EVENTS INDUSTRY ALLIANCE

AEO AEV ESSA

SASIE

SIZE AND SCALE INDEX FOR EXHIBITIONS 2025

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FOREWORD

SASIE affords market intelligence crucial in shaping the events industry's future development, in securing appropriate government recognition and support and in maximising sector investment.

The UK's events industry is now worth an estimated £68.7 billion to the national economy (UKEvents, December 2025), reinforcing its position as a cornerstone of the UK economy and a driver of innovation, trade and tourism.

Business events account for a substantial proportion of that total; exhibitions, contributing some £11.5 billion in total economic output and supporting 126,000 jobs (EIA economic impact study, September 2025), form a key part of this incredibly diverse business events sector.

Exhibitions have always played a significant role in successfully promoting the UK's best assets at home and on the global stage, drawing on the unparalleled skills of innovation and creativity for which the country's business events sector is renowned and respected.

SASIE provides invaluable trends data and analysis and it is in the context of such historical achievements and contemporary success that we publish this latest SASIE research.

Detailing benchmark data on key metrics i.e. number, type and size of exhibitions, both gross and net size; visitor numbers; industry sectors generating major events; and the duration and seasonality of exhibitions, the report helps organisers, venues and suppliers in understanding the size and scope of our industry, in identifying investment opportunities, informing marketing planning, measuring and monitoring emerging trends.

It is our aim through SASIE to continue providing vital market intelligence, with this report revealing the total number of UK exhibitions in 2025 was up significantly on 2024 and at the highest level since 2015. It confirms that there has been sustained growth since 2022, even though most indicators still remain at approximately 75% to 90% of pre-Covid levels, showing a market impacted by Brexit, Covid, global uncertainties and inflationary and cost of living pressures.

It is imperative that, as an industry, we continually promote the importance of the role exhibitions can and do play in supporting and developing local economies, in job creation, in showcasing the creativity and innovative talents of UK businesses. SASIE demonstrates the resilience, strength and scale of our industry and will help us to make the case for ongoing support for, and investment in, the business events sector.

I am convinced that the UK exhibitions industry will also continue to play a vital role in boosting international trade and inward investment, and fostering scientific inquiry, innovation and technological advancement, thus supporting the government's growth agenda.

I would like to thank the members of AEV and AEO who continue to share performance data and related information. Without this ongoing support, SASIE would be impossible to produce. We are really pleased to publish SASIE 2025 and encourage you to read and share this report.

Ian Taylor, Chair, Events Industry Alliance

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

The Size and Scale Index for Exhibitions (SASIE) measures the scale and characteristics of the UK exhibition sector. It has been running since 2014.

It is produced by the Events Industry Alliance (EIA) which is an alliance of trade associations created by the three event industry bodies: the Association of Event Venues (AEV), the Association of Event Organisers (AEO) and the Event Supplier and Services Association (ESSA) to provide a group secretariat service in the events industry.

1. Dimensions of exhibition performance

In 2025 there were an estimated 1,154 exhibitions and conferences (with an exhibition element) at the UK's main exhibition venues.

- Trade exhibitions accounted for the largest share (42%) with consumer exhibitions accounting for just under a third.
- Just under two-thirds (61%) of these were held on an annual basis.
- In terms of gross exhibition size, a typical (median) exhibition was 5,400m^2 in 2025. The average was 8,200m^2 (including outdoor space).
- Typical (median) net exhibition size was 2,300m^2 - the average was 4,200m^2.
- A typical exhibition was, in terms of number of exhibitors, medium sized (i.e. 50-150 exhibitors). The average was 121 exhibitors per event.
- An exhibition occupied a venue for an average of 4.3 days and was open for 2.0 days. Consumer exhibitions were typically longer than trade exhibitions.

In 2025, there were an estimated 6.8m visits to exhibitions at the UK's main exhibition venues.

- The typical (median) event attendance was 2,100 – the average was higher at 5,900 visitors.
- The leisure sector was the largest sector for exhibitions – representing just under a fifth (18%) of exhibitions in 2025.
- In 2025, March, September, October and November were the busiest exhibition months accounting for half of all exhibitions.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. Trends

Numbers of events were up in 2025 and reached their highest level since 2015.

- This impacted on other indicators with **total** event days, and total visitor numbers also up. Total numbers of exhibitors and gross space sold were static in 2025.
- Looking at measures on an **average** (rather than total) basis, performance in 2025 for all exhibitions was broadly on a par with the last few years. **Average** gross size, duration, visitor numbers and exhibitor numbers remain at approximately 75% to 90% of their pre-Covid levels.
- Trade and consumer exhibitions show **different patterns** and trajectories. While numbers of exhibitions were up for both in 2025, tradeshows have demonstrated a robust growth in recent years with numbers above pre-Covid levels. Consumer shows remain slightly below pre-Covid levels.
- Average numbers of visitors to **trade** exhibitions have also shown year-on-year increases since 2022 with levels reaching a high point in 2025. This reflects a continued interest in, and value to, attending exhibitions from a business and sustainability perspective.
- In contrast, average visitor numbers to **consumer** exhibitions have shown a steady decline since 2019 and are at around 70% of pre-Covid levels.

Total visitor numbers among primary venues were up on 2024 by 4%. This was driven by repeat exhibitions.

1.

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The Events Industry Alliance (EIA), which comprises the Association of Event Venues (AEV), the Association of Event Organisers (AEO) and the Event Supplier and Services Association (ESSA), is undertaking a programme of research into the size, scale and characteristics of the UK exhibitions sector. This has been running since 2014, with a break in 2020 and 2021 (when the Covid pandemic impacted heavily on the sector).

The following report is divided into three main sections.

The first provides an overview of the dimensions of activity in 2025 and includes data on:

- The number and type of exhibitions
- The number of visits to UK exhibitions
- Event duration
- Event size - both gross and net
- Events by industrial sectors
- Seasonality of events

The second section provides a trend analysis for the period 2015 to 2025. This is based on a sample of venues where comparable year-on-year data exists.

The final section outlines the approach and methodology.

The research is based on a survey of venues (in AEV membership) and organising companies (in AEO membership) which involved collecting and reconciling detailed individual exhibition data.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

DEFINITION OF AN EXHIBITION

An **exhibition** is an event with at least 500m^2 of exhibition space.

EXHIBITIONS INCLUDE:

- **Trade** - an exhibition aimed primarily at those working within a particular trade sector and its peripherals. Visitors to trade exhibitions are usually required to establish their trade bona fides.
- **Consumer** (also referred to as 'public') - an exhibition that is primarily organised to attract the consumer or general public. Usually makes a charge for admission.
- **Outdoor** – an exhibition which primarily uses outdoor space, often with temporary structures, which may or may not be held at a qualifying venue.
- **Conference** – a conference event that also includes a substantial (gross minimum 500m^2) exhibition element.

OTHER TERMS:

- **An exhibition organiser** - a company or individual that rents venue space for an exhibition and resells that space to exhibitors or exhibition participants.
- **Exhibition start date** - the date the show is open to either trade visitors or consumers (or both).
- **Total venue hire days** - the number of days for which the venue is hired. This would include exhibition set-up, open and break-down days.
- **Total open days** - the number of days an exhibition is open to either trade visitors or consumers (or both).
- **Gross Hall Space** (m^2) of exhibition - the overall space occupied by an exhibition, irrespective of the floor space occupied by exhibition stands, measured in square metres.
- **Net Hall Space** (m^2) of exhibition - the actual space sold occupied by exhibitors/exhibition participants at the exhibition, measured in square metres.
- **Number of exhibiting companies** – the number of companies exhibiting at an exhibition.

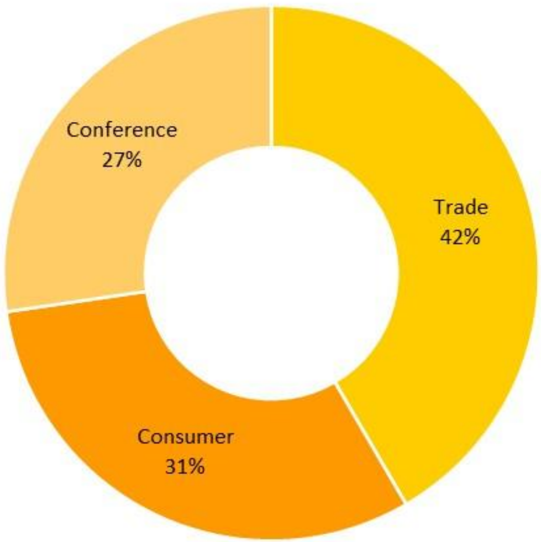
2.

DIMENSIONS OF EXHIBITIONS 2025

NUMBER AND TYPE OF EXHIBITIONS

In 2025, there were an estimated 1,154 exhibitions and conferences (with an exhibition element) at the UK's main exhibition venues.

TYPES OF EXHIBITION



Trade exhibitions accounted for the largest proportion of the market – 42% (480 exhibitions).

Just under a third of exhibitions (31%) were consumer (or public) (i.e. 359 exhibitions). Conferences that incorporated an exhibition element (i.e. 500m^2 plus) accounted for 27% of the market. This was a slight increase over 2024 (see page 23).

Venue Case Study: Scottish Event Campus

Our view is positive, recent consumer shows have reported increases in attendance. We are also seeing more niche consumer shows, tailored to the needs of their communities. These are often being delivered by independent or new organisers, who may be less experienced and thus more reliant on venue support for all aspects of technical and event management through to marketing. This leads to great collaboration and a partner approach: it's where our teams can apply the breadth of their experience in event delivery.

We are also seeing an increase in events that are more interactive, immersive or full participation. We have seen growth in sports events where the visitor is the athlete with retail and social elements added to the full experience.

As a venue, recent and planned investments are focused around evolving the customer experience. The use of technology to ensure physical and digital security levels, digital screens for content sharing and way finding. Food continues to play a significant role in driving dwell time and visitor satisfaction. Healthy, good value and personalised to the event audience as much as possible.

