

NATIONAL PARTICIPATION FORUM EVALUATION REPORT

2022-2024

A photograph of two women standing on a balcony with a black metal railing. The woman in the foreground is wearing a light blue corduroy jacket and glasses, smiling broadly. The woman behind her is wearing a green jacket and glasses, also smiling. The background shows a stone building under a clear blue sky.

 brook

INTRODUCTION

During the two-year term for each national Participation Forums (16-19, 20-24 and 25+), the participation team provided two structured evaluation opportunities to monitor individual experiences of each Forum Member.

The first evaluation was a mid-point evaluation which was completed after the first year of the Forum Members involvement, and the second, more detailed, evaluation was completed at the end of their two-year involvement.

Forum Members participation in these evaluations was voluntary and anonymous, and at the end of the report there is an overview of what actions the participation team have taken to address the feedback.

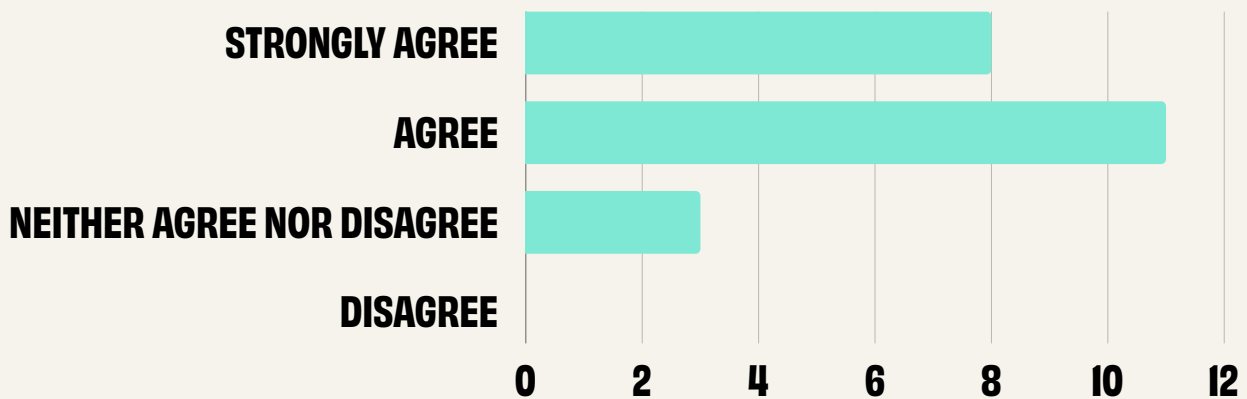


MID-POINT PARTICIPATION FORUM MEMBERS' SURVEY

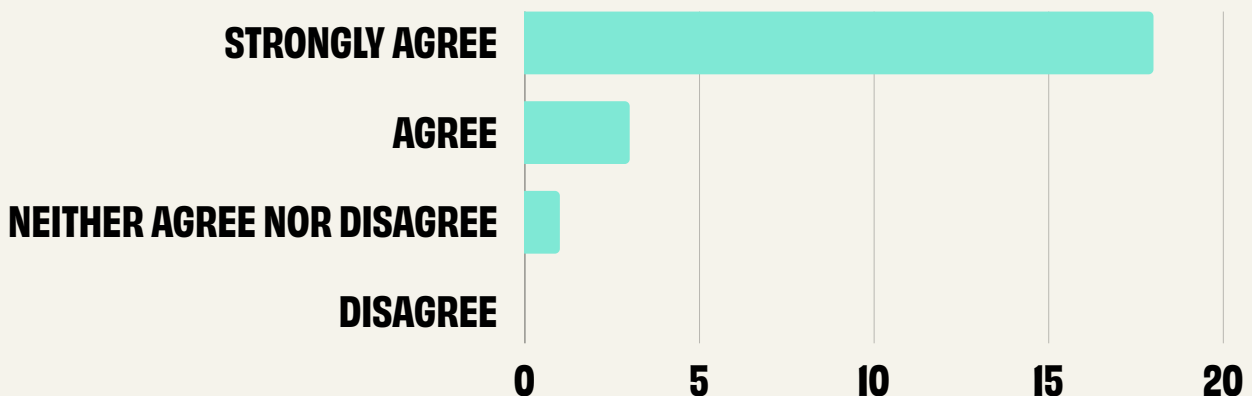
JANUARY 2023

- Number of Active Forum Members: 46
- Number of Members Completed Form: 22
- Response rate 48%

