



Bolton Food and Drink Festival 2025: Visitors Survey Findings

Findings by Consultation & Engagement Team

February 2026

1. Background and methodology

Between 26th August and 30th September 2025, the council ran a survey, seeking to engage visitors that engaged with Bolton Food and Drink Festival 2025 in sharing their reflections and experience. This survey intended to gather feedback from people that attended the Bolton Food and Drink Festival 2025 to find out levels of satisfaction with different aspects of the festival, to see what improvements could be made and to see how visitors became aware of the festival.

Throughout the festival weekend engagement took place with visitors, who requested to provide their feedback about the event. In addition, an electronic survey was made available on our Consultation website, which was also widely circulated on social media. An incentive was offered in the form of a prize draw, with the chance to win an assortment of items including a signed copy of “The Yorkshire Forager” by Alysia Vasey, aprons, flasks, glasses and stationery.

There were 248 responses in total.

Respondents were surveyed using a questionnaire tool made up of open and closed questions, over a period of 5 weeks, providing them with the opportunity to reflect and share their thoughts.

A copy of the questionnaire is included at the end of this document, located in Appendix A.

Analysis notes

- Results are presented in the questionnaire format with ‘Don’t know’ type responses removed unless stated.
- Comments have been categorised where feasible and include sentences, phrases or whole quotes. Unless otherwise stated, categories with 6 or more responses are shown. Categories may overlap and a comment from one respondent included in multiple categories. A sample of comments [verbatim] are included in the report. Comments may be abbreviated so that only the relevant extract is included. One comment may be coded into multiple categories, and each category may only cover a certain aspect of the comment, for example a respondent may have made both positive and negative comments about the same aspect.
- Base: unless otherwise stated the base is the number of respondents to a particular question.
- Data has been cleansed where appropriate, e.g., comments moved into existing responses.

2. Consultation responses

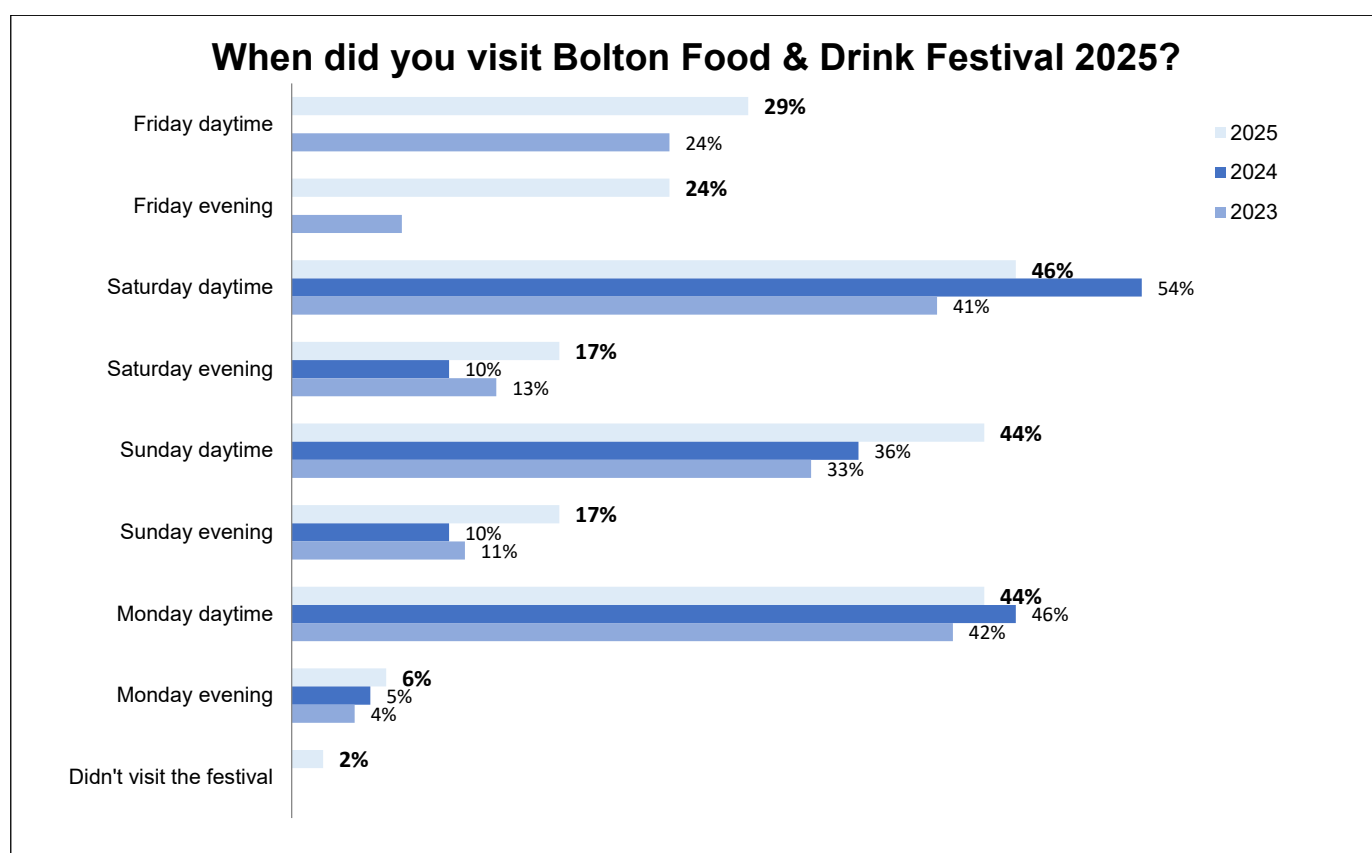
A number of open-ended questions were included in the questionnaire to give respondents the opportunity to comment on Bolton Food and Drink Festival 2025. A total of 248 people took part in the survey, but 4 of these stated they did not visit the festival. 242 respondents stated they are a UK resident, and none were not a UK resident.