We are seeing an increase in the number of visitors to our campus for a more diverse range of events. It is our aim to ensure that all continue to enjoy incredible experiences, that they repeat year on year.

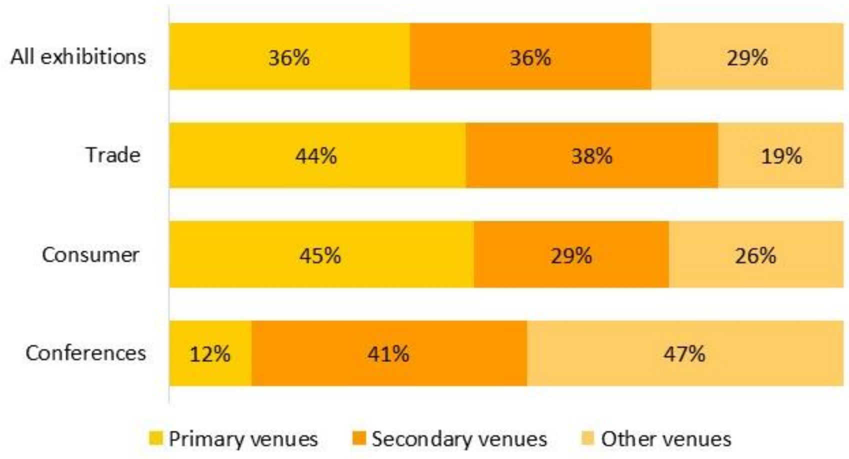
NUMBER AND TYPE OF EXHIBITIONS

The four primary venues, Excel London, Olympia, the NEC and the Scottish Event Campus (SEC) (see section 4 for a full definition of venue categories), hosted over a third (36%) of all exhibitions held in 2025.

They hosted a higher proportion of trade (44% of all trade exhibitions) and consumer exhibitions (45% of all consumer exhibitions).

Secondary venues (see section 4) held the same level of exhibitions (36%) in 2025 with a mix of trade and consumer exhibitions and a high proportion of conferences (41%).

Other / outdoor venues (see section 4) hosted 29% of all exhibitions. They were more likely to host conferences (47% of all conferences).



Trade exhibitions tended to use primary and secondary venues.

Consumer exhibitions were particularly likely to use primary venues.

Conferences tended to use secondary and other venues.

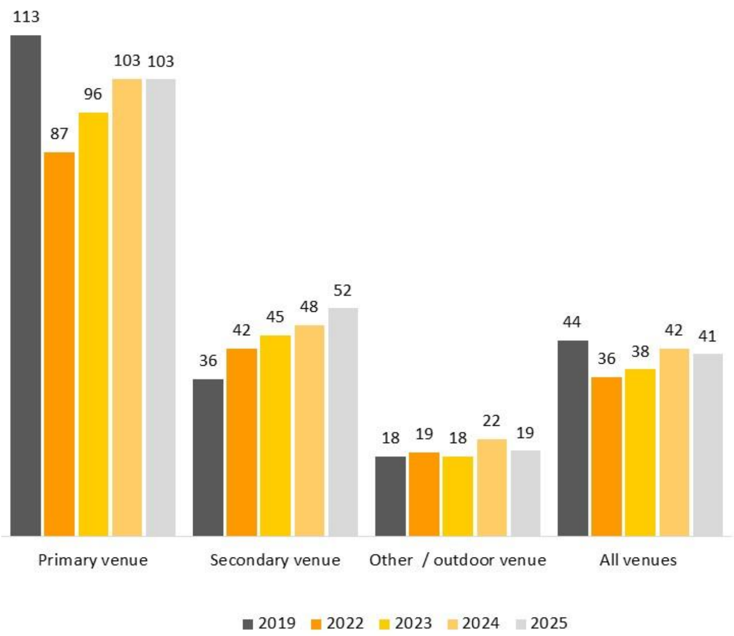
EXHIBITION SHARE - BY VENUE TYPE

Venue type	Trade exhibitions	Consumer exhibitions	Conferences	Total exhibitions
Primary venues	211	162	39	**412**
Secondary venues	180	104	128	**412**
Other / Outdoor venues	89	93	148	**330**

NB data is rounded so may not sum exactly.

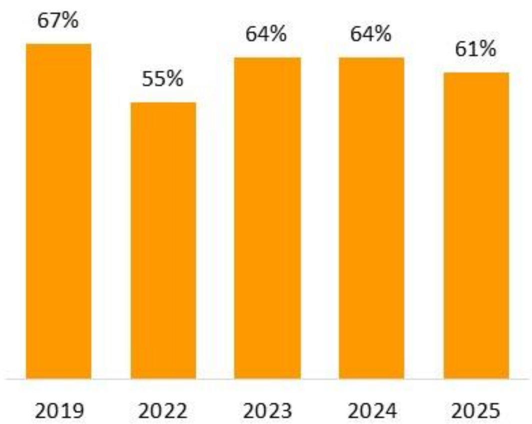
NUMBER AND TYPE OF EXHIBITIONS

AVERAGE EXHIBITIONS - BY VENUE TYPE



On average, venues hosted 41 exhibitions a year (three a month) – about the same as 2024. This varied significantly, with primary venues hosting an average of 103 per annum (8.6 a month) compared to an average of 1.6 per month for other / outdoor venues.

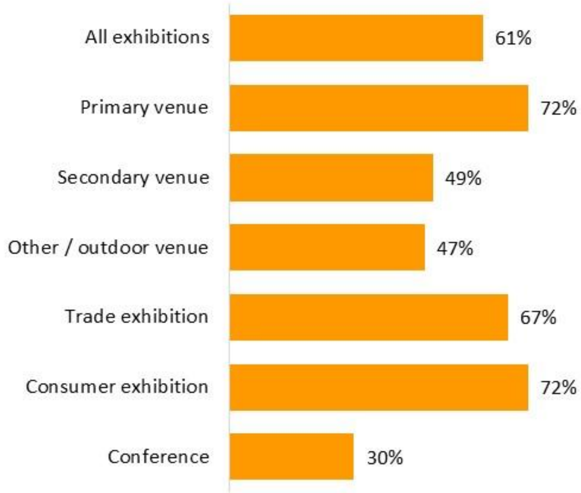
ALL ANNUALLY-HELD EXHIBITIONS(2019-2025)*



In 2025, 61% of exhibitions were held on an annual basis, slightly down on 2024 (64%), with 39% representing non-annual events (although some would be biennials), an increase on 2024. This suggests some churn in the market with new exhibitions / conferences coming on stream.

Primary venues had the highest proportion of repeat events in 2025 – 72%. Trade (67%) and consumer exhibitions (72%) were typically annual while conferences were more peripatetic (with only 30% annual repeat events).

ANNUALLY-HELD EXHIBITIONS 2025*



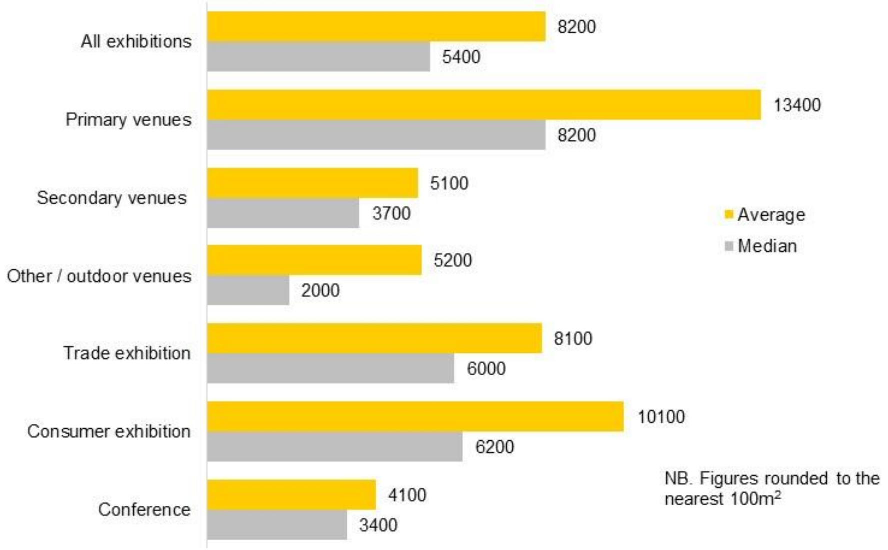
* NB. This analysis is based on venues that have reported in at least the last three years. The sample for other / outdoor venues was small (114 events) and should be treated with some caution.

In 2025, there was a slight increase in the proportion of non-annual exhibitions.

EXHIBITION SIZE

Typical (median) gross exhibition size (including outdoor space) was 5,400m^2.

TOTAL GROSS EXHIBITION SIZE (AVERAGE AND MEDIAN)



Gross exhibition size varied by event and venue type. Consumer exhibitions (a median of 6,200m^2) and events at primary venues (a median of 8,200m^2) were typically larger than others.

Venue Case Study: Excel London

In addition to robust exhibition show performance we are seeing continued growth in adjacent areas such as corporate proprietary events and large-scale international association congresses.

In the last year we invested c.£350m expanding capacity, improving technology infrastructure and fixating on enhancing customer experience. This investment addresses the evolving demands from the corporate, association and exhibition sectors which we remain committed to serving. The opening of our 25,000 sqm expansion in 2025 significantly increased Excel and London's venue capacity enhancing our global competitiveness.

As marketing investment is more closely scrutinised, exhibitions and corporate events are increasingly valued for their ability to deliver meaningful return on investment – whether in time or commercial outcomes – alongside high-quality engagement and access to senior decision-makers. Recent IPA Bellwether data supports this trend, consistently identifying events as one of the strongest areas of marketing spend.

Alongside unique content, diverse hospitality eco-systems and connectivity are playing an increasingly important role in destination competitiveness. Improvements in transport and accessibility materially influence both attendance profiles and behaviour. In London the Elizabeth Line has improved access across the city, making it easier for senior, time-constrained audiences to attend events, increasing dwell time resulting in elevated ROI and supporting higher-value interactions.