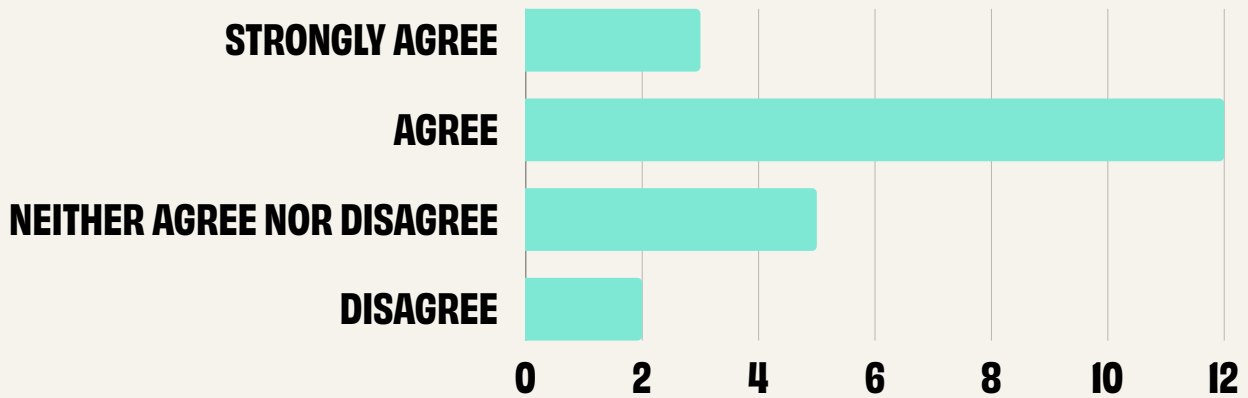
The participation forum met my expectations



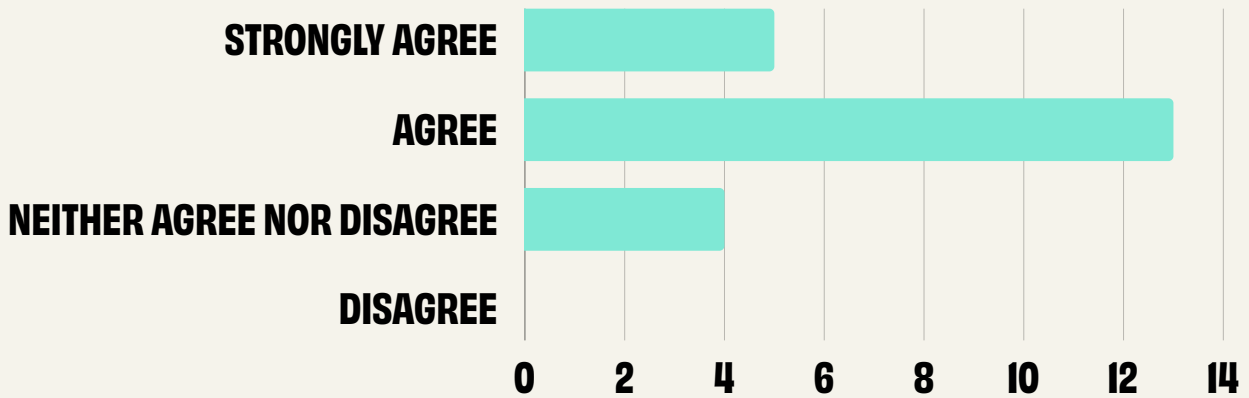
I feel supported by the Participation team



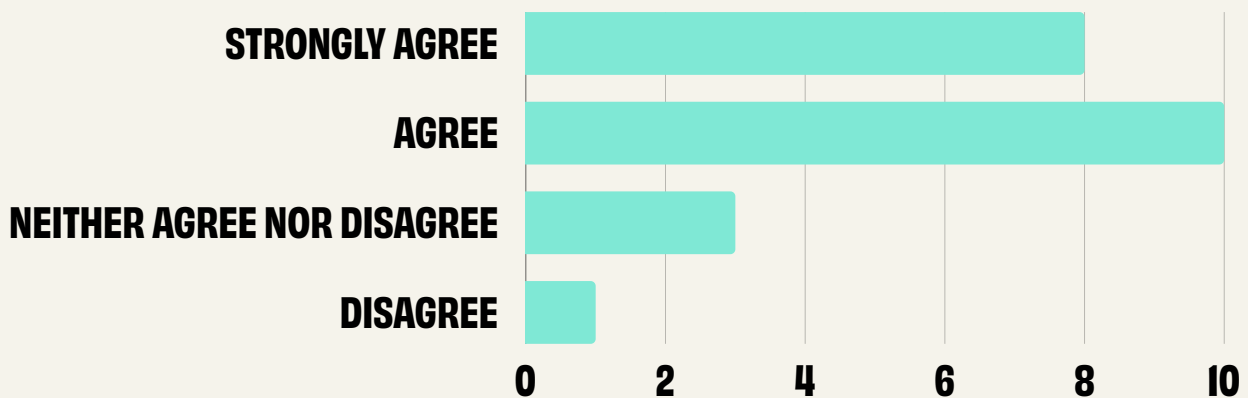
The frequency of the forum meetings is right



