

ERASMUS PLUS: ARE YOU READY?

Survey Report

May 2026

“The chaotic times we live in make it essential that European countries pull together. And what better way is there of promoting mutual understanding than through open-minded young people?”

Comment from the survey

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Executive summary

InterCom conducted this survey between mid-March and late April 2026 with the aim of finding out how well prepared organisations are, in general, to apply for Erasmus Plus funding when the UK returns to the programme in 2027. The results of the survey are being shared with government departments and the new UK National Agency (the British Council).

Erasmus Plus must be – and be seen to be – a success in its first year, not only because this will motivate more institutions and organisations to participate in future, thereby benefiting more and more young people; but also for shorter-term political reasons both nationally and internationally. However, the Government, working through the National Agency, faces a significant challenge in ensuring uptake of the available funding. In the five years or so since our country left the programme, organisations have closed down or changed priorities, staff have moved on and expertise in European projects has been lost.

The survey results support this view. Respondents from all kinds of organisations took part, across all four nations. Almost 50% said they knew only a little, or nothing, about Erasmus Plus. Only just over 50% said their organisations had been involved in past Erasmus Plus projects, with a further 15 % unsure. Knowledge and experience appears weakest in England and in the schools and youth sectors. Unsurprisingly, Higher Education institutions seem to be better prepared and capable than others, but even in that sector there is a need for more information and support. Overall, fewer than 10% of respondents said they would need no help in applying, while over 90% would definitely or probably like to attend information and training events in their local areas.

Answers to most questions showed relatively minor differences between the UK nations. However, organisations in Wales gave dramatically more positive responses to questions about recent international experience and current partnerships. This is clear testament to the success of the Taith programme.

We asked what obstacles organisations would face in participating in Erasmus Plus. The main concerns were: bureaucracy / complexity; capacity (especially for small organisations); financial issues; and various internal or practical issues.

Respondents offered a long list of suggestions as to how Erasmus Plus can reach young people with fewer opportunities, covering policy, administrative and financial issues as well as how to engage and motivate young people directly. Some comments seemed to apply specifically to the Higher Education sector. Further details are given in the report.

Finally, we invited respondents to share their hopes and expectations of the new National Agency. Some drew comparisons with negative experiences in the previous programme or with the Turing scheme. There were many favourable comments about the administration of Taith. Overall, respondents want a National Agency that is open, transparent and built on relationships rather than transactional. The need for clarity, consistency and simplicity in communication and administration was repeatedly emphasised. Engagement and support at local level was another consistent theme in the answers given.

The majority (89%) of organisations indicated a willingness to act as programme promoters in various ways, such as disseminating official information (64.3%), involving local MPs or dignitaries (42.1%), organising events (53.4%) or mentoring another organisation (30.8%). More than half of respondents also said that they could facilitate a group of young ambassadors (EuroPeers), or join a national network of Erasmus+ multiplier organisations.

"We see a strong opportunity for the new UK National Agency to position Erasmus+ as an accessible, inclusive, and high-impact programme across the UK".

1. Introduction

The UK, together with Switzerland, is joining Erasmus Plus in 2027 for an initial one-year period.

This has to be – and be seen to be – a success, because our continued participation in the next programme (2028-34) will depend on it. Success would (in theory) be measured by uptake of available grants, the number of projects implemented, and project results including the number of young people and organisations benefiting, across all sectors of education, youth and sport, and in all parts of the country. But in practice, the number of organisations applying or expressing interest will be the only measure available in the given timeframe. This in turn requires:

- Awareness of the programme and understanding of its scope and benefits, at all levels of policy and practice
- Support of senior leadership in organisations
- Access to partner networks in other countries
- Preparedness of staff to plan and implement projects
- Motivation / mobilisation of young people

Since the UK withdrew from Erasmus Plus, there has been a loss of know-how and capacity for international work, and young people are largely unaware of the opportunities, because:

- organisations have closed or downsized
- staff have moved on
- pressure of policy, regulations or resources have restricted the "bandwidth" for non-essential activity
- partnerships with other European countries have lapsed
- there are few peer examples to inspire young people to participate

For the youth sector alone, the amount of money allocated for 2027 is expected to be equivalent to around 50% of the funding for the whole 7 year period 2014-2020. At the same time, of the 442 organisations that led youth sector projects in 2014-20, around 30% are no longer in business. This shows the scale of the challenge.

Organisations of all kinds need information, training and support immediately if they are to get up to the starting-line by the end of 2026. Public authorities and other key stakeholders also need accurate information about Erasmus Plus.

In the period prior to the new National Agency becoming fully operational, InterCom has been working with partners across the UK, and in the framework of the National Campaign for Erasmus Plus, to provide basic information about the programme, understand needs and expectations, organise events and build a network of possible multipliers. The survey *“Erasmus Plus: Are You Ready”* was part of this initiative.

All plain text quotations included in this report are from survey respondents. Testimonial quotations with illustrations are from young people in the EuroPeers UK youth network.

“Start now promoting the programme. Put together positive data and messages about the benefits of the programme. Pull in case studies and success stories from other national agencies. Flood the zone with positive information broken down in to digestible pieces. Don't over complicate.”

2. Scope and reach of the survey

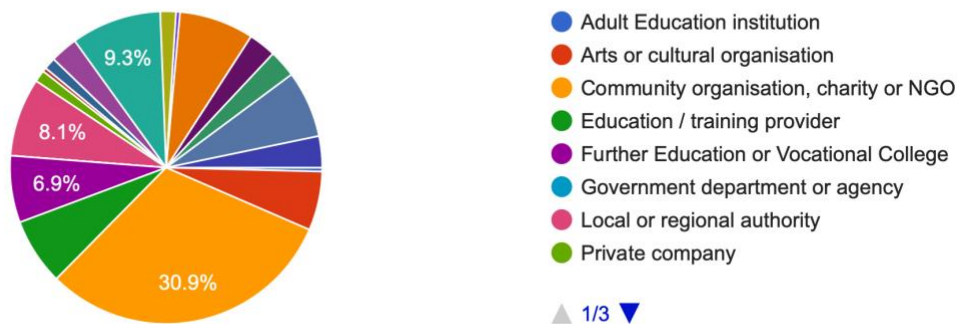
Responses were received from organisations of all kinds, across different sectors of education, culture and society, and in all four UK nations. The total number of responses (246) was satisfactory though not exceptional. However, the diversity and spread of organisations, and the broad similarity of many comments, suggest that a higher response rate would not have significantly changed the pattern of results.