Looking ahead, we expect the market to continue evolving towards more integrated, experience-led formats, with greater emphasis on sustainability, digital capability and demonstrable value. While competition remains strong both domestically and from European destinations, the UK continues to offer a compelling platform for international events through its connectivity, sector strengths and established infrastructure.

EXHIBITION SIZE

The following table summarises the breakdown of events based on gross size. The yellow shaded cells highlight the most common exhibition by either venue or exhibition type.

Just over half of exhibitions (52%) were small or small/medium (i.e. less than 5,000m^2). This was greater for conferences (76%) and other /outdoor venues (78%).

Just over a quarter (27%) of exhibitions were 8,000m^2 or more. For primary venues, half (51%) were 8,000m^2 or more.

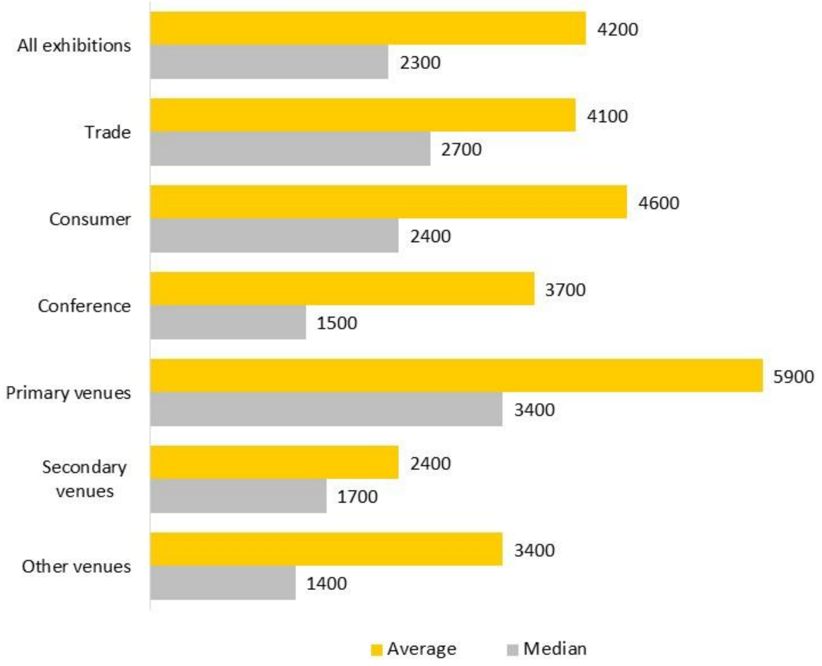
GROSS EXHIBITION SIZE

Exhibition size (based on total gross size)	All Exhibitions (%)	Trade Exhibition (%)	Consumer Exhibition (%)	Conference (%)	Primary Venue (%)	Secondary Venue (%)	Other /Outdoor Venue (%)
Small (up to 2500 m^2)	29%	18%	17%	57%	4%	21%	69%
Small / medium (2500-5000 m^2)	23%	26%	24%	19%	19%	38%	9%
Medium (5000-8000 m^2)	21%	30%	21%	10%	26%	26%	10%
Medium/large (8000-15000 m^2)	16%	15%	22%	8%	25%	12%	9%
Large (15000+ m^2)	11%	12%	16%	6%	26%	3%	3%
Average (gross m^2)							
Indoor gross	7300	8000	9000	4000	13400	4900	3700
Total (indoor and outdoor) gross	8200	8100	10100	4100	13400	5100	5200
Median (based on total gross size)	5400	6000	6200	3400	8200	3700	2000

EXHIBITION SIZE

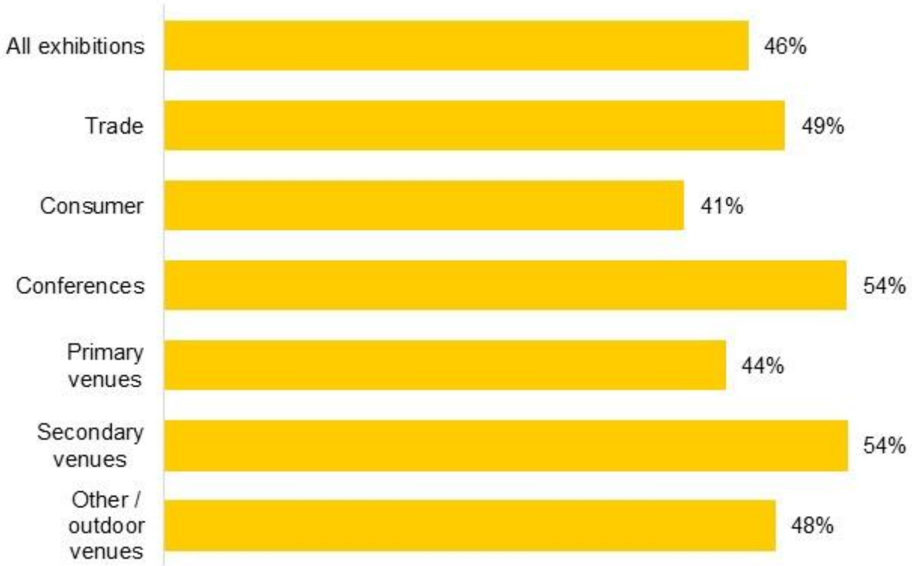
Typical (median) net exhibition size was 2,300m^2 – the average was 4,200m^2 in 2025.

NET EXHIBITION SIZE (AVERAGE AND MEDIAN)



NB. Figures are net total exhibition size (indoor and outdoor) rounded to the nearest 100m^2

TOTAL NET SPACE AS A PERCENT OF GROSS SPACE



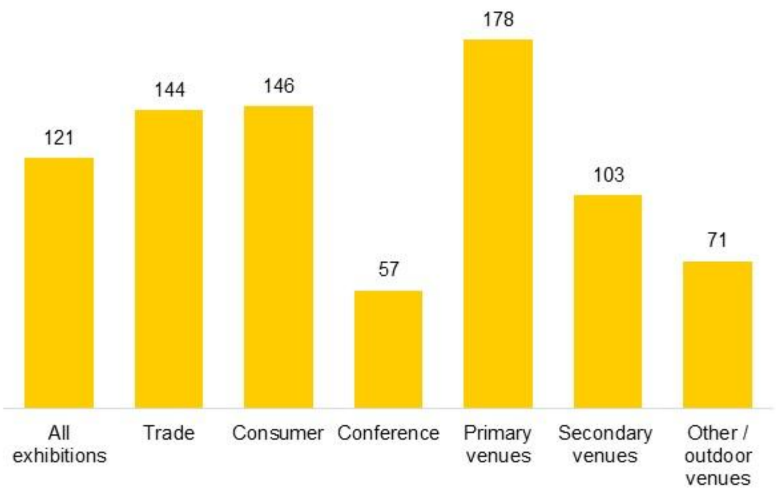
NB. This analysis is based on exhibitions where the data is available for both gross and net exhibition sizes. It is based on total (indoor and outdoor) size. It is unweighted. The overall sample was 785

Net space was less than half of gross space (46%) in 2025. The proportion of net space was higher for trade exhibitions (49%), conferences (54%) and secondary venues (54%).

EXHIBITOR NUMBERS

On average there were 144 exhibitors per trade event and 146 per consumer event.

AVERAGE NUMBER OF EXHIBITORS



Exhibitions at primary venues had the most exhibitors (178 per event) with an average of just over 100 at secondary venues.

NO. OF EXHIBITORS PER EXHIBITION
(by % of exhibitions)

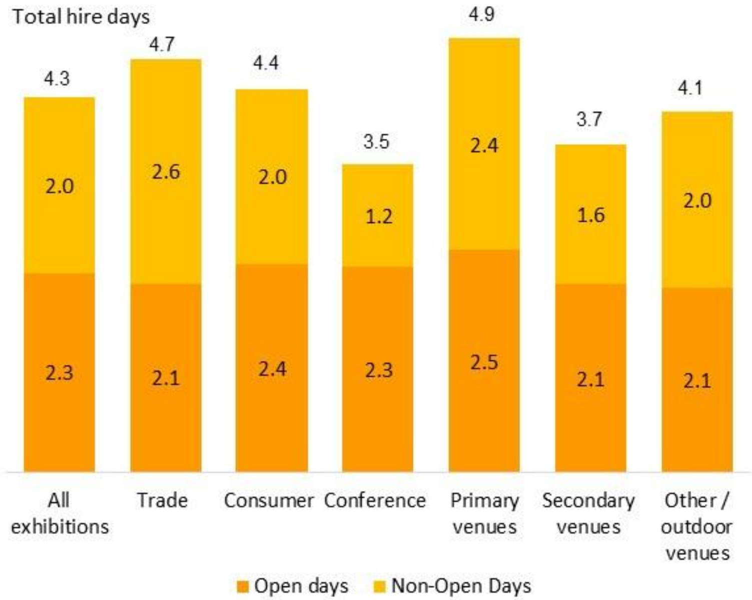
	Small (up to 50 exhibiting companies)	**Medium** (50-150 exhibiting companies)	**Large** (151 - 300 exhibiting companies)	Very **Large** (300+ exhibiting companies)
All exhibitions	30%	35%	24%	11%
Trade exhibitions	21%	39%	27%	13%
Consumer exhibitions	28%	31%	28%	13%
Conference	57%	32%	11%	1%
Primary venue	18%	33%	32%	17%
Secondary venue	36%	42%	19%	4%
Other / outdoor venue	52%	30%	14%	5%

A typical exhibition was, in terms of number of exhibitors, medium sized (i.e. 50-150 exhibitors) – representing 35% of all exhibitions. However, substantial proportions of trade (40%) and consumer exhibitions (41%) were large to very large (i.e. over 150 exhibiting companies).

EXHIBITION DURATION

On average an exhibition occupied a venue for 4.3 days. Exhibitions were open for an average of 2.3 days.

EXHIBITION DURATION



NB. Figures rounded.

