



2026 Member Survey Report

Executive Summary

Brave Starts tends to attract between 150 – 250 new members a year. This report presents the findings of the 2026 Member Survey which went out in July. It highlights what members value most, why they joined Brave Starts, and where there are opportunities to further strengthen the member experience and support the organisation's future development.

Sixty-one members responded to the survey, providing valuable insights into their experiences of Brave Starts, the support they value most, and areas where they believe the organisation could continue to evolve.

The findings show that Brave Starts is successfully supporting people who are exploring a new direction in their careers, navigating career transition, and seeking meaningful professional connections. Members were overwhelmingly positive about their experience; with many stating there was little they would change. The survey also identified opportunities to enhance the member offer by strengthening practical career support, expanding wellbeing resources, creating more opportunities for members to connect and making it easier for members to identify workshops most relevant to their needs.

Key Findings

The three most common reasons for joining Brave Starts were:

- To explore work and career opportunities (47 respondents)
- To meet new people and grow their network (28 respondents)
- To find something more meaningful and purposeful (21 respondents)

The survey found that members place greatest value on the sense of community, connection and hope that Brave Starts provides. Many described feeling supported by meeting others at a similar stage in their lives, gaining confidence, recognising their own value and finding the clarity to explore new career opportunities. Workshops, expert speakers and one-to-one



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support were frequently praised for providing practical insights, renewed motivation and reassurance that career reinvention is possible at any stage of life.

Members were also highly positive about the existing workshop programme, with many saying they would change very little.

The most common suggestions for future development focused on creating more opportunities for members to connect through face-to-face events, and peer support groups, alongside more workshops outside office hours to accommodate those in work. Members also expressed a desire for greater support in understanding the changing UK job market, particularly for experienced professionals, together with practical guidance on career change, including transferable skills, CV writing, interview preparation and engaging with recruiters. Other suggestions included enhancing the online member experience through improved networking, discussion forums and website functionality, as well as sharing more career change success stories and providing more tailored support for specific groups and career stages.

Overall, the findings suggest that Brave Starts has established a strong reputation and is meeting an important need. The majority of respondents said they would recommend Brave Starts to others, reflecting the positive impact the organisation has on members navigating career transition. The survey also highlights opportunities to further strengthen the member experience by making it easier to identify relevant workshops through themed learning pathways, expanding opportunities for members to connect with one another, and increasing awareness of Brave Starts among people who could benefit from what it offers.

Recommendations

1. Grow Membership

The survey demonstrates that Brave Starts meets an important need for people exploring career change, redundancy, and seeking more meaningful work.



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Given current job market trends and an ageing workforce, there is significant opportunity to expand membership by increasing awareness of Brave Starts and benefits for members.

A targeted marketing strategy, including greater use of social media and partnerships with relevant organisations, could broaden Brave Starts' reach and increase membership.

2. Review the BraveStarts Offer

Many members reported that the existing workshops are valuable. Rather than replacing what already works, the survey suggests an opportunity to review the current programme to identify:

- topics that continue to meet member needs;
- areas where content could be refreshed;
- gaps where new workshops could be introduced.

A regular review process would help ensure the programme remains relevant as the labour market evolves.

3. Organise Workshops into Themed Learning Pathways

Rather than offering individual workshops in isolation, consider grouping them into themed series that members can either complete as a programme or attend individually.

Possible pathways include:

Career Change

- Understanding why you work
- Identifying transferable skills

- Marketing yourself
- CV writing
- Working with recruiters
- Interview preparation
- Returning to work after a career break

The Future of Work

- UK labour market trends
- Growing and declining sectors (with some focus those in the later stages of their career)
- Opportunities for experienced professionals
- Flexible and portfolio careers
- Self-employment

Wellbeing During Career Change

- Building confidence
- Managing uncertainty
- Motivation
- Imposter syndrome



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- The emotional impact of redundancy
- Looking after wellbeing during career transition

4. Make Greater Use of the Brave Starts Community

Brave Starts has access to a wide network of members with diverse expertise and experience.

Once future priorities have been agreed, develop clear volunteer role descriptions outlining:

- responsibilities;
- expected time commitment;
- required skills;
- duration of involvement.

This would enable members to contribute their expertise while supporting the continued growth of the organisation.

5. Review the Membership Model *(with the new CRM being implemented soon, I know this is something being considered already)*

Consider reviewing the current membership structure and offered tiered membership packages to better meeting the differing needs of members.

Potential options include:



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- introductory free membership for an agreed period;
- standard membership with access to events;
- enhanced membership including workshops;
- premium membership including coaching, peer supervision and additional benefits.

This should be informed by member feedback and aligned with Brave Starts' long-term strategy.

Conclusion

The findings of the 2026 Member Survey demonstrate that Brave Starts is making a meaningful difference to people navigating career transition. Members consistently described the organisation as a welcoming and supportive community that provides practical guidance, renewed confidence and hope at a time of uncertainty. The overwhelmingly positive feedback, together with the high proportion of members who said they would recommend Brave Starts to others, reflects the value and impact of the organisation's work.

While members expressed high levels of satisfaction with their overall experience, the survey also identified clear opportunities to build on this strong foundation. In particular, members would welcome greater support in understanding the changing landscape of the job market, more opportunities to connect with one another, and a clearer learning journey through themed learning pathways. By continuing to listen to members and evolving its offer in response to their needs, Brave Starts is well placed to strengthen its impact, grow its membership and support even more people to navigate career change with confidence.