We do not claim that this report is as scientific or academically rigorous as larger and better-resourced surveys. It should be viewed as illustrative rather than comprehensive. Nevertheless we believe that the data and comments contained in it will be valuable.

Types and locations of responding organisations

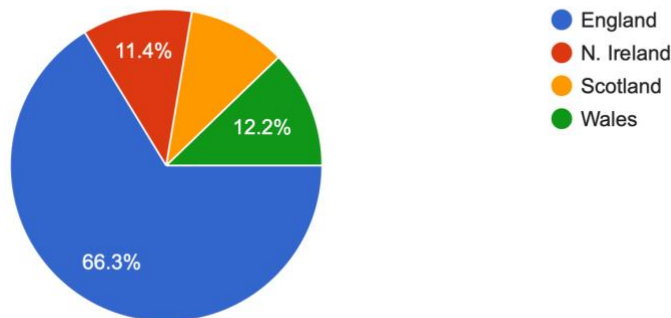
Type of organisation

246 responses



Location - country

246 responses



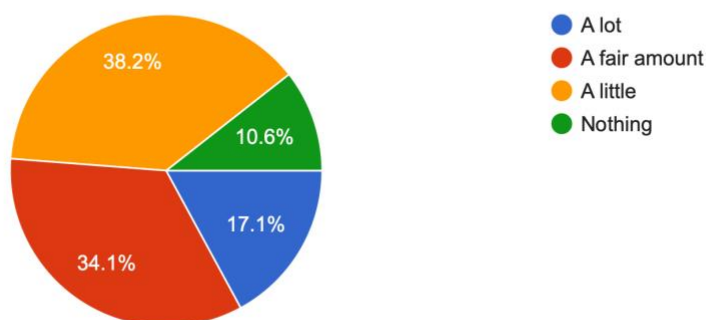
3. Knowledge and experience of Erasmus+

The chart below indicates the level of knowledge about the programme among responding organisations. However, we must bear in mind that these organisations must already have had some awareness or interest in Erasmus Plus in order for the survey invitation to have reached them. There is sure to be a wider constituency of organisations where awareness is lower; and among the media, let alone the general public, we would expect a high degree of (sometimes wilful) ignorance.

Knowledge of Erasmus Plus

How much do you know about Erasmus+?

246 responses



The following tables show responses by UK nation and sector. Please note that respondents self-selected their sectors, leading to a degree of inconsistency which we have done our best to correct.

	ENGLAND	N. IRELAND	SCOTLAND	WALES
A lot	22%	4%	4%	17%
A fair amount	30%	44%	44%	37%
A little	36%	46%	40%	40%
Nothing	12%	4%	12%	6%

	H.E.	F.E.	SCHOOLS	YOUTH / COM.*	OTHER
A lot	25%	11%	5%	18%	23%
A fair amount	45%	22%	30%	37%	30%
A little	30%	50%	60%	33%	33%
Nothing	0%	17%	5%	12%	14%

* Community

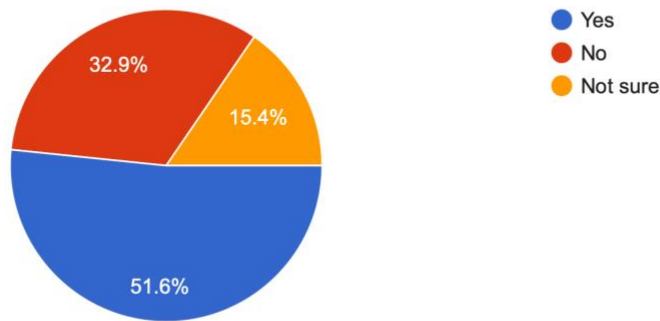
Past experience of Erasmus Plus will be a key factor in the interest and readiness of organisations to participate in the new programme. For reasons stated in the introduction above, much of this expertise has been lost or diluted, and the survey shows that at least 30% of organisations will be starting from scratch.

"This is an incredible and inspirational programme that brings life changing hope for young people and will have a powerful ripple effect for change for the good."

Previous Erasmus Plus projects

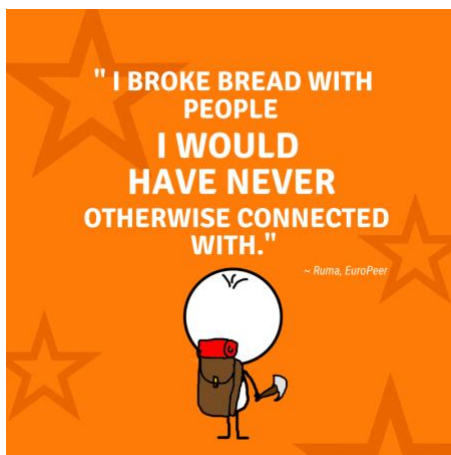
Has your organisation led or taken part in Erasmus+ projects in the past?