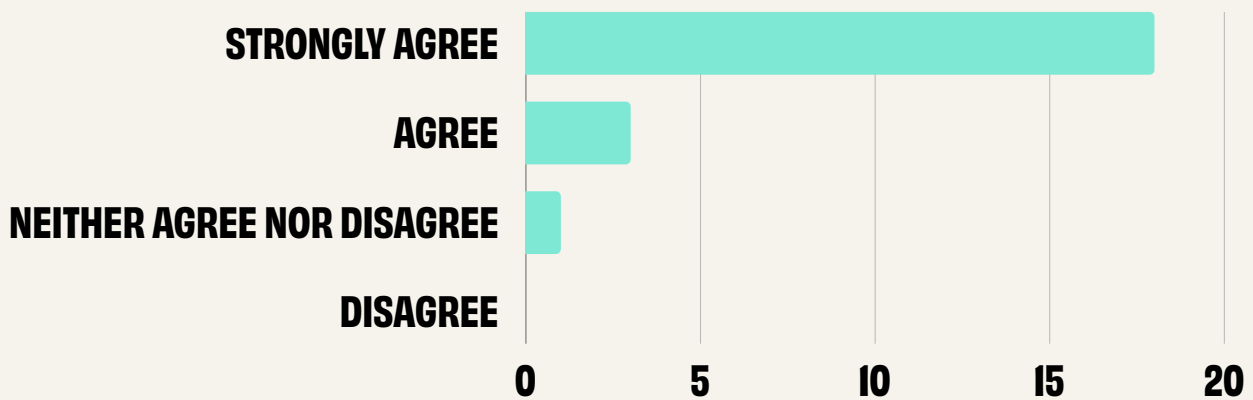
The length of each forum meeting is right



The amount of participation opportunities available to me is adequate



I feel supported by the Participation team



Describe your time on the Forum in one word



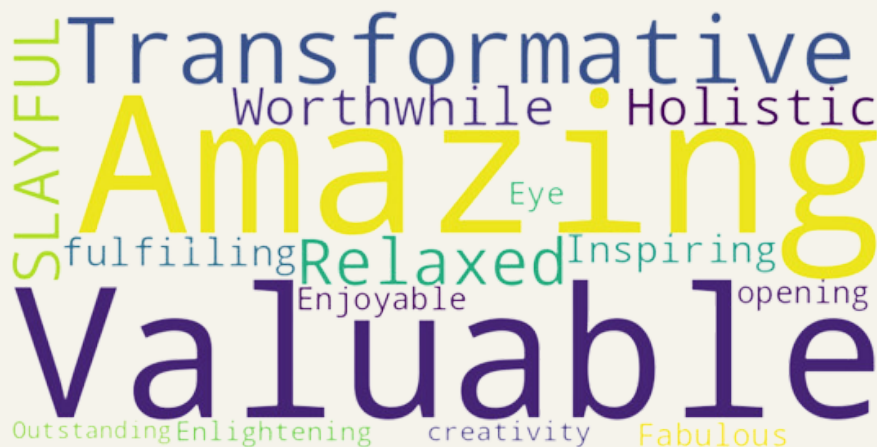
The feedback was taken into consideration at the time the survey was completed and revisited during the recruitment process of the new participation groups.

END OF TERM PARTICIPATION FORUM MEMBERS' SURVEY MARCH 2024

- Total number of active forum members invited to take part in the end of forum survey March 2024: 35
- Total number completed the survey: 17
- Response rate: 49%

I. DESCRIBING THEIR TIME AT BROOK

We asked the members if they could provide us with 1 word to describe their time on the Brook Participation Forum. The larger and more prominent words indicate the frequency in which they were used to answer this question.



2. OPPORTUNITIES & EXPECTATIONS

Forum members were asked whether they liked the volume of participation opportunities available to them and 100% agreed.

‘There was a really nice variety of opportunities, from broad projects to little tasks to help out. This really helped me because I was able to contribute even though I didn’t have much time.’

(16-19 Forum Member).