EXHIBITION DURATION
(by % of exhibitions)

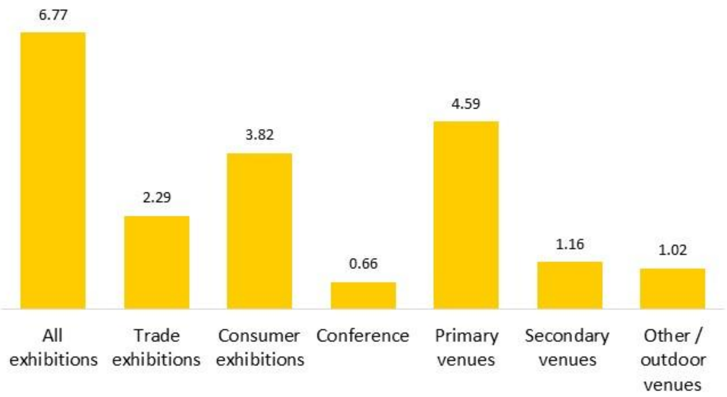
	Trade exhibitions	Consumer exhibitions	Conference	All exhibitions
Venue Hire Days				
1- 2 days	19%	25%	32%	25%
3 days	25%	28%	20%	24%
4 days	19%	12%	26%	19%
5 -7 days	27%	26%	19%	25%
8+ days	10%	9%	3%	8%
Open Days				
1 day	19%	26%	26%	23%
2 days	55%	40%	35%	45%
3 days	20%	19%	26%	21%
4 days	4%	11%	10%	8%
5 + days	1%	5%	4%	3%

Exhibitions, in terms of open days, typically lasted two days (45%) and this was more pronounced for trade exhibitions (55%).

VISITOR NUMBERS

In 2025, there were an estimated 6.8m visits to exhibitions at the UK's main exhibition venues. Typical (median) event attendance was 2,100 visitors.

VISITOR NUMBERS



NB. Figures in millions

Organiser Case Study: Diversified

The operating environment remains uncertain, with challenges varying by sector. A key structural issue is increasing market fragmentation. As organisers, we are carving out smaller, more specialised niches from the same overall audience. While this enables targeted positioning, it reduces the scale of individual events, potentially making them less compelling and harder to differentiate. Over time, this dynamic is likely to drive consolidation.

Global instability is also a concern. Geopolitical tensions and economic uncertainty have limited the ability or willingness of some international visitors and exhibitors to travel, affecting the global reach of events.

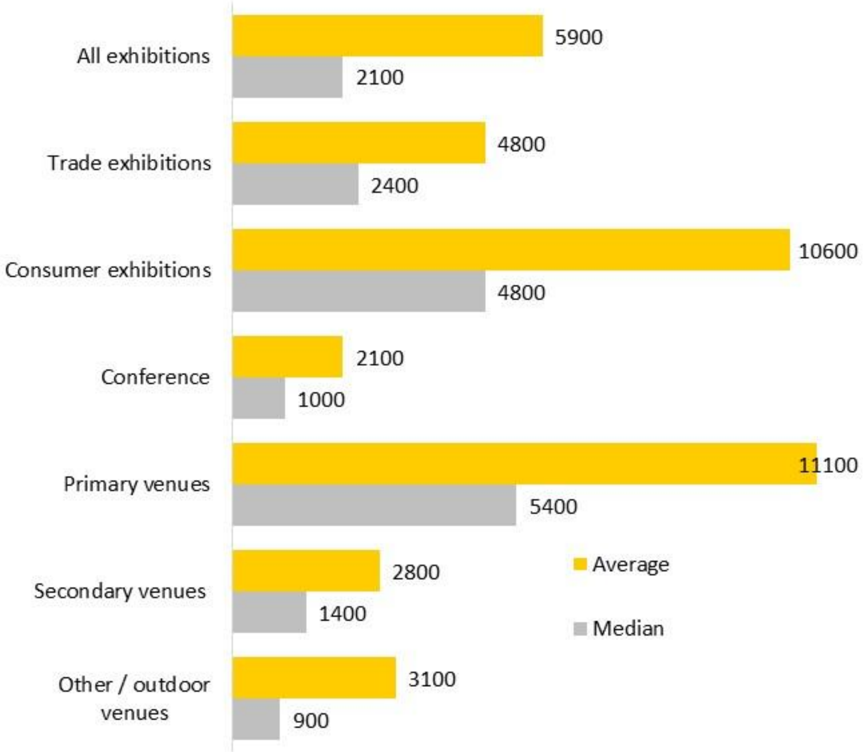
We are seeing significant changes in registration behaviour, with bookings made much closer to opening dates. One established show experienced a 40% decline in pre-registrations over a two-year period, yet total attendance ultimately surpassed figures from two years earlier. This shift towards later decision-making increases forecasting uncertainty and financial risk. Larger exhibitors are also scrutinising terms and conditions more closely, extending sales cycles and slowing the contracting process.

At the same time, expectations have risen considerably. Compared with 15 years ago, trade shows now place far greater emphasis on experience, content and engagement alongside traditional stands, incorporating live entertainment, enhanced features and high-profile speakers. Artificial intelligence presents further opportunities to personalise content, improve matchmaking and enhance value.

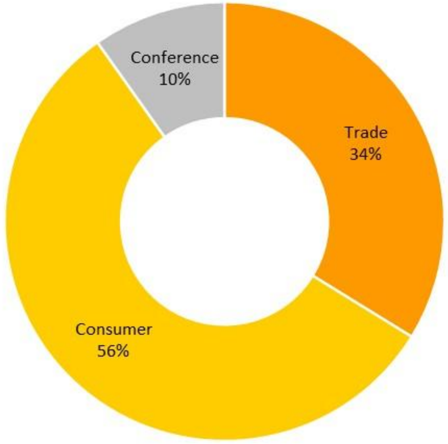
Overall, the UK exhibition industry remains in a strong position, with notable growth in sectors such as technology, while retail and hospitality face more challenging conditions. Increasingly, success will depend on year-round engagement and membership-style models that deliver ongoing value beyond the core event.

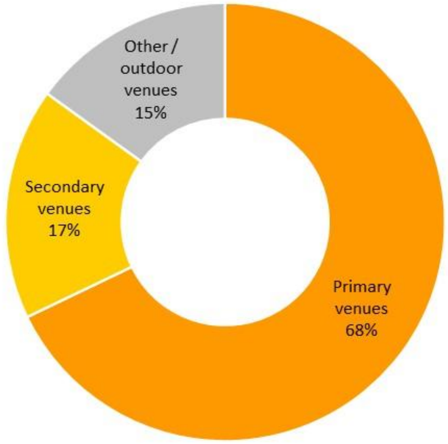
VISITOR NUMBERS

AVERAGE AND MEDIAN VISITOR NUMBERS



NB. Figures rounded to the nearest 100





Consumer exhibitions (median 4,800 and an average of 10,600 visitors) and exhibitions at primary venues (median 5,400 and an average of 11,000) had the largest number of visitors.

Consumer exhibitions (56%) and primary venues (68%) also accounted for most visits.

Supplier Case Study: ESM Ltd

Rising costs of both labour and materials in a less than economically hospitable UK business environment are currently the main challenge for suppliers particularly for those caught between service costs and squeezed exhibitor budgets as all businesses face similar challenges.

This means many suppliers are met with a choice of either providing the same service for less to enable the exhibitor to deliver the experience they want to offer in taking their brands live, or compromising with the likelihood that exhibiting becomes less effective as a medium for growing the business of exhibitors. Difficult conversations and choices are much more frequent than they used to be.

Over time, this may result in many b2b shows becoming smaller in terms of exhibitors, simply as the cost of exhibiting rises and rising energy and commercial costs challenge their own businesses. It may in turn lead to consolidation, co-located events with more emphasis on conference sessions and content to drive education and engagement from businesses as visitors, so that the most high-profile exhibitors continue to see shows as an industry meeting place.

Face to face is more important than ever in this era of virtual meetings and work from home – but that cannot be taken for granted. More than ever before, suppliers need to keep offering value, maintaining compromise on the exhibitor experience to a minimum, whilst organisers remain focused on shows that deliver tangible learning and education alongside the networking benefits that come from attending.

VISITOR NUMBERS

Organiser Case Study: Raccoon

At Raccoon, our AI strategy currently focuses on training and governance, ensuring best-use practices while avoiding security risks or over-reliance. All business decisions remain human-led, and every business case is rigorously reviewed to preserve internal analytical skills. AI is primarily deployed to generate reports and improve time efficiency, allowing teams to focus on interpreting data rather than gathering or organising it.

As a high-growth business, Raccoon moves with pace and is always exploring new opportunities. AI enables us to test ideas quickly, while improved efficiencies expand the capacity of our existing resources. Over the past few years, our processes have evolved significantly. Like many organisers, we continuously seek seamless systems integration, aiming to minimize reconciliations between platforms. In practice, syncing systems is often more complex than anticipated, particularly when integrating newly acquired businesses. Our approach prioritises gradual integration rather than imposition, allowing our tech stack to evolve pragmatically.

This iterative approach has been valuable, helping us identify what works and what doesn’t across the tools we’ve trialled. We are fortunate to have in-house experts capable of leveraging tools creatively, including advanced spreadsheet solutions. Partnerships with providers have been particularly effective, as they actively listen to our needs and adapt their solutions to fit our business rather than the reverse.

Through a combination of human-led decision-making, practical AI adoption, and a flexible, evolving technology stack, Raccoon demonstrates how growing businesses can harness innovation to improve efficiency, test new opportunities, and scale responsibly while maintaining analytical rigor.

Organiser Case Study: Informa

International visitors to Informa exhibitions are influenced by visa requirements, travel costs and geopolitical conditions. These considerations affect attendance patterns and require careful planning to ensure events remain accessible and attractive to a global audience.

Attendee expectations are evolving rapidly, with participants increasingly seeking engaging, interactive experiences. In response, we have enhanced our events through a combination of immersive technologies and experiential features. Augmented and virtual reality (AR/VR) are incorporated within exhibitor booths, while live demonstrations and product showcases provide dynamic, hands-on engagement. Dedicated networking spaces, workshops and data-driven matchmaking tools enable meaningful connections and personalised experiences, ensuring attendees derive maximum value from participation.