246 responses



	ENGLAND	N. IRELAND	SCOTLAND	WALES
Yes	47%	68%	52%	60%
No	34%	32%	28%	33%
Not sure	19%	0%	20%	7%

	H.E.	F.E.	SCHOOLS	YOUTH / COM.	OTHER
Yes	65%	22%	45%	58%	46%
No	15%	33%	38%	37%	26%
Not sure	20%	45%	17%	5%	28%

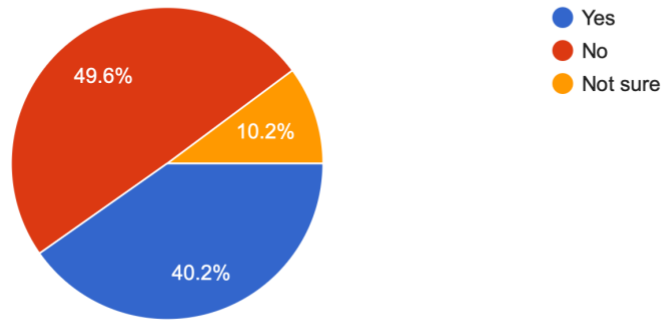


Experience of other programmes

Half of the organisations reached by this survey have had no access to international programmes since the UK left Erasmus Plus. The obvious exception is in Wales, where the Taith programme has been a considerable success in filling the gap.

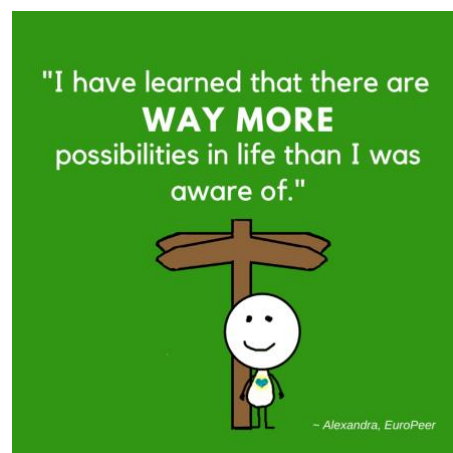
Has your organisation participated in other international programmes in the last 5 years (e.g. Turing, Taith, Scottish Education Exchange Programme, UK-German Connection, etc.)?

246 responses



	ENGLAND	N. IRELAND	SCOTLAND	WALES
Yes	33%	29%	40%	90%
No	57%	57%	48%	3%
Not sure	10%	14%	12%	7%

	H.E.	F.E.	SCHOOLS	YOUTH / COM.	OTHER
Yes	55%	67%	50%	35%	28%
No	20%	28%	45%	58%	51%
Not sure	25%	5%	5%	7%	21%



4. Readiness, information and support

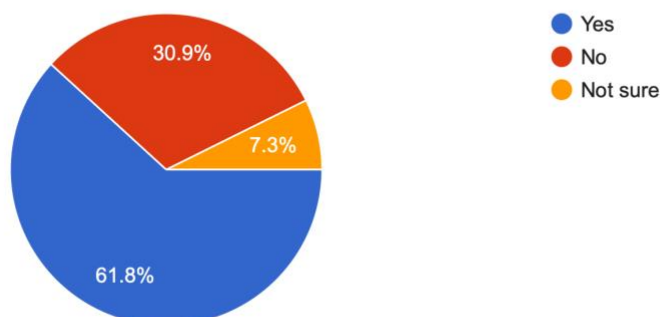
Although the majority of organisations already have international partnerships, almost a third do not. Advice and help in partner finding will be essential for many. Again, Wales leads the field in this regard.

Respondents were asked to name the countries where their partners are located. Unsurprisingly, a wide range of countries were mentioned, including all EU 27, wider Europe, MENA, Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, Americas and Australasia.

Existing overseas partners

Does your organisation already have overseas partners?

246 responses



	ENGLAND	N. IRELAND	SCOTLAND	WALES
Yes	56%	64%	64%	87%
No	35%	32%	32%	7%
Not sure	9%	4%	4%	6%

	H.E.	F.E.	SCHOOLS	YOUTH / COM.	OTHER
Yes	80%	44%	55%	63%	63%
No	5%	50%	43%	32%	21%
Not sure	15%	6%	2%	5%	16%

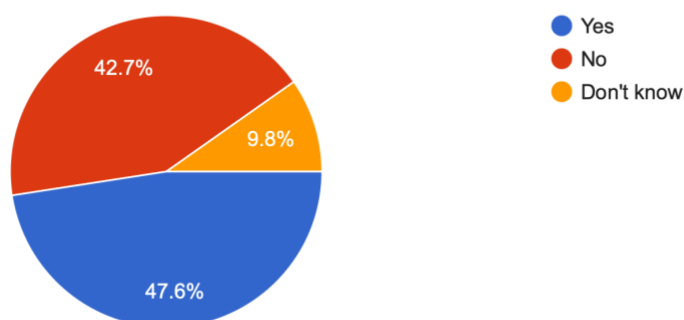
“Fantastic grass roots organisations need to know about Erasmus Plus. If you don’t know you can’t take action to engage.”

As one would expect, Higher Education Institutions are more likely than those in other sectors to have dedicated staff for international work. There is no significant regional variation on this question, though Wales is slightly ahead.

Staff responsibilities

Does your organisation have a designated member of staff responsible for international work?

246 responses



	ENGLAND	N. IRELAND	SCOTLAND	WALES
Yes	46%	43%	40%	67%
No	44%	54%	52%	20%
Don't know	10%	4%	8%	13%

	H.E.	F.E.	SCHOOLS	YOUTH / COM.	OTHER
Yes	65%	44%	45%	45%	51%
No	15%	34%	45%	52%	30%
Don't know	20%	22%	10%	3%	19%

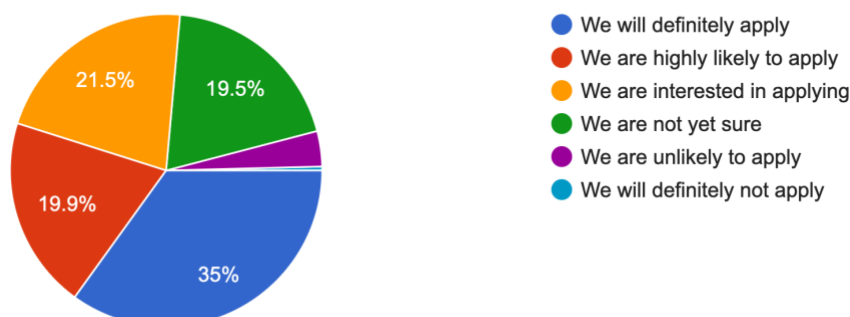
There is palpable excitement and enthusiasm about Erasmus Plus. The survey results back up what people have been saying in our recent webinars and other events, and throughout the foregoing campaign. It is encouraging that over 50% of organisations will definitely or are highly likely to apply for funding, with very little variation by sector or region: there is a slightly higher hesitancy for Scotland.