205 visitors entered the prize draw. Out of 236 respondents, 29 were happy for the Markets and Marketing Team to contact them to further discuss volunteering at future Bolton Food and Drink Festivals. The details were forwarded to the appropriate team.

3. Your visit

3a. Visit times

Respondents were asked when they visited BFDF 2025. Of the 248 responses received, at least 44% attended on Saturday daytime, Sunday daytime or Monday daytime. Another common time for visitors attending was Friday daytime (29%) and just under a fifth (17%) of respondents stated that they visited on Saturday evening or Sunday evening. 2% stated that they did not visit the festival.

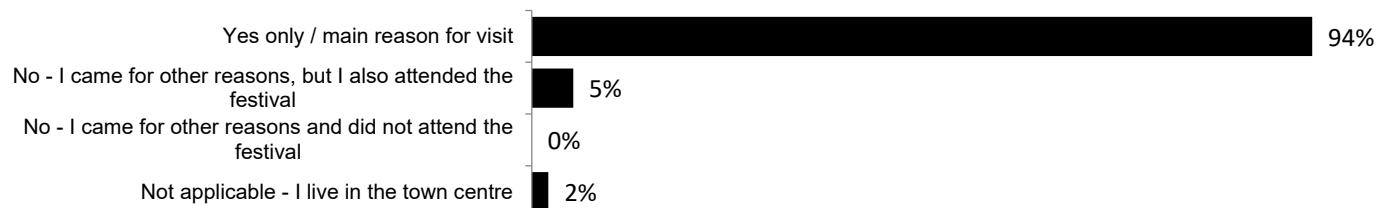


2025 base: 248; 2024 base: 435; 2023 base: 697

3b. Reason for attending Bolton Food and Drink Festival 2025

Respondents were asked whether they visited the town centre specifically to go to BFDF 2025. Most respondents visited the town centre solely because of the festival (94%), which was the same result as the previous year, 5% visited the town centre but for other reasons and attended the festival and 2% of responses stated that they live in the town centre.

Did you visit the town centre specifically to go Bolton Food & Drink Festival?



Base: 244

3c. Staying in Greater Manchester

243 respondents outlined whether they stayed in Greater Manchester to attend BFDF somewhere other than their own home. The majority did not stay somewhere other than their own home (91%) but of the 23 people who did stay elsewhere in Greater Manchester, 18 (7%) stayed in Bolton and 5 (2%) stayed elsewhere within Greater Manchester.

