory photography, visual literacy, community led, ethical and complex.”**

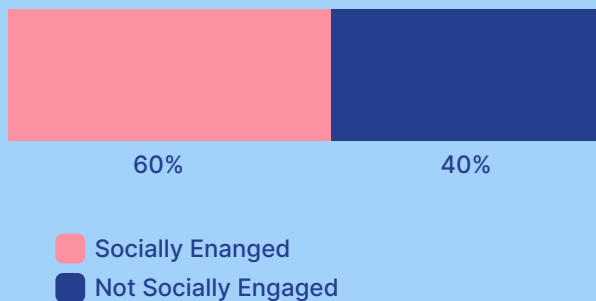


“Working in a manner which engages with people in an equitable way. It focuses less on the output, and more on the experience, and through this allows people to be not just subjects, but tell their own story.”

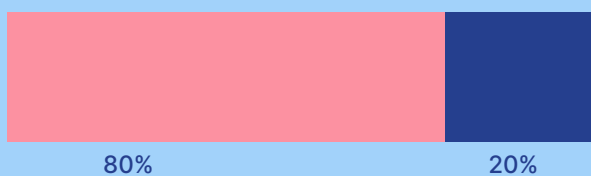


“A more ethically considered photography practice that focuses on building and establishing relationships with communities. The practice has a focus on spotlighting issues that are faced within these communities and finding ways to platform these in a collaborative way.”

### How much of your photography practice is socially engaged?



### How much of your photography practice would you like to be socially engaged?



## What are the motivations of working in this way?

Similarly, individuals who completed the survey offered a range of motivations for wanting to work in this way. This ranged from gaining a deeper understanding of the people you want to work with, and a preference to work collaboratively, to working with others who also share their own lived experiences and to affect social positive change.



“I want my photography to help raise social and environmental issues in a visual way and to connect with a wide range of people. I enjoy encouraging other people in their creativity. I believe in the importance of giving support and spaces for voices that are often unheard.”

“To effect positive social change through creative processes and increase access to and representation in the cultural sector.”

If you are interested in joining the SEPN then sign up here:

[openeye.org.uk/engagement-get-involved/sepn/](http://openeye.org.uk/engagement-get-involved/sepn/)



## What are the barriers or reasons that would stop you from working more in this way currently?



Funding which properly supports the longer time spans needed for socially engaged work to be planned, delivered and evaluated. It feels like everything is too short, too rushed and not given the thinking and reflection time it really needs - this leads to burn out for practitioners and underwhelming outputs for everyone involved if we aren't careful.

## How do you engage with SEPN?