"In our school there is great excitement about our rejoining Erasmus+ amongst both staff and pupils. The oldest pupils participated in our final project. The legacy of former projects is strong; we use materials and projects which were successful in the past. We are so pleased that eTwinning will again be available to our pupils. Our younger ones benefited enormously from this and it gave them confidence to join in Erasmus+ mobilities. This showed real progression. We are delighted to be rejoining Erasmus+ and strongly hope that the UK will remain in the programme."

Intention to apply for funding

How likely is your organisation to apply for an Erasmus+ grant when the UK joins the programme next year?

246 responses



	ENGLAND	N. IRELAND	SCOTLAND	WALES
Definitely	33%	39%	24%	53%
Highly likely	20%	29%	8%	20%
Interested	23%	21%	20%	10%
Not sure yet	20%	11%	36%	14%
Unlikely	3%	0%	12%	3%
Definitely not	1%	0%	0%	0%

	H.E.	F.E.	SCHOOLS	YOUTH / COM.	OTHER
Definitely	40%	33%	42%	34%	28%
Highly likely	25%	17%	15%	24%	12%
Interested	10%	28%	18%	20%	33%
Not sure	20%	22%	15%	18%	25%
Unlikely	0%	0%	10%	4%	2%
Definitely not	5%	0%	0%	0%	0%

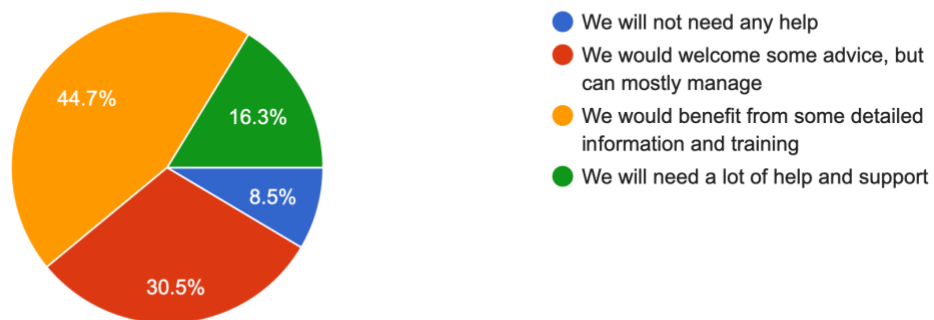
The sense of expectation about Erasmus Plus is balanced by a need for advice and support. Fewer than 10% of respondents feel that they can manage to apply without any support at all. Information and training will be a vital part of the service provided by the National Agency. It stands to reason that this is needed sooner rather than later. The vast majority of respondents would like to have local training events.

“We see Erasmus+ as a highly valuable opportunity, and we are genuinely motivated to engage with its programmes. However, the administrative complexity and time required to prepare applications can be demanding. Flexibility in project design and timelines, as well as clearer financial structures, can make participation more accessible and aligned with the realities of working in diverse, community-based contexts. Continued simplification and support could further encourage organisations like ours to engage even more actively with Erasmus+ opportunities.”

Support needs

How much help and advice will your organisation need in order to apply?

246 responses



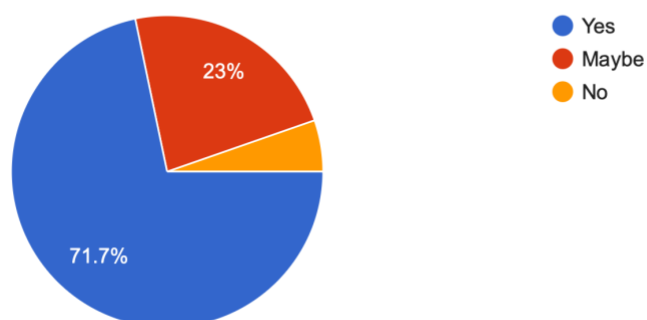
	ENGLAND	N. IRELAND	SCOTLAND	WALES
No help	11%	0%	4%	7%
Some advice	29%	36%	28%	33%
Info & training	45%	50%	44%	43%
A lot of help	15%	14%	24%	17%

	H.E.	F.E.	SCHOOLS	YOUTH / COM.	OTHER
No help	20%	0%	2%	9%	12%
Some advice	50%	28%	20%	30%	33%
Info & training	25%	44%	60%	43%	46%
A lot of help	5%	28%	18%	18%	9%

Local information and training

Would you like to attend an information or training event in your local area?

244 responses



"We need greater support for smaller under-represented local organisations. Sometimes it feels as if all the larger youth bodies get all the focus."

5. Promoters and multipliers

The National Agency has already mentioned the importance of multipliers and ambassadors for Erasmus Plus. There is no doubt that effective promotion will depend on this, especially towards minority communities, disadvantaged groups and smaller and less experienced organisations. Many of the responses to this survey's open-ended questions (below) substantiate this.