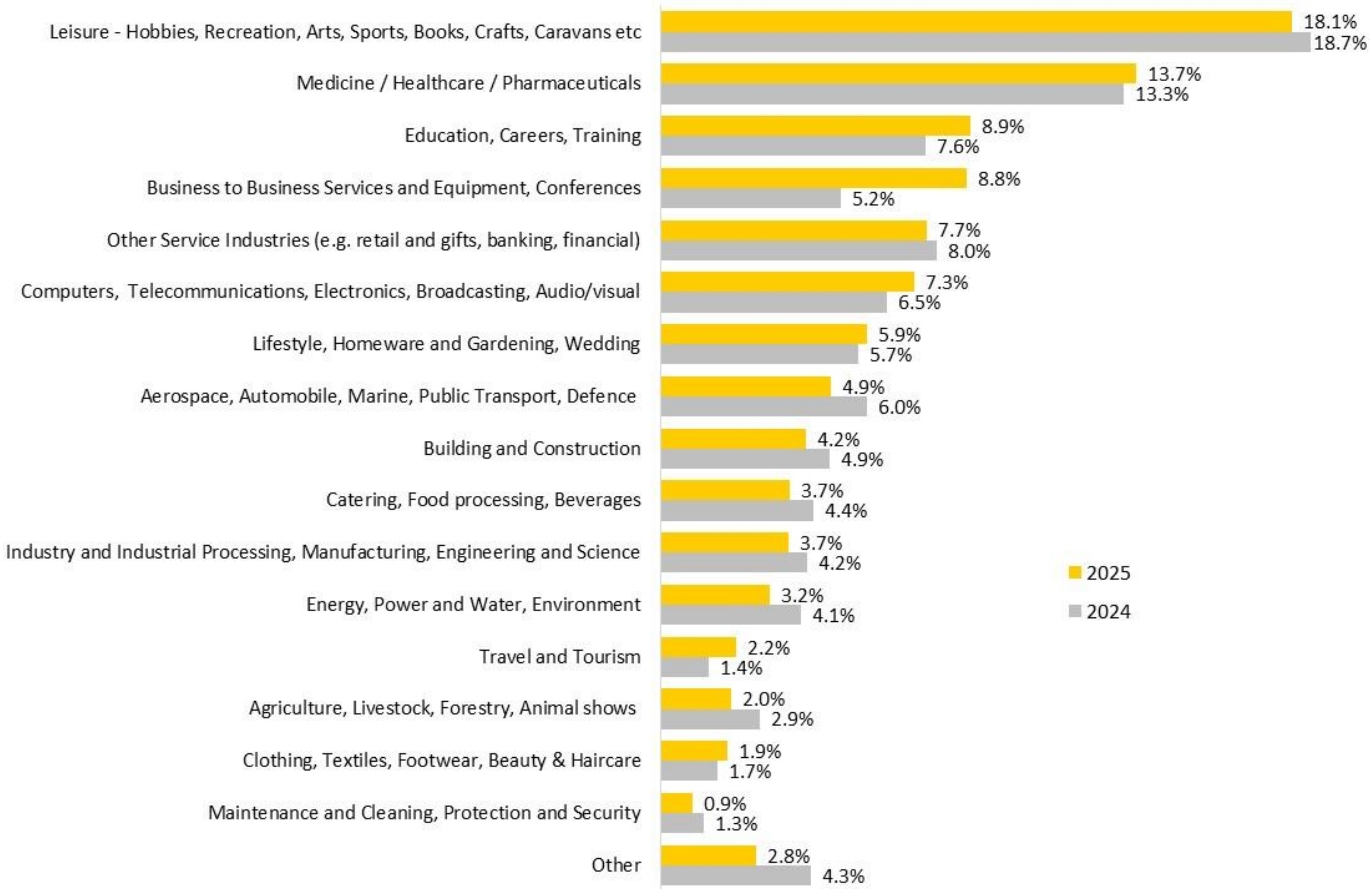
Exhibition organisers face a range of challenges, including rising operational costs, evolving visitor expectations and international competition. Informa addresses these by investing in technology to streamline operations and reduce costs, innovating event formats to align with market demands and strengthening marketing strategies to attract diverse audiences and exhibitors. A commitment to best-in-class customer service underpins these efforts, supporting long-term loyalty and satisfaction.

Looking ahead, we anticipate further advancements in UK exhibitions. Greater integration of immersive technologies will enhance physical event experiences, while sustainability and ESG compliance will become central to planning and delivery. Enhanced personalisation through data-driven insights will continue to improve outcomes for both attendees and exhibitors.

By combining technological innovation, operational efficiency and a strong focus on customer experience, Informa ensures its exhibitions remain relevant, engaging and resilient.

INDUSTRY SECTOR

INDUSTRY SECTOR (% OF EXHIBITIONS)



Leisure and medical remained the largest sectors for exhibitions – representing just under two fifths of the market in 2025.

INDUSTRY SECTOR

INDUSTRY SECTOR

	All Exhibitions (%)	Trade Exhibition (%)	Consumer Exhibition (%)	Conferences (%)
Leisure (Hobbies, Recreation, Arts, Sports, Books, Crafts, Caravans etc.)	18.1%	6.3%	48.3%	3.3%
Medicine, Healthcare, Pharmaceuticals	13.7%	10.6%	3.9%	28.0%
Education, Careers, Training	8.9%	6.3%	10.5%	11.1%
Business to Business Services and Equipment, Conferences	8.8%	13.0%	0.6%	12.0%
Other Service Industries (e.g. retail and gifts, banking, financial)	7.7%	10.6%	4.1%	7.1%
Computers, Telecoms, Electronics, Broadcasting, Audio/Visual	7.3%	8.5%	1.0%	12.6%
Lifestyle, Wedding, Homeware and Gardening	5.9%	4.4%	12.5%	1.0%
Aerospace, Automobile, Marine, Public Transport & Defence	4.9%	7.3%	3.8%	2.6%
Building and Construction	4.2%	6.7%	2.1%	2.9%
Catering, Food processing, Beverages	3.7%	6.2%	1.8%	2.2%
Industry & processing, Manufacturing, Engineering and Science	3.7%	5.2%	2.8%	2.4%
Energy, Power and Water, Environment	3.2%	3.9%	1.6%	3.8%
Travel and Tourism	2.2%	2.2%	2.9%	1.6%
Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry, Animal Shows	2.0%	2.6%	1.7%	1.6%
Clothing, Textiles, Footwear, Beauty, Hair	1.9%	3.0%	2.2%	0.0%
Maintenance & cleaning / Protection & security	0.9%	1.8%	0.0%	0.6%
Other	2.8%	1.5%	0.3%	7.1%

The table summarises the industry sector by exhibition type. The highlighted values indicate the most common sectors.

Consumer exhibitions were strongly orientated to the Leisure sector (approximately 48% of consumer exhibitions), Lifestyle, Wedding, Homeware and Gardening (13%), and the Education/ Careers / Training sector 11%).

Trade exhibitions were more diverse in their industry sector – popular ones were Business to Business Services and Equipment (13%), Medicine, Healthcare and Pharmaceuticals (11%), and other service industries (11%).

Conferences with exhibitions also tended to be from a small number of sectors – Medicine/Healthcare/Pharmaceuticals (28%), Computers, Telecoms, Electronics, Broadcasting, Audio/Visual (13%) and Business Services and Equipment (12%).

SEASONALITY

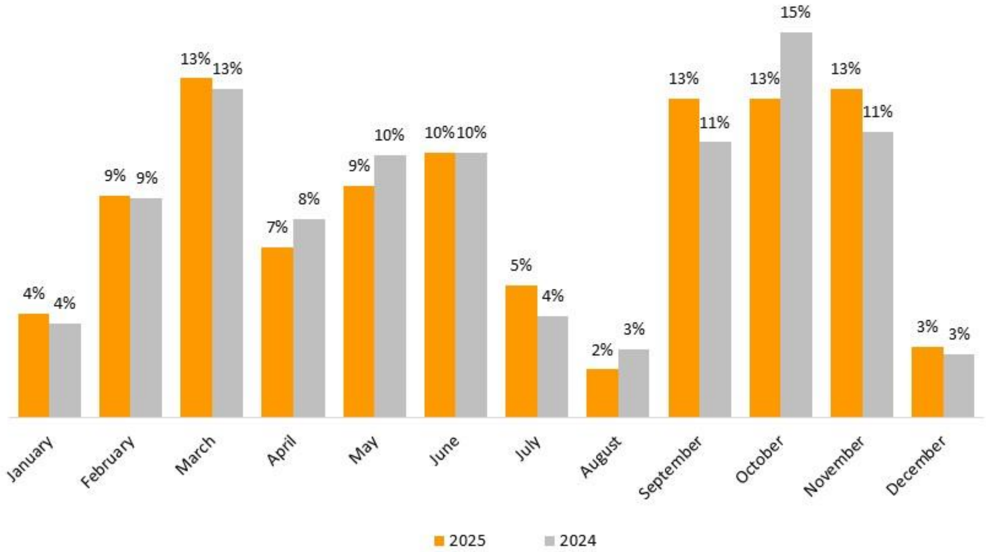
Seasonality of events in 2025 was similar to 2024, with post-summer peak.

March, September, October and November were the busiest exhibition months accounting for 52% of all exhibitions.

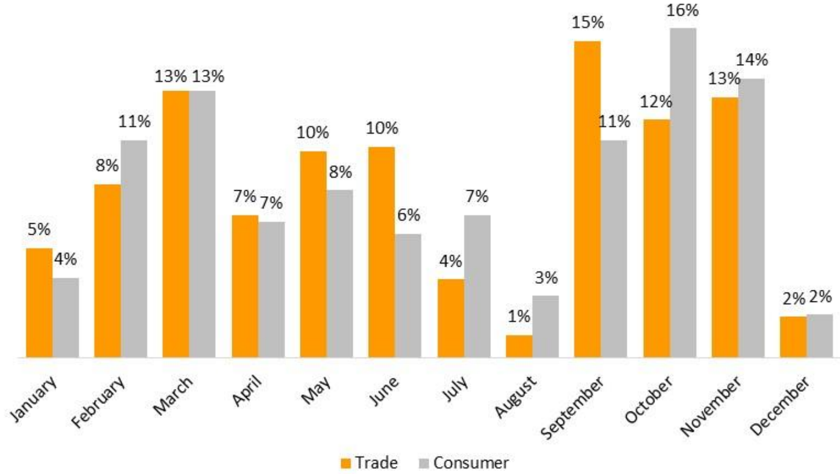
Consumer exhibitions peaked in March, October and November.