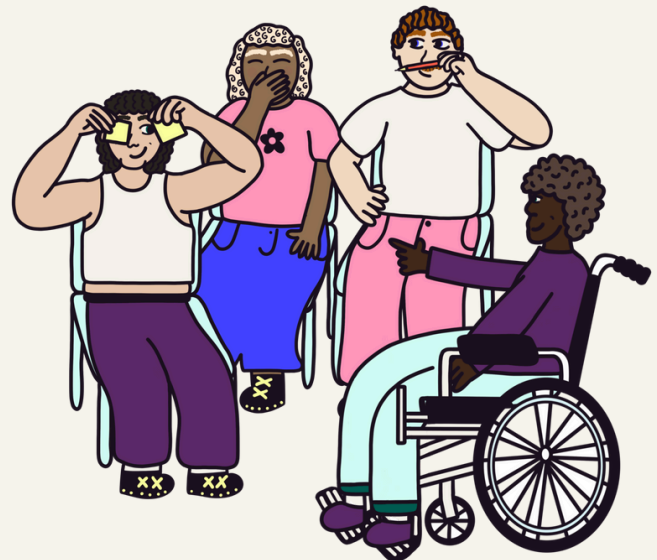
‘It really diversified the experience to get to be involved with tasks I wouldn’t usually get to do e.g. focus groups and reading grant applications’.

(20-24 Forum Member)

Forum members were asked whether the reality of being a forum member lived up to their expectations and 89% agreed.

‘The forum wasn’t what I expected, but in a good way! It was much more relaxed than I was expecting. When I got my first job and was still in college, I became really busy and wasn’t able to contribute as much; but the leaders of the team were so understanding and supportive. I was really surprised at how ‘optional’ everything is, and how we’re encouraged to only participate in what we are able to and want to.’

(16-19 Forum Member)



3. FEELING VALUED & FEELING SUPPORTED

100% of our forum members surveyed felt that their contributions to Brook are valued by the organisation.

‘Everything we took part in, we were listened to and saw the impact that we had’.
(16-19 Forum Member)



‘It was great being part of such a diverse forum and even though my background is something completely different I felt my contributions were always heard and my ideas treated with as much respect as someone who worked within the specific sector’.
(25+ Forum Member)

100% of the forum members surveyed felt supported by the participation team during their time on the forum

‘Staff members very helpful about reminders, and being on the ball for all our activities. Very good with access needs, and trans inclusivity too’.
(20-24 Forum Member)

‘The lack of judgment and the effort that was actively being put in to listen to our feedback was amazing. I’ve received nothing but respect and care on the forum’.
(16-19 Forum Member)



4. INDIVIDUAL LEARNING & ACHIEVEMENTS

When asked about what they had learnt as part of their forum experience, key ideas included:

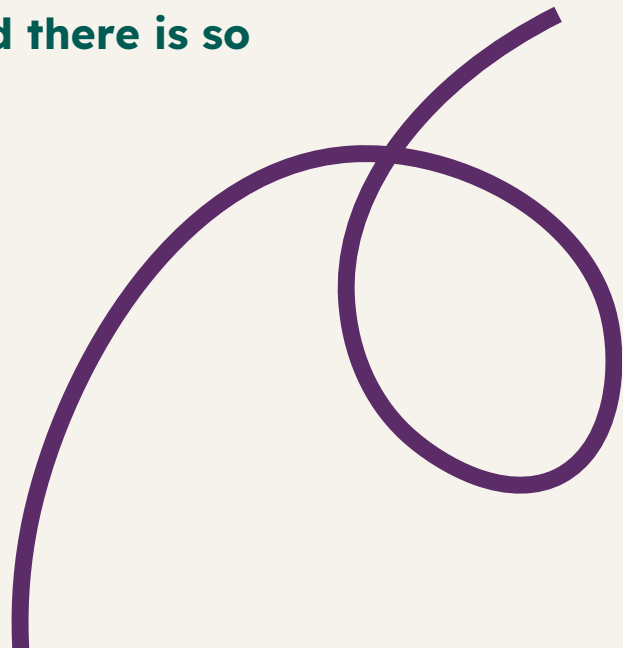
- Developing in new ways
- The broad scope of Brook's work
- The real importance of RSE
- Teamwork
- Feeling their ideas are valid and heard
- Accessibility, diversity and inclusion
- Deserving of respect in the workplace
- How to run a campaign

'I learnt so much! About how to deliver an excellent participation/volunteer experience, as Brook has done. I learnt more about accessibility, diversity and inclusion. I learned more about Brook's work. I developed my skills in team-working and creative development of projects'.