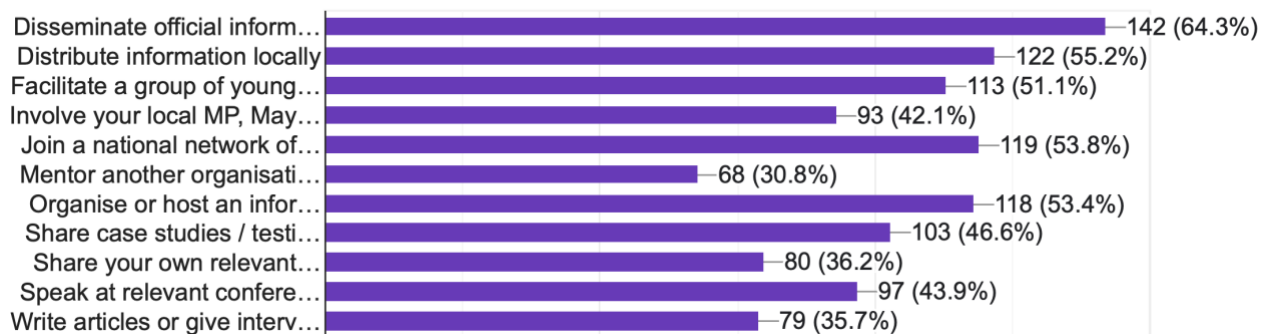
We asked organisations how they might be able to help. The majority (89%) of respondents indicated a willingness to act as programme promoters in various ways, such as disseminating official information, involving local MPs or dignitaries, organising events or mentoring another organisation. More than half also said that they could facilitate a group of young ambassadors, or join a national network of Erasmus+ multiplier organisations. Some have access to valuable data or expertise that they are willing to share.

InterCom has been building a partner network across the UK for the last few years, and is now intensifying this process. As well as providing information services (Eurodesk or similar) we intend to relaunch the EuroPeers (youth ambassadors) network in the near future.

How organisations could help promote Erasmus Plus

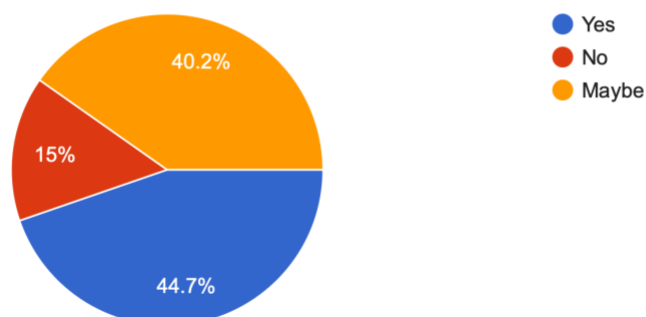
Could your organisation help to promote Erasmus+ / give advice and support to others? (Please select as many as relevant)

221 responses



Do you know any young people (individuals or groups) who would be interested in helping to promote Erasmus+ to others?

246 responses



	ENGLAND	N. IRELAND	SCOTLAND	WALES
Yes	46%	39%	40%	47%
No	12%	22%	28%	17%
Maybe	42%	39%	32%	36%

	H.E.	F.E.	SCHOOLS	YOUTH / COM.	OTHER
Yes	35%	56%	32%	46%	51%
No	30%	0%	28%	13%	9%
Maybe	35%	44%	40%	41%	40%

6. Obstacles

What, if anything, might put you off applying?

Not all respondents identified obstacles, but the majority did.

Bureaucracy

By far the greatest number of respondents mentioned their expectation that Erasmus Plus projects would involve overwhelming levels of bureaucracy, particularly for small organisations. *“The thought of all the forms that have to be completed!”* is a comment that summarises many others. In some cases these were based on past experience of Erasmus Plus or Turing, which was seen as comparable: *“5,000 words for the application – that is hard work”*. This administrative burden is daunting to most people. The following specific points were mentioned:

- Length and complexity of forms and processes, particularly in relation to the small size of many grants: no proportionality. *“I applied for Erasmus+ funding for a course myself a number of years ago and the paperwork was ridiculous.”* The Taith programme was mentioned favourably in comparison.
- Time needed to complete applications, and short windows of opportunity.
- Communication issues and potential long delays in getting a response. There is a perceived lack of transparency.

“We will be supporting our network of community youth providers to apply and they will be put off if it’s too complicated or time consuming.”

Capacity issues

The second, closely related obstacle is lack of capacity in organisations, not only to navigate the bureaucracy but also to plan and manage the actual projects. There is a need for dedicated staff, but smaller organisations do not have that luxury. Some feel they can only get involved by working in partnership with larger organisations. One school mentioned that it would only be possible to apply if they were allowed to employ a freelance consultant.

There are competing pressures on time and resources, arising from organisations’ core work. One also mentioned that they are currently waiting for the result of a Turing application, which if successful will mean they do not have capacity to take on an Erasmus Plus project too.

Knowledge, information and partnerships

The need for information and guidance was reiterated by many of the respondents. It was also borne out by the answers to some of the survey questions, which showed a variety of misunderstandings about

Erasmus Plus (e.g. whether schools or NGOs are eligible to apply) or knowledge limited to one sector (usually HE). A few people worry about not feeling supported through the application process.

A few people mentioned their lack of international partners as an obstacle. They will need help with contact-making and partnership building, and the relevant tools available.

Financial issues

Respondents expressed concerns about insufficient funding and the financial risks associated with participation. Some organisations worry that grant amounts may not fully cover operational, travel, living, or placement costs, particularly in expensive locations such as London, leaving participants or organisations to absorb additional expenses.

Upfront costs, the lack of 100% advance funding, and uncertainty around matched funding requirements are additional concerns, especially for smaller organisations or self-employed teams without core funding. Administrative burdens of managing applications, financial reporting, and data collection may also be difficult to resource. Strict funding rules, limited flexibility, and concerns that grants may not be accessible or affordable for young people from lower-income backgrounds were also identified as significant deterrents.

Internal and operational issues

A variety of potential internal barriers were mentioned, largely relating to organisational capacity, strategic fit, and uncertainty about eligibility or relevance. Many organisations expressed concerns about the additional workload involved and the challenge of balancing participation with existing core projects, particularly where staff capacity is already limited or organisations rely heavily on volunteers.

Some respondents questioned whether Erasmus+ would align with their organisational values, services, or the needs of their young people and students, while others noted limited international experience, uncertainty around application criteria, consortium eligibility, or whether their organisation could apply at all. Additional challenges include lack of qualified staff, insufficient understanding or support from leadership or school governors, limited parental engagement, and practical constraints such as family commitments and competing professional priorities. One respondent suggested that their director's personal ambitions might get in the way.

There is a worry that it will be difficult to get young people to engage, or (for universities) that not enough students will want to travel abroad.