Trade exhibitions peaked in March, September and November.

SEASONALITY
(% OF EXHIBITIONS)



SEASONALITY
(% OF TRADE & CONSUMER EXHIBITIONS)



3.

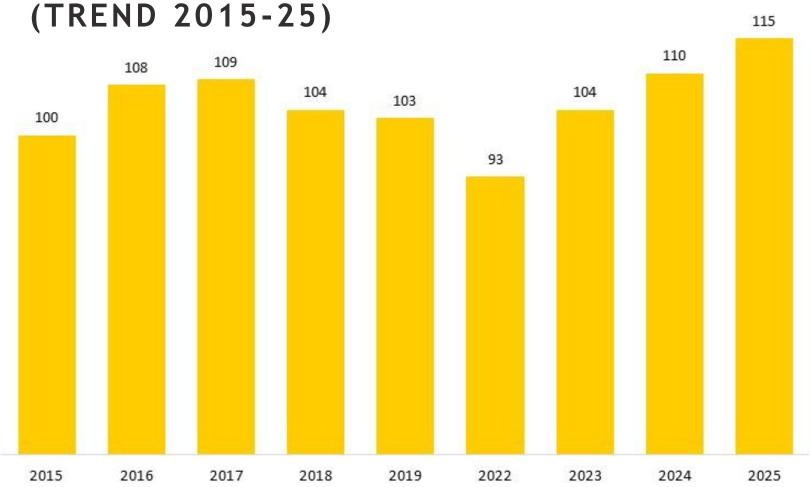
TRENDS

NUMBER OF EXHIBITIONS

The trend analysis in this section is based on a sample of venues where comparable year-on-year data exists (see section 4 for more details).

Number of exhibitions showed further growth in 2025 reaching their highest level since 2015.

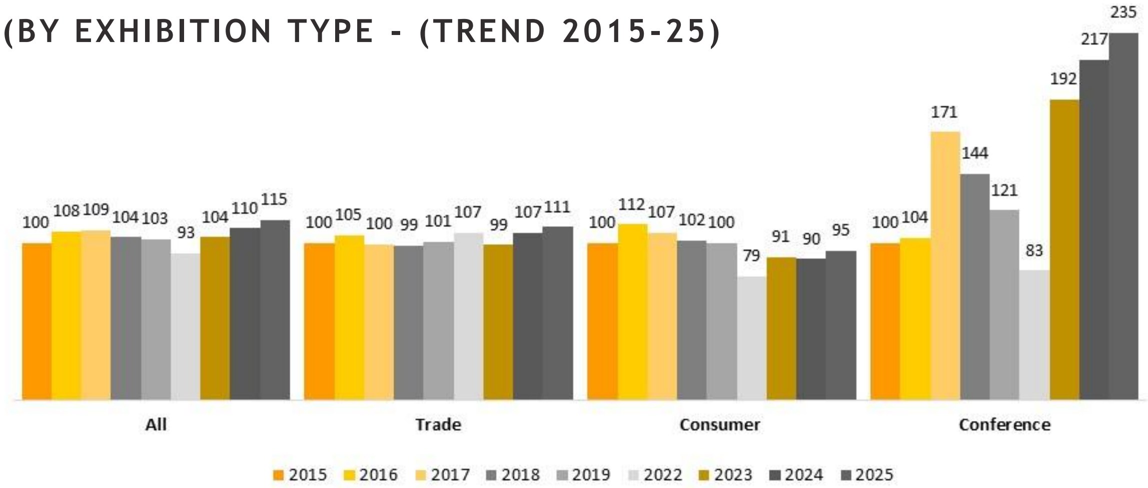
NUMBER OF EXHIBITIONS
(TREND 2015-25)



Note: chart shows change in average value relative to 2015. Figures are indexed. 2015 = 100. Base - 'trend' venues that have provided consistent responses since 2015.

NB. These figures are based on responses from venues that have **consistently reported** since 2015. These include ACC Liverpool, Alexandra Palace, Business Design Centre, Excel London, Farnborough International Exhibition & Conference Centre, Harrogate Convention Centre, the NEC, Olympia, Scottish Event Campus, and Telford International Centre. NB The Great Yorkshire Events Centre was previously included this analysis but has been omitted this year. The historic analysis has been amended accordingly .

NUMBER OF EXHIBITIONS
(BY EXHIBITION TYPE - (TREND 2015-25)



The number of exhibitions was up in 2025 by 5% (over 2024) reaching their highest level since 2015.

There were mixed trends by exhibition type. Conference events continued their post-Covid growth trend, up nearly 8% on 2024. This represented an additional nine events at these venues.

Consumer exhibitions were up 6% on 2024 (an additional 13 events).

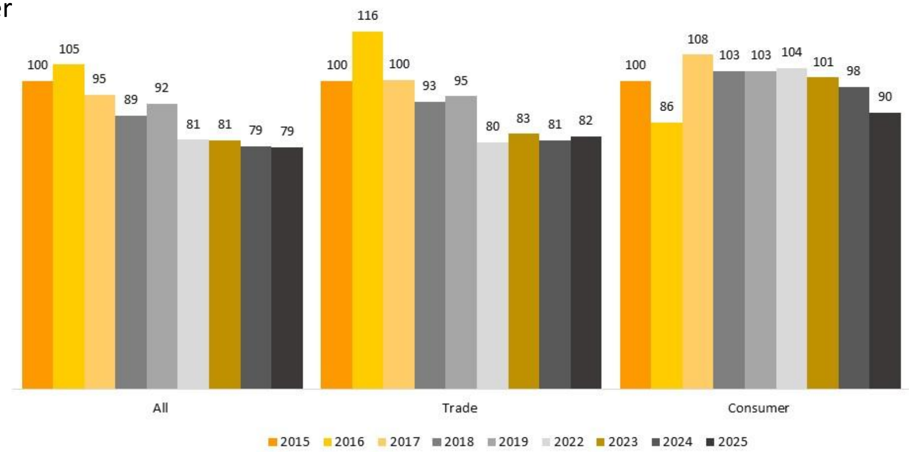
Trade exhibitions showed a modest growth but were up just over 3% on 2024 (albeit this was from a more significant base and represented an additional nine events).

EXHIBITION SIZE

Among primary venues, total gross exhibition space sold was static in 2025.

Average gross size for trade events also remained at a similar level to previous years while average gross size for consumer exhibitions was down in 2025.

AVERAGE GROSS EXHIBITION SIZE (m^2) (TREND 2015-25)



Note: chart shows change in average value relative to 2015. Base: 'trend' venues. Figures are indexed. 2015 = 100

TOTAL GROSS EXHIBITION SIZE(m^2) (TREND 2015-25)

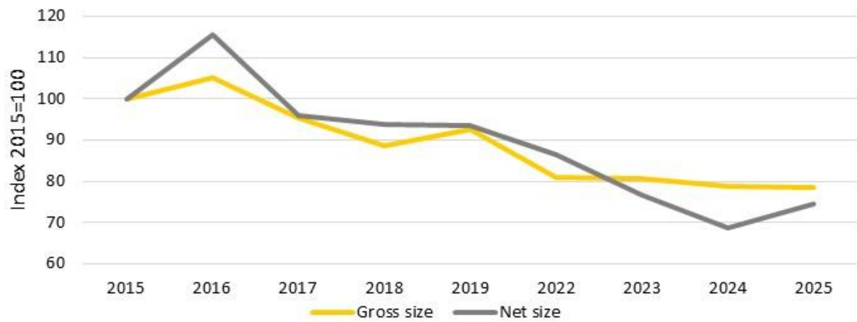
Note: chart shows change in average value relative to 2015. Figures are indexed. 2015 = 100
Base: 'primary' venues (where the dataset is consistent)

In terms of the **total** gross space (for all events – trade consumer and conference) sold among primary venues (above), this was unchanged in 2025. Overall levels remained below the pre-Covid period. The **trade** total was marginally up on 2024 (driven by an increase in the volume of events), while the **consumer** total was slightly down.

Exhibition sizes, based on **average** gross area, were also unchanged and have been at a similar level throughout the post-Covid period.

Average net size for all exhibitions was slightly up in 2025 with increases in the net size for both trade and consumer exhibitions.

AVERAGE GROSS AND NET EXHIBITION SIZE(m^2) (TREND 2015-25)



Note: chart shows change in average value relative to 2015. Base: 'trend' venues. Figures are indexed.

EXHIBITION DURATION

Total number of hire and open days was up in 2025.

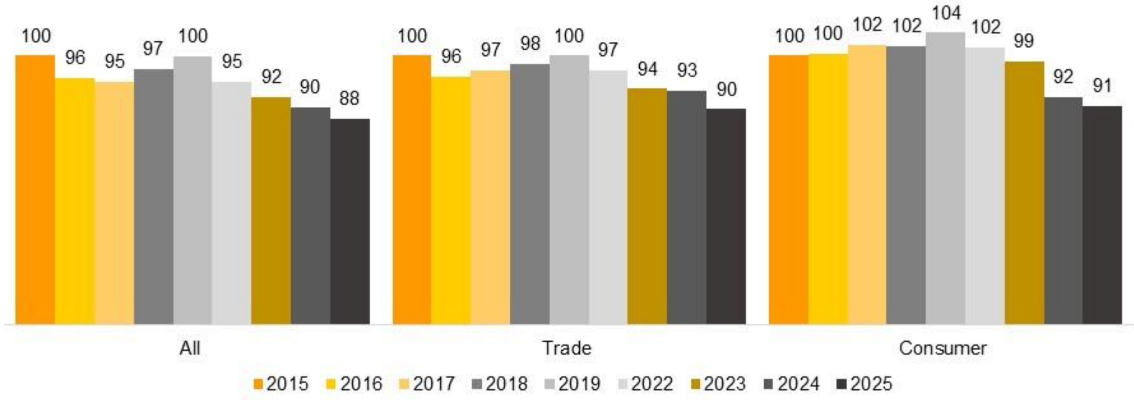
TOTAL VENUE HIRE AND OPEN DAYS
(ALL EXHIBITION TREND 2015-25)

Note: chart shows change in total value relative to 2015. Base = 'trend' venues. Figures are indexed. 2015 = 100.