3d. Nights spent in Greater Manchester

19 respondents stated how many nights they spent in Greater Manchester to attend BFDF 2025. 4 respondents spent no nights in Greater Manchester, 4 spent 1 night, 4 spent 2 nights and 3 people spent 4 nights in Greater Manchester. 1 person spent 7 nights in Greater Manchester.

How many nights did you spend in Greater Manchester to attend the Bolton Food & Drink Festival?



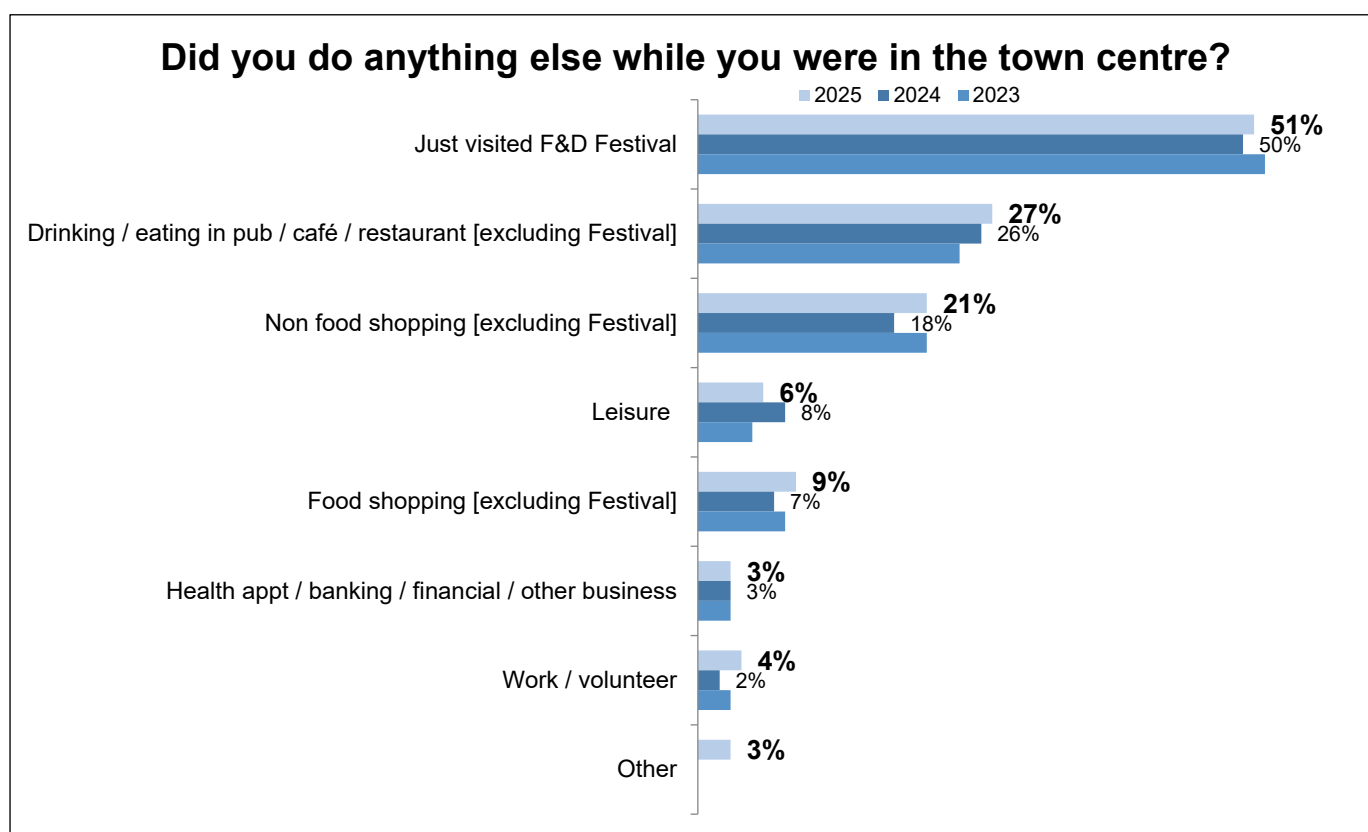
Base: 19

3e. Type of accommodation

Of the 19 responses received, 8 stayed with friends and family, 2 stayed in paid accommodation and 9 chose "other". Other types of accommodation mentioned included personal property: comments such as "*I live in Bolton*" or the wider Bolton borough were mentioned 6 times, and "*at home*" / "*my own property*" were also mentioned. One person mentioned "*friends and family stayed with me for the festival*".