Logistical difficulties such as finding affordable accommodation were also mentioned.

Erasmus+ policy or systemic issues

Various points were made here, beginning with the highly competitive nature of funding programmes like Erasmus Plus which especially puts off small organisations. With particular reference to re-submission of applications, organisations find that even when they actively incorporate assessor feedback into their applications, outcomes remain uncertain.

Welsh organisations commented that Taith was a highly inclusive programme and would like to see this replicated in Erasmus Plus. They also want applications to be assessed by people with knowledge of Wales, and for there to be Welsh champions for the programme.

There is some disappointment that the European Solidarity Corps is not yet included in Erasmus Plus. Many people are unaware that it will be reincorporated from 2028.

Safeguarding concerns

A small number of responses mentioned the high level of duty of care and the corresponding risks inherent in taking young people overseas or arranging placements. Risk assessment for eventual projects was felt to be an added burden.

Political issues

Finally, a few respondents mentioned the current and possible future political climate. There is still uncertainty in the UK about the relationship with Europe, and a worry that the government's commitment to Erasmus Plus is only short-term: *"we want this to continue and not just for one year 2027/28, otherwise it is pointless"*. There is also a question-mark over whether the government will provide frameworks that facilitate participation (e.g. visa pathways). One organisation reported that *"we are often attacked for using EU funds"*.

7. Inclusion

What needs to happen to ensure that Erasmus+ benefits young people with fewer opportunities?

Policy

Erasmus Plus should adopt more inclusive and targeted policies to ensure greater participation among young people with fewer opportunities. Respondents recommended prioritising underrepresented and disadvantaged groups, including young people from deprived areas, rural communities, minority ethnic ("racialised") backgrounds, those receiving free school meals, young people with neurodiverse or additional support needs, and those outside formal education.

Many called for broader and more flexible eligibility criteria that recognise different forms of disadvantage beyond traditional poverty measures, alongside mandatory inclusion targets or incentives for projects supporting underrepresented groups. There was also strong support for directing more funding and outreach toward areas of high deprivation and grassroots organisations already working closely with disadvantaged young people, while building partnerships between experienced and smaller local organisations to reduce administrative burdens and widen participation.

Respondents highlighted the importance of embedding accessibility and inclusion throughout the programme design, including flexible participation options, higher staffing ratios for young people with additional needs, support for obtaining passports and travelling to departure points, and clear, simple application criteria. Suggestions also included linking participation to employability outcomes and accredited qualifications. Better communication, mentoring, case studies, targeted outreach, and national or regional support structures would help to raise awareness and encourage participation.

Finally, respondents stressed the need for clear government commitment, sustained funding, and strategic national priorities to ensure Erasmus Plus opportunities are accessible to all young people regardless of background or location.

"We work with young people living in poverty and we know the pressures they are under to find jobs and help their families. That means that participation in projects is often dependent on practical outcomes that could improve their employability or school success."

Administration

The main suggestions made in relation to programme administration were:

- Transparent, user-friendly and accessible application processes, with built-in flexibility to cover unforeseen circumstances such as Covid, and recognising potential discrimination. Simplicity and affordability are key.
- Extra support for small organisations, e.g. to help build partnerships with like-minded organisations in the EU; and more time, patience and additional resources.

- Roll out the programme as soon as possible, with minimal administrative hurdles (upstream / downstream) collectively or individually.
- Outreach, induction, throughcare and after care mechanisms including professional, peer support & mentoring.
- Attention to destination management, e.g. ensuring that LGBTQ+ people are travelling to safe places
- A wider variety of call types and more frequent opportunities. *“At the highest end that’s the main limiting factor to helping young people”.*

Finance

Survey responses emphasised the need for financial support to be more comprehensive, flexible, and targeted. Respondents said that funding should fully cover the real costs of participation, including not only travel, accommodation and daily living expenses, but also passports, clothing, phones, specialist medical or care support, and transport (including taxis) in places where public transport is limited. *“The rates the programme offers need to be high enough for a young person to actually be able to support themselves on. This has not always been the case in the past.”*

There were many calls for enhanced grants / additional funding for young people from deprived, marginalised, or vulnerable backgrounds, as well as for organisations supporting these groups. Several comments specifically mentioned the additional costs and support needs in rural areas. One person commented: *“remember that ‘fewer opportunities’ goes beyond the financial situation of families.”*

Respondents stressed that funding levels need to reflect actual costs in different destinations, with top-up grants for exceptional or specialist support needs such as medical staff, carers, or accessible travel arrangements. Absence of this support is a real barrier to young people with Additional Learning Needs. Costs need to be paid upfront.

Flexibility was also seen as important, including blended mobility options that combine physical and virtual participation. Overall, respondents felt that financial barriers should be removed entirely so that participation is genuinely accessible regardless of income, location, disability, or additional support needs.

Outreach and engagement

Increasing participation among young people with fewer opportunities requires sustained, locally rooted outreach and engagement delivered through trusted organisations and community networks. Respondents mentioned the importance of working closely with grassroots organisations, youth groups, charities, schools, colleges, and local youth services that offer place-based services, are adept at working with underrepresented young people and already have strong relationships with them, with a proven track record and high safeguarding standards. There needs to be humility in finding out what the actual needs of these young people are. There were repeated calls for targeted outreach in deprived, rural, and marginalised communities, including schools with higher levels of deprivation (e.g. Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation), care-experienced young people, and Black and racially minoritised communities. Participants stressed that trusted local organisations should be properly supported and funded to promote opportunities, give guidance to young people, and provide ongoing mentoring and pastoral support.

Awareness-raising activities are seen as essential, including school visits, talks from previous participants, case studies, youth-friendly marketing, targeted communications to educators and community leaders, and stronger dissemination of information through regional and local networks. *“Often emails about funding do not reach the right people!”* Respondents also highlighted the need to involve parents, local decision-makers and politicians at all levels from the outset, improve communication with schools and local authorities, and ensure that teachers and youth workers are equipped and supported to promote Erasmus+ opportunities effectively. Flexible and inclusive programme design, accessible application processes, and practical support such as funding, food, warm venues, safeguarding, and language or pastoral assistance are also viewed as key to encouraging meaningful participation.