Total hire and open days were, for all exhibitions, up in 2025 (see above) – driven by increased numbers of events and, for open days, by a slight increase in exhibition duration.

The **average** duration of exhibition open days was up slightly in 2025. This was driven by trade exhibitions (with consumer static). The average duration of hire days was slightly down.

AVERAGE VENUE HIRE DAYS
(TREND 2015-25)



Note: chart shows change in average value relative to 2015. Base: 'trend' venues. Figures are indexed. 2015 = 100

AVERAGE EXHIBITION OPEN DAYS
(TREND 2015-25)

Note: chart shows change in average value relative to 2015. Base: 'trend' venues. Figures are indexed. 2015 = 100

VISITOR NUMBERS

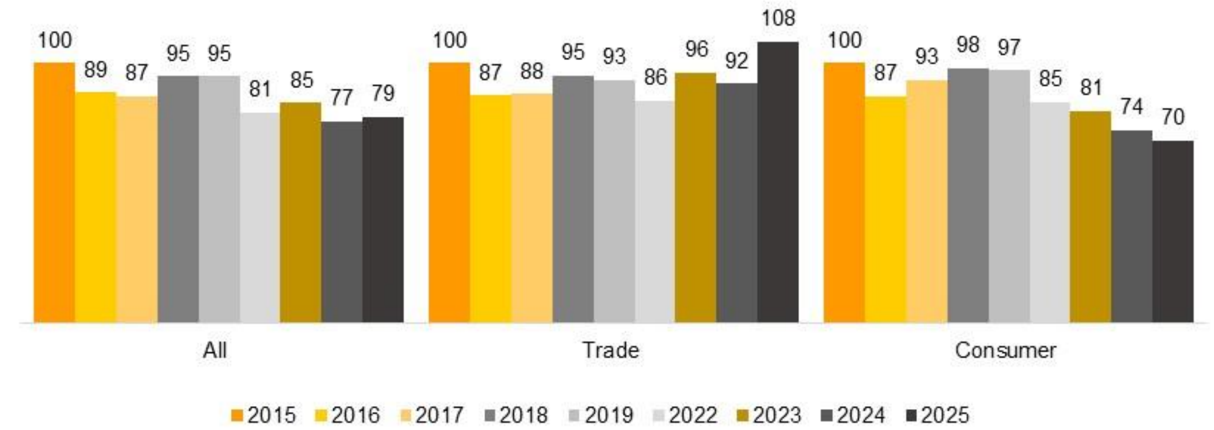
Total visitor numbers were slightly up in 2025.
The average per event was also slightly up.

Total number of visitors was up – see top chart right. (NB these figures are from **primary** venues - i.e. Excel London, Olympia, the NEC and SEC - where a consistent trend exists). Growth was particularly strong in trade exhibitions with visitor numbers reaching their highest point since 2015. Total visitor levels at consumer exhibitions were broadly static (and this was largely due to an increase in the overall number of consumer exhibitions in 2025).

Linked to the previous point, the **average** number of visitors per consumer exhibition was down on 2024 (bottom chart right). The average for trade exhibitions was up significantly.

TOTAL VISITOR NUMBERS
(TREND 2015-25)

AVERAGE VISITOR NUMBERS PER EVENT
(TREND 2015-25)



Note: chart shows change in average value relative to 2015. Figures are indexed. 2015 = 100
Base: 'primary' venues (i.e Excel London, Olympia, the NEC and SEC).

VISITOR NUMBERS

Newly established repeat exhibitions demonstrated the greatest growth in 2025.

TOTAL VISITOR NUMBERS
(TREND 2025 over 2024 by exhibition frequency)

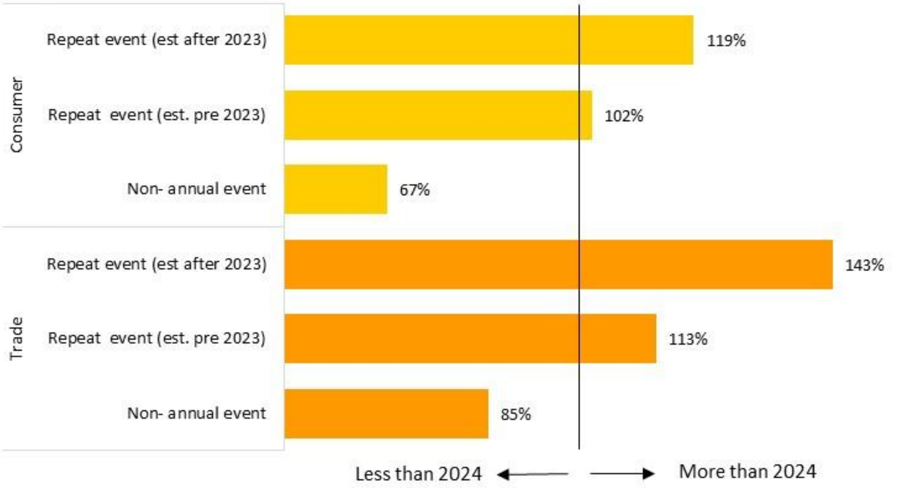


Chart shows the difference in total visitor numbers in 2025 (compared to 2024) by different event types based on when they were established. This is expressed as a percentage (2025/2024) The sample base is events held at primary venues.

The chart (above) shows year on year change (2025 over 2024) in visitor numbers by exhibition frequency. New established exhibitions (i.e. established in 2023 or 2024) showed the greatest growth in 2025. Longer established exhibitions (pre 2023) also showed growth in 2025, albeit this was modest for consumer exhibitions.

Venue Case Study: Manchester Central

Manchester Central continues to attract and manage a broad portfolio of exhibition business, as both new and established organisers are leaning further into the infrastructure and access to expanding audiences that a city centre venue can provide.

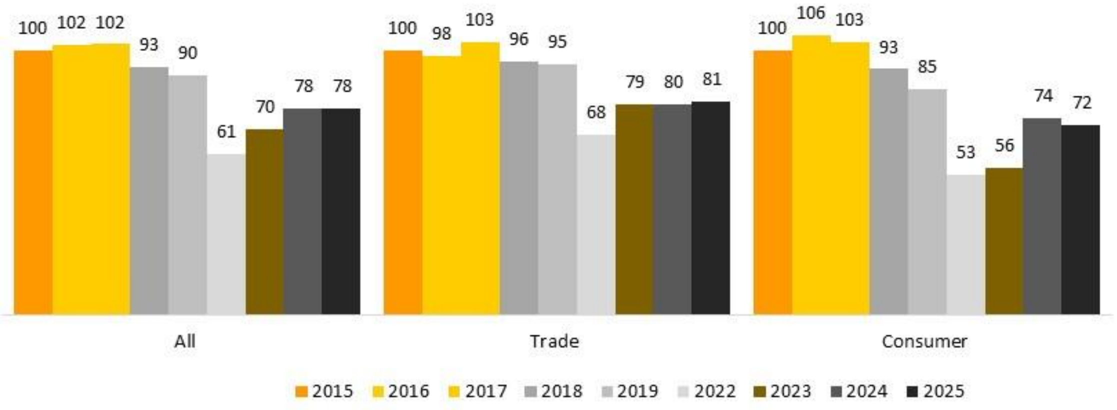
As cost pressures continue, inevitably organisers are becoming increasingly rate conscious, which presents challenges in securing prime dates within the venue diary. This is particularly prevalent with launch events, which often seek high-value datelines at low rates, making it challenging to balance commerciality with a desire to attract and grow new shows.

Looking ahead, expectations for exhibitions at Manchester Central point toward continued evolution in commercial models. There is a clear shift away from traditional square metre pricing toward a more holistic “value-based” approach, with organisers and venues needing to work more collaboratively and creatively to amplify the value proposition and its impact.

Booking behaviour is also changing: while initial enquiries are coming in with shorter lead times, there is a growing willingness from organisers to commit to multi-year deals once an event proves successful, particularly as venue availability becomes more constrained.

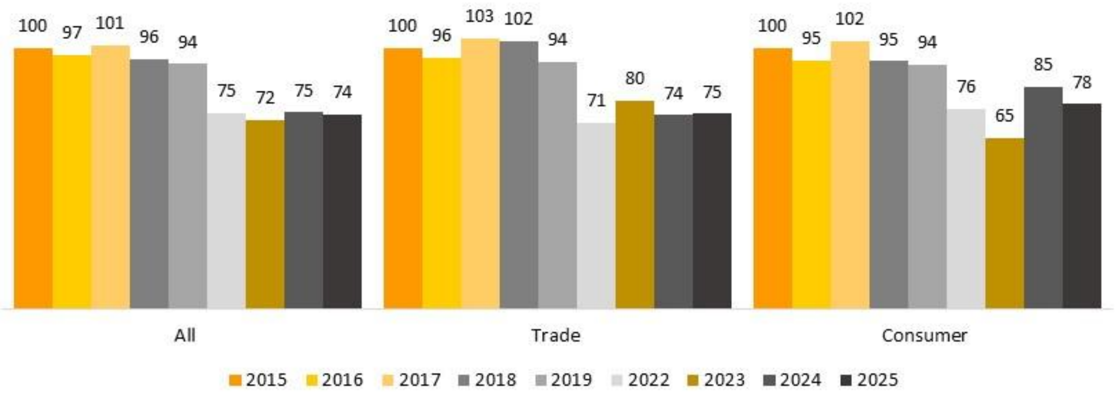
EXHIBITORS

TOTAL NUMBER OF EXHIBITING COMPANIES (TREND 2015-25)



Note: Figures are indexed. 2015 = 100. Base: total number of exhibiting companies at **primary** venues.