(20-24 Forum Member)

'I learnt that when you draw people from all different walks of life who all have a similar goal and put them in a group where everyone feels comfortable, confident and respected there is so much you can achieve!'

(25+ Forum Member)



When asked about what their proudest achievement was, key themes included:

- Making a real difference
- Trying new things
- Making services Neurodivergent friendly
- Writing impactful blog posts
- Creating campaigns together
- Being a committee member
- Seeing people outside of Brook react to their work
- Festivals and outreach
- Creating videos for Brook's big RSE lessons
- Supporting Brook's new participatory research framework

**'All of it! I'm proud of everything I personally contributed, and what we created together. I suppose I'm particularly proud of our group campaign, since that was the most long-term 'biggest' piece of work we did together. It was great to see that develop from early ideas through to content creation and impact'.
(20-24 Forum Member)**

5. IN-PERSON OPPORTUNITIES

82% of forum members surveyed felt that the opportunity to have in-person events was important. Reasons provided included connectivity with other members and Brook staff, productivity of show casing their work and ideas, and feeling valued.



‘Ideally, I think it’s great to have some opportunities for in person work, for those who can make it. It really helps to enable our best ideas and work to be produced, being able to work together in person in a less clunky fashion compared to online. It helps to forge good relationships across the forum, and with Brook staff’.

(20-24 Forum Member)

‘I think the often vulnerable nature of Brook’s work with young people means that in-person collaboration is really important’.

(16-19 Forum Member)

6. LOGISTICS & IDEAS TO IMPROVE

76% of forum members surveyed like the frequency of forum meetings

‘Though it would have been lovely to meet everyone more frequently and see their lovely faces, I think quarterly works best as there is enough breathing space for things to happen (events/social media/webinars/meetings). When the meetings roll around we have enough to talk about and it makes the forum feel like its activities as a whole have momentum - which is rewarding’.

(20-24 Forum Member)



‘I have a very busy schedule, so the meetings were the right spacing for me’.

(25+ Forum Member)

59% of forum members like the current duration of meetings being 90 minutes. Some forum members felt that 2 hours would be better, whereas others felt the time of the meetings fitted in well with their lives, for most members surveyed any longer would be difficult for concentration online.

‘To be able to get through everything and be able to properly brainstorm ideas, 90mins was perfect to do this in’.

(25+ Forum Member)

Other ideas to include the forum meeting experience include sending slides/agenda ahead of the meetings. As well as screen breaks and reassurance that members can have their dinner/turn cameras on and off during the meeting.

‘Sending an agenda ahead of time’.

(16-19 Forum Member)

‘The break in-between helps. I think a little more reassurance about being able to have dinner / turn off cameras would be useful’.

(20-24 Forum Member)



‘Excellent framework for participation, including lovely regular email check-ins, signposting offered, group ‘agreement’ covered in each session etc’.

(20-24 Forum Member)



‘It’d be good if you could plan some [opportunities] ahead of time’.

(20-24 Forum Member)

‘I’d like to team to know that it was such a great experience, and I hope the new groups find it as fulfilling as I did’.

(25+ Forum Member)

‘Keep doing the creative icebreakers they’re really good’.

(20-24 Forum Member)



YOU SAID, WE DID

As a result of the mid-way and end of forum survey, and other touch points with members during their time on the forum, the participation team committed to completed/exploring the following:

- Hosted an end of forum celebration event in-person that took place in March 2024.
- Ensuring that the number of participation meetings, the times of the meetings, and length of meetings was adequate for the majority of the members.
- Ensuring that we would build in screen breaks during meetings.
- Ensuring that agendas, and where possible, slides would be sent in advance of participation meetings.
- Continuing to explore more accessible ways to communicate about participation opportunities such as digital notice-boards.
- Working with wider Brook teams to understand what participation opportunities might be coming up so we can provide the participation group members with more advance notice.
- Ensure that we will be clearer about what to expect from being in a Brook participation group when we advertised the new groups in 2024.



- The name of the groups would be changed from ‘Forum’ to ‘Participation Advisory Groups’, as the word ‘forum’ was difficult for many members to relate to and ‘advisory member’ felt more transferable as a quality on CVs.
- An optional evaluation form would be built into all participation meetings and workshops as an opportunity to provide feedback from members in a timely manner for the participation team to make any adjustments to improve sessions.

Thank you to all of the forum members who took part in offering the participation team their feedback. For more information about the participation work at Brook past and present visit the participation section of the Brook website:

brook.org.uk/get-involved/participation