Overall, respondents stressed that outreach should be community-based, relationship-led, and responsive to local needs, with bespoke regional communication strategies and sustained investment in organisations with proven experience supporting young people with fewer opportunities.

Motivation and support

Motivating disadvantaged young people to participate in Erasmus+ projects requires strong local outreach, trusted partnerships, clear communication, and tailored support. Respondents emphasised the importance of working directly with grassroots organisations, schools, youth services, and community networks that already have trusted relationships with young people from marginalised backgrounds. Localised engagement, including outreach events, school visits, webinars, youth alliances, and community-based promotion, was viewed as essential to ensuring opportunities are visible, relevant, and accessible. Many stressed the need for clear, simple, and targeted information delivered through communication channels young people already use, alongside myth-busting and reassurance that Erasmus+ is not only for university students or more privileged groups.

Participants also highlighted the value of relatable role models, testimonials, and success stories from young people with similar lived experiences to help build confidence and demonstrate the personal, educational, and career benefits of international mobility. Motivation was seen as closely linked to practical support, including mentoring, preparation, application guidance, financial assistance, accessibility support for SEND/SEMH and neurodiverse young people, and comprehensive support before, during, and after participation. Respondents stressed that opportunities must feel relevant to young people's lives and aspirations, with experiential learning, employability outcomes, and inclusive messaging that makes all young people feel the programme is "for them." There were also calls for greater support and training for teachers, youth workers, and smaller organisations so they can confidently promote and facilitate participation among disadvantaged groups.

"To make sure Erasmus+ truly benefits young people with fewer opportunities, it's not just about offering places; it's about removing the barriers that stop them from participating in the first place. That requires coordinated changes at policy, institutional, and local levels."

University / FE specific suggestions

Several comments appear to refer specifically to students at university or further education colleges.

Suggestions for increasing participation included improving financial support, accessibility, confidence-building, and targeted outreach. Respondents would like to see enhanced grants that fully cover travel, accommodation, living expenses, and hidden costs such as visas, insurance, and language learning. This is critical for young people who may not have the financial means to participate. *"Funding needs to happen promptly and not in arrears. Otherwise it is of no benefit to those on low incomes"*.

There were calls for more flexible and accessible mobility options, including shorter non-credit-bearing group activities (e.g. 4–5 day group mobilities not requiring work placements) that would reduce financial and personal barriers. Respondents also highlighted the need to simplify application processes and provide tailored support through dedicated mentors, clear pathways, and structured frameworks before, during, and after placements.

Building awareness and confidence is seen as essential, particularly through targeted promotion, myth-busting, language learning opportunities, and active encouragement from staff to build students' self-belief that international opportunities are relevant, achievable and accessible to them. In addition, universities should be persuaded to integrate Erasmus opportunities into their welcome packs.

8. The National Agency

Do you have any advice or requests for the new UK National Agency? What could it do to support you? How can it make Erasmus+ a success in the UK?

The British Council's appointment as National Agency appears to have been largely well received. Survey respondents nevertheless offered many words of advice about how it should operate.

General ethos

The new UK National Agency should be transparent, approachable, collaborative, and strongly focused on supporting participants and organisations rather than prioritising bureaucracy and compliance alone. Many people emphasised the importance of clear communication, accessible points of contact, responsive support, and staff with strong sector-specific expertise who can work in partnership with applicants to solve problems and provide timely guidance. Flexibility is viewed as essential, with respondents stressing that the programme must operate effectively in real-world contexts and remain focused on people and meaningful outcomes rather than simply meeting administrative requirements or targets.

There were strong calls for the NA to demonstrate a clear commitment to youth work, European collaboration, innovation, and shared citizenship values, while actively supporting networking, partnership-building, and national training opportunities. Respondents also highlighted the need to work closely with grassroots organisations, local community groups, and devolved administrations in the UK nations to ensure funding and support are tailored to different regional contexts and informed by ongoing feedback and learning. Several comments referenced positive experiences with the British Council as NA pre-2014, and more recently with organisations such as Léargas and Taith. Particularly valued are accessible support, networking opportunities, and relationship-based approaches. Respondents cautioned against returning to former NA systems that are perceived as overly bureaucratic or poorly managed.

"Please remember that this programme is about people, not just numbers! E+ is a framework which needs to work in the real world and for this to happen effectively and to be maximised, flexibility is essential and project realities need to be understood."

Outreach and engagement

The National Agency should adopt a locally focused, partnership-based approach to outreach and promotion, working closely with grassroots organisations, schools, youth groups, charities, faith groups, and regional networks that already have trusted relationships with young people and communities. Many respondents emphasised the importance of engaging organisations with expertise in community outreach and inclusion, particularly those working with disadvantaged or underrepresented groups, to act as bridges between the National Agency and target communities. There were strong calls for regional and devolved approaches, including nation-specific offices, coordinators, meetings, and communications strategies that reflect local contexts, devolved policies, and language needs, particularly in Wales and across other devolved administrations.

Respondents highlighted the need for accessible, proactive, and visible promotion through schools, local organisations, mailing lists, media campaigns, networking events, and partnership-building activities. Suggested activities included school visits, conferences, feedback workshops, mentoring schemes, networking and matchmaking events, case studies, awareness sessions, and campaigns featuring previous Erasmus+ participants to demonstrate impact and inspire engagement.

Many people stressed that smaller and less experienced organisations require additional support, including mentoring, tailored guidance, simplified processes, and funding to develop partnerships and manage outreach activities. There was also a strong emphasis on maintaining effective international partnerships

and encouraging cross-sector collaboration between schools, colleges, universities, businesses, and community organisations to broaden participation and improve project quality.

Overall, respondents want a National Agency that is highly visible, locally connected, inclusive, and relationship-driven, with a clear focus on empowering communities and widening access across all regions and sectors.

“Connect with local youth organisations who will promote it in their areas across Northern Ireland.”