AVERAGE NUMBER OF EXHIBITING COMPANIES PER EVENT (TREND 2015-25)



Note: Figures are indexed. 2015 = 100. Base: 'trend' venues. Chart shows change in **average** number of exhibiting companies per event.

The total number of exhibiting companies was unchanged in 2025. The average number per exhibition was also largely static.

The **total** number of exhibiting companies (among primary venues) was broadly static in 2025 for both trade and consumer exhibitions.

The **average** number of exhibitors per exhibition was broadly static for trade exhibitions but slightly down for consumer exhibitions.

TREND SUMMARY

In looking at trends, points to note include:

- The baseline of 2015 is slightly arbitrary and determined by the data that is available. The analysis seeks to use consistent data that allows year-on-year comparisons and, as such, is dominated by exhibitions held at the primary venues (see section 4).
- While the period to 2017 is arguably a peak, the period of 2022 onwards shows a different performance pattern and most indicators at a lower than pre-Covid level. This represents a market impacted by Brexit, Covid, global uncertainties, and inflationary and cost of living pressures.

In terms of overall trends for all exhibitions:

- The **total number** of exhibitions was up significantly in 2025 and at their highest level since 2015. There had been sustained growth since 2022 – i.e. the post-Covid period and shows adaptation and resilience in the sector with an increase in conference events (albeit from a small base), reflecting changes in the marketplace and diversification in offer among venues.
- This has impacted on other indicators. For example, **total** event days have seen sustained growth since 2022 and were at pre-Covid levels in 2025.
- Total numbers of visitors were also up slightly in 2025 but, overall, these have not recovered and remain at about three-quarters of pre-Covid levels.
- Total numbers of exhibitors and gross space sold were static in 2025 and, like visitor numbers, had not recovered to pre-Covid levels.
- Looking at measures on an **average** (rather than total) basis, performance in 2025 for all exhibitions was broadly on a par with the last few years. **Average** gross size, duration, visitor numbers and exhibitor numbers remain at approximately 75% to 90% of their pre-Covid levels.

Trade and consumer exhibitions show different patterns and trajectories. While numbers of exhibitions were up for both in 2025, tradeshows have demonstrated a robust growth in recent years with numbers above pre-Covid levels. This reflects a continued interest in, and value to, attending exhibitions from a business and sustainability perspective. Consumer shows remain slightly below pre-Covid levels.

Average numbers of visitors to **trade** exhibitions have also shown year-on-year increases since 2022 with levels reaching a high point in 2025. In contrast, average visitor numbers to **consumer** exhibitions have shown a steady decline since 2019 and are at around 70% of pre-Covid levels.

Trade exhibitions, in the post-Covid period, are however smaller and shorter. Average gross size and numbers of exhibiting companies have been static since 2022 and are around 75-80% of their previous levels. Since 2022, average hire days have reduced slightly but open days have increased and are near their 2019 level.

Performance patterns among **consumer** exhibitions have been more varied. Average numbers of exhibitors, since 2022, have been a little up and down, and are around 80% of pre-Covid levels. Average gross size and hire days have declined since 2022 but are around 90% of pre-Covid levels. Open days have levelled off in 2025 and are closer to pre-Covid levels.

4.

METHOD

RESEARCH APPROACH

The approach to SASIE included the following steps:

- Data collection – from both exhibition venues and organisers;
- Data checking and reconciliation;
- Weighting data and grossing up;
- Trend analysis.

DATA COLLECTION

The survey involved data collection from both UK venues and organisers (typical AEV and AEO members) on a self-completion basis. The same questionnaire was used for both groups and a range of data was collected on individual exhibitions.

DATA CHECKING

The survey then involved a process of data checking and reconciliation. This included checking responses to ensure exhibitions qualified (see glossary of terms) – exhibitions outside this threshold were excluded from the analysis.

The survey collected data on exhibitions from both venue and organiser perspectives which meant duplicated values for some exhibitions. These were reconciled to ensure only one record per exhibition (NB where there were discrepancies, responses from organisers were treated as the principal response).

SAMPLE UNIVERSE

Exhibition venues were categorised into three groups - primary, secondary, other/ outdoor venues. These were defined partly on the basis of relative size but also on their likely business levels as the table (below) summarises.

VENUE CATEGORISATION

Category	Description	Venues
Primary	Primary venues have a capacity of over 20,000m^2. They are those that are proactive in the exhibitions sector and manage a high volume of events. Exhibitions will account for all (or the majority) of their turnover	Excel London, the NEC, Olympia and Scottish Event Campus (SEC)
Secondary	Typically, secondary venues have a capacity of 10,000 to 20,000m^2 (but some may be larger or smaller). They are moderately busy in the marketplace with approximately one to two events each month. Exhibitions will form a significant part of their turnover.	ACC Liverpool, Business Design Centre, Coventry Building Society Arena, Farnborough International Exhibition & Conference Centre, Harrogate Convention Centre, Manchester Central, P&J Live, Telford International Centre
Other and outdoor	Typically (but not always) smaller venues (with less than 10,000m^2 capacity) or venues where a significant component of their exhibition space is outdoors. Exhibitions will tend to be an ancillary or minority part of their business and they will only host exhibitions on an ad-hoc or irregular basis	Alexandra Palace, Barbican Exhibition Centre, Bournemouth International Centre, The Brighton Centre, Central Hall Westminster, Cranmore Park, Eikon Exhibition Centre, Kent Event Centre, The Kia Oval, ICC Wales, QEII Centre, Royal Armouries Leeds, Royal Highland Centre, Silverstone International Conference & Exhibition Centre

RESEARCH APPROACH

RESPONSE RATES

The following table summarises the number of identified venues (by categories) and sample (in terms of number of responses).

SAMPLE

	Supply	Sample
Primary	4	4
Secondary	8	8
Other /outdoor	17	10

In addition, responses were received from seventeen organisers.

WEIGHTING DATA AND GROSSING UP

The survey collected data from the majority of all venues in AEV membership. The survey provides a comprehensive picture of the performance of primary and secondary venues.

There are two potential issues with SASIE. Firstly, it is a sample survey – as the table highlights, there are responses from most but not all venues. Secondly, where there are responses, there is not necessarily a complete dataset – i.e. respondents excluded some data.

To address this, the data needs to be weighted and grossed up to provide an estimate of the overall performance of the sector (not just the sample). This has been done on the basis of venues (rather than organisers) since the overall supply is known.

Venues perform in different ways, so they have been weighted according to their categorisation. Weighting was a two-stage process.

Firstly, sample data was grossed up to provide an estimate of the overall number of exhibitions. The following table illustrates the process for all exhibitions. The estimated number of exhibitions (column C) was calculated by multiplying the number of venues (by venue category – column A) by the average number of exhibitions per venue (Column B). NB one of the other / outdoor venues reporting this year had a different performance pattern from the others. This was included in the analysis but not weighted to ensure it did not disproportionately impact on the results.

GROSSING UP PROCESS

	A. No. of venues	B. Average no of exhibitions per venue	C. Estimated exhibitions
Primary	4	103.0	412
Secondary	8	51.5	412
Other / outdoor*	16	14.6	233

* NB. Excludes outlying venue (see note above)

RESEARCH APPROACH

The second stage was to align other data in the sample (e.g. visitor numbers, exhibition duration etc.) by weighting it so that it reflected the overall universe. The weighting framework was based on the number of exhibitions derived in the first stage - i.e. the number of exhibitions by exhibition type and venue categorisation. Unless otherwise stated, all data in this report is weighted by the exhibition / venue. Sample data for consumer exhibitions at other venues is weighted by the estimated number of consumer exhibitions in other venues etc.

For data relating to visitor numbers, outlying values (i.e. exhibitions with over 100,000 visits) in the sample were excluded for 'other and outdoor venues' since they could have a significant impact and skew on the results when grossed up. In addition, a small number (about ten in 2025) of consumer show events (e.g. indoor Funfairs, Tutankhamun: The Immersive Experience and Universum) with long opening durations and limited (or no) exhibitors were excluded from the analysis. While an important part of the business mix for some venues and organisers, these were not comparable events with mainstream trade and consumer exhibitions and skewed the results in some areas.

TREND ANALYSIS

Section 3 provides a trend analysis. This was based on data from venues that have provided consistent responses annually since 2015.

These include ACC Liverpool, Alexandra Palace, Business Design Centre, Excel London, Farnborough International Exhibition & Conference Centre, Harrogate Convention Centre, the NEC, Olympia, Scottish Event Campus, and Telford International Centre In 2025, this group hosted 60% of total exhibitions. NB The Great Yorkshire Events Centre was previously included in this analysis but has been omitted in 2025. The historic analysis has also been amended accordingly.

The analysis on visitor numbers was, however, based on the four primary venues (Excel London, the NEC, Olympia, Scottish Event Campus) because they have provided consistent data since 2015 relating to visitor numbers.

This trend analysis should not necessarily be regarded as representative of the whole exhibition sector. It is largely based on data from primary and, to a lesser extent, secondary venues. It does not represent other/ outdoor venues – a group where exhibitions tend to be more ad-hoc and subject to market variations.

5.

ABOUT THE EVENTS INDUSTRY ALLIANCE

ABOUT EIA

The Events Industry Alliance (EIA) is an alliance of trade associations created by the three event industry bodies: the Association of Event Organisers (AEO), the Association of Event Venues (AEV) and the Event Supplier and Services Association (ESSA) to provide a group secretariat service in the business events industry.

Association of Event Organisers Ltd (AEO) is the trade body representing companies which conceive, create, develop or manage trade and consumer events both in the UK and around the world.

Association of Event Venues Ltd (AEV) is the trade body representing venues of every size and type that host business events both in the UK and internationally.

Event Supplier and Services Association Ltd (ESSA) is a trade association representing the very best suppliers of goods and services to the events industry.

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