“Ensure that local authority decision makers in Scotland are aware of national guidance about residential trips to European countries so that there is comparable experience for schools across the country. Post-COVID, some Scottish local authorities are still very reluctant to allow trips abroad, especially if these are traditional exchanges.”

“There needs to be a Welsh presence in Wales to support organisations, with a specific comms strategy. The support provided by Taith would be a good starting point as a minimum standard.”

Information and training

Respondents want the National Agency to offer consistent, timely, streamlined, and easily accessible information and training that reduces barriers to participation and builds organisational capacity across all sectors and regions of the UK

Comments included:

- clear, accessible, practical information and capacity-building opportunities, alongside comprehensive training and ongoing support to help organisations and young people engage with Erasmus+.
- simple, step-by-step guidance covering eligibility, registration, project design, application writing, budgeting, monitoring, reporting, deadlines, and project delivery, particularly for first-time applicants and smaller organisations with limited experience; clear examples of successful proposals.
- the need for user-friendly resources such as toolkits, flowcharts, and information websites
- webinars, online support sessions, training days, conferences
- knowledgeable and responsive helpdesks
- clear communication about funding rules, country eligibility, and post-Brexit arrangements.
- allocated advisors, mentoring opportunities, partnership-matching support, and lists of potential European partners to help organisations build confidence and develop viable projects.

Respondents also emphasised the importance of strong communication and awareness-raising activities to ensure Erasmus+ opportunities are widely understood and accessible. Suggestions included targeted social media campaigns, promotional videos, case studies, success stories, and regular updates showcasing the benefits of participation for employability, careers, empowerment, and community development.

Policy

Survey respondents want the National Agency to adopt policies that prioritise inclusion, accessibility, and equal opportunity, particularly for young people with fewer opportunities and the organisations that support them. Many called for dedicated funding, upfront financial support, mentoring, and continuous support before, during, and after participation to ensure that cost and complexity do not prevent disadvantaged young people from taking part. Respondents stressed that inclusion should be embedded throughout the programme, with simplified and flexible application processes, equitable regional funding distribution, and targeted support for smaller organisations, rural communities, and young people outside traditional education pathways. There were also calls to broaden eligibility so opportunities are open to young people of different ages, academic backgrounds, and social circumstances, including those with lower academic attainment or those not in higher education. (The final comment indicates a widespread misunderstanding about the scope of the programme).

A key theme was the need for the programme to reflect the diversity of the UK, including meaningful engagement with all four nations and recognition of devolved contexts and policies. The NA should ensure that Northern Ireland, Wales, Scotland, and rural areas are fully included from the outset, while several comments referenced the inclusive approach taken by Taith as a positive model to learn from. There is disappointment that the UK Overseas Territories are not included in the 2027 agreement, and a demand that the NA should lobby the government to redress this as soon as possible.

People also called for stronger collaboration between organisations, better promotion of language learning and international opportunities in schools and colleges, and fewer barriers for incoming international participants. Overall, respondents want a long-term, well-structured, and inclusive Erasmus+ programme that builds trust, removes barriers, strengthens collaboration, and ensures opportunities are genuinely achievable for all young people across the UK.

“Be on the sector's side. Be pro-Europe.”

Administration

The NA should administer Erasmus+ in a way that is simple, accessible, responsive, and supportive, particularly for smaller organisations, schools, and groups working with disadvantaged young people. A consistent theme was the need to reduce bureaucracy by simplifying application forms, reporting requirements, and administrative processes, using clear and jargon-free language, and providing straightforward step-by-step guidance. Applicants want systems and online portals to be easy to navigate, with accessible resources, advance notice of deadlines, and practical support that makes participation manageable without requiring excessive staff time or specialist expertise.

Strong and responsive communication is also essential. Many respondents requested dedicated support officers or named caseworkers who could provide continuity and personalised assistance throughout the application and delivery process, rather than relying on anonymous or inconsistent email responses. Suggestions included well-trained telephone helplines, responsive helpdesks, clear communication channels, and staff with strong programme knowledge who can quickly resolve queries and support applicants effectively.

Respondents also stressed the importance of transparent evaluation processes, constructive feedback, swift grant payments, and support for partnership-building and host organisations. Several comments encouraged the NA to build on the expertise and effective practices previously associated with the British Council and the former eTwinning team, while ensuring the programme remains inclusive and accessible to all young people, including looked after children and care leavers.

“I'm excited that we will be rejoining this excellent programme.”

9. About InterCom

InterCom is an independent not-for-profit organisation established for the purpose of promoting Erasmus Plus, and international youth and education projects in general, through provision of information and training. We work in partnership with a network of experts and multiplier organisations across the UK, in the framework of the National Campaign for Erasmus Plus.

Our vision is a sustained, visible increase in the number and variety of UK organisations involved in international education partnerships, with the benefits widely recognised.

Our mission is to be a leading provider of information, training and expertise in the field of international youth and non-formal education projects.

Our primary target audiences are youth, sports and community organisations (including umbrella bodies and local authorities), especially those with low awareness or experience of Erasmus Plus. We work in partnership with other experts who offer similar information and support services to schools, FE colleges and adult education providers.

We reach these audiences through existing networks, and by working with national, local and regional government authorities who are willing to act as convenors and enablers for Erasmus Plus.

We also empower young people as peer ambassadors for Erasmus Plus through the EuroPeers UK youth network, and are working towards the re-establishment of Eurodesk in the UK.

10. About the National Campaign for Erasmus Plus

The National Campaign for Erasmus Plus began as an initiative of the European Movement UK in 2025. It now aims to raise awareness of the benefits of the programme across all sectors; to motivate schools, colleges, youth, sports and community organisations to apply for funding; and to broaden support for the UK's participation.

The campaign brings together a coalition of organisations and individuals. A steering committee, including experts from all sectors of education, coordinates the campaign, shares information and resources, and encourages participation: anyone can join the campaign and take whatever action is right for them.

The campaign expects to work closely with the UK National Agency.



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