3f. Other activities in the town centre

232 respondents shared the other activities that they did whilst in the town centre. A moderate proportion of the respondents stated they went drinking / eating at a pub, café, or restaurant (27%), non-food shopping (21%) and food shopping (9%), though the majority stated they only attended the festival (51%). Of the 8 that chose “other”, 7 provided further comments, of which some included: “Discovered arcade for kids”, “Bolton pantomime, faulty towers meal”, “Bolton market food hall had really good singers” and “Nothing because town is a dump”.



Base: 232

3g. Attraction of Bolton Food and Drink Festival

Respondents were asked to state what brings them to Bolton Food and Drink Festival. Of the 244 responses received, the most popular options were to buy / see / try different foods (81%), the atmosphere / buzz (68%), and that it is a local (67%) and free event (67%).

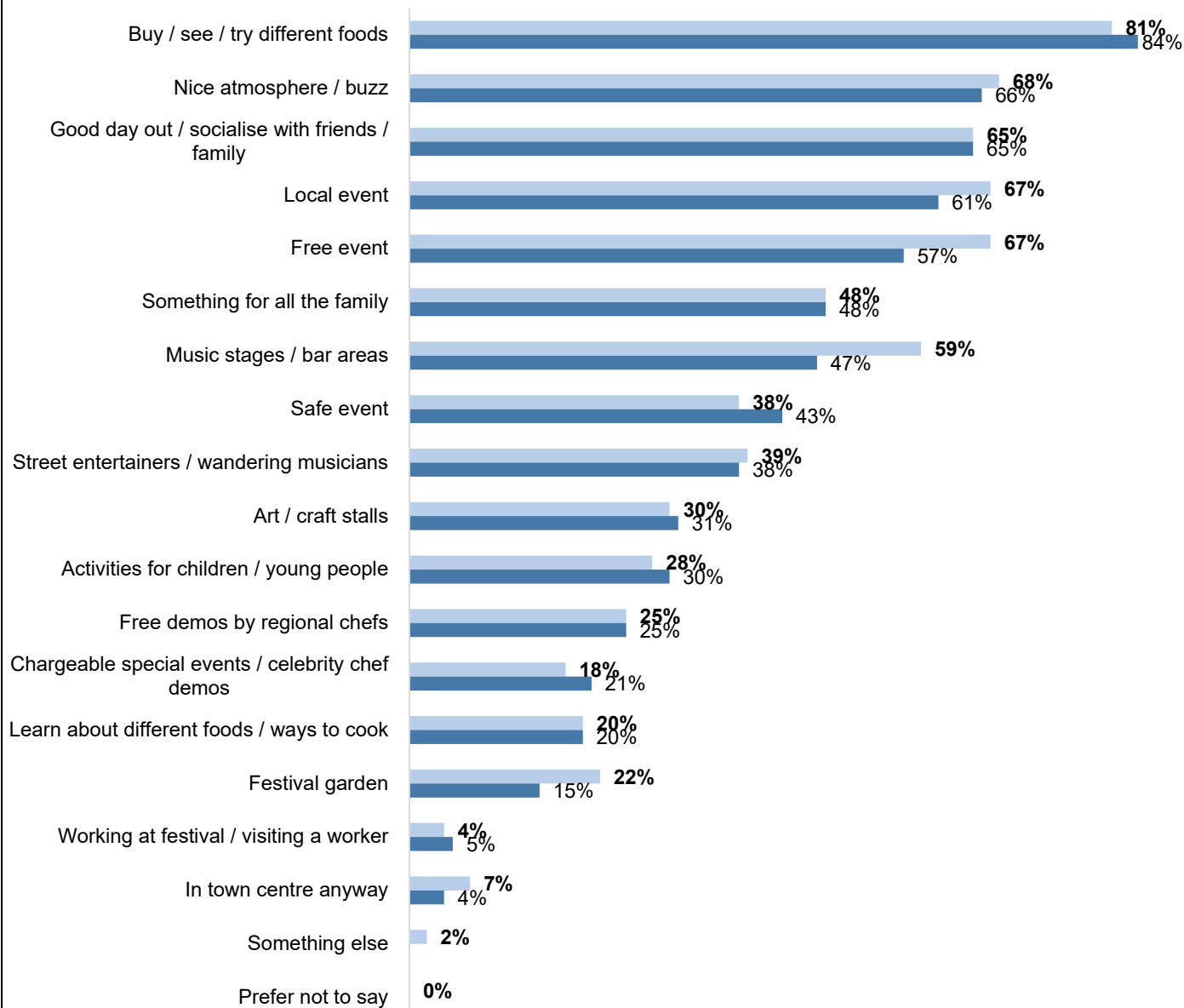
Of the six “something else” responses received, comments included:

- “Kids kept asking to go from previous years experience”
- “I was working for one of the bands playing at the festival (not employed by the festival itself)”
- “The mexican wave ride!! i went last year when it was the crazy frog and loved it so much i had to come back for it”
- “It was so expensive people need to put the cash points a bit more”

- “Didn’t go because over priced food has turned the event into just a commercial enterprise full of councillors picking up freebies”
- “My daughter wanted noodles”

What attracts you to Bolton Food and Drink Festival?

2025 2024

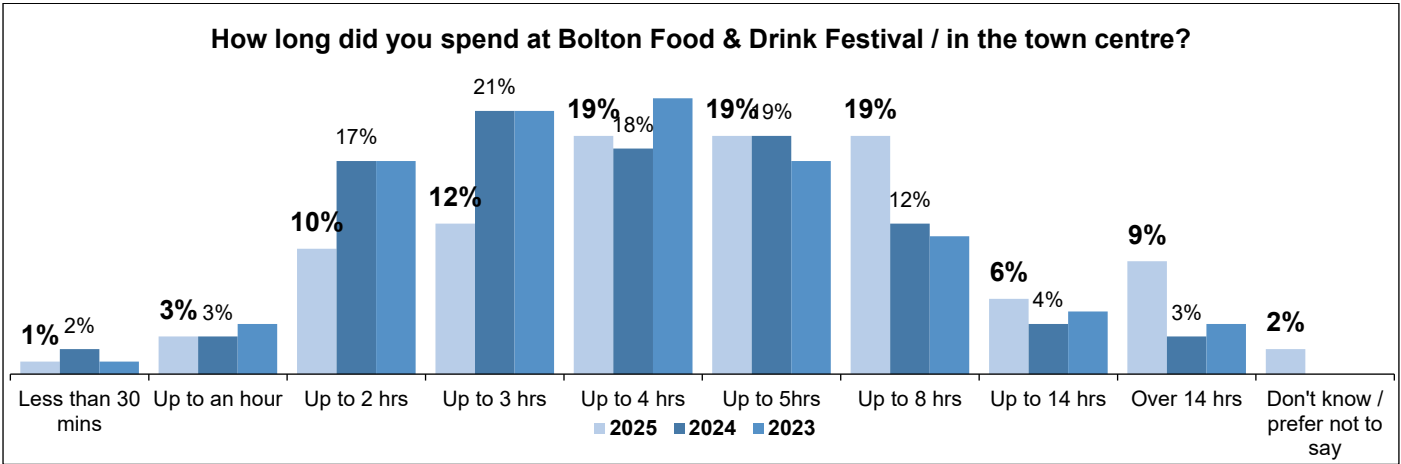


Base: 244

3h. Time spent at Bolton Food and Drink Festival

There 243 responses received outlining how much time visitors spent at the festival or the town centre. 19% of respondents attended up to 8 hours, a 7% increase from the previous year, while another 19%

spent up to 5 hours and a further 19% spent up to 4 hours there. Almost 15% of respondents spent less than 2 hours at the festival or in the town centre and another 15% spent up to 14 hours or over 14 hours there. A minority did not know or preferred not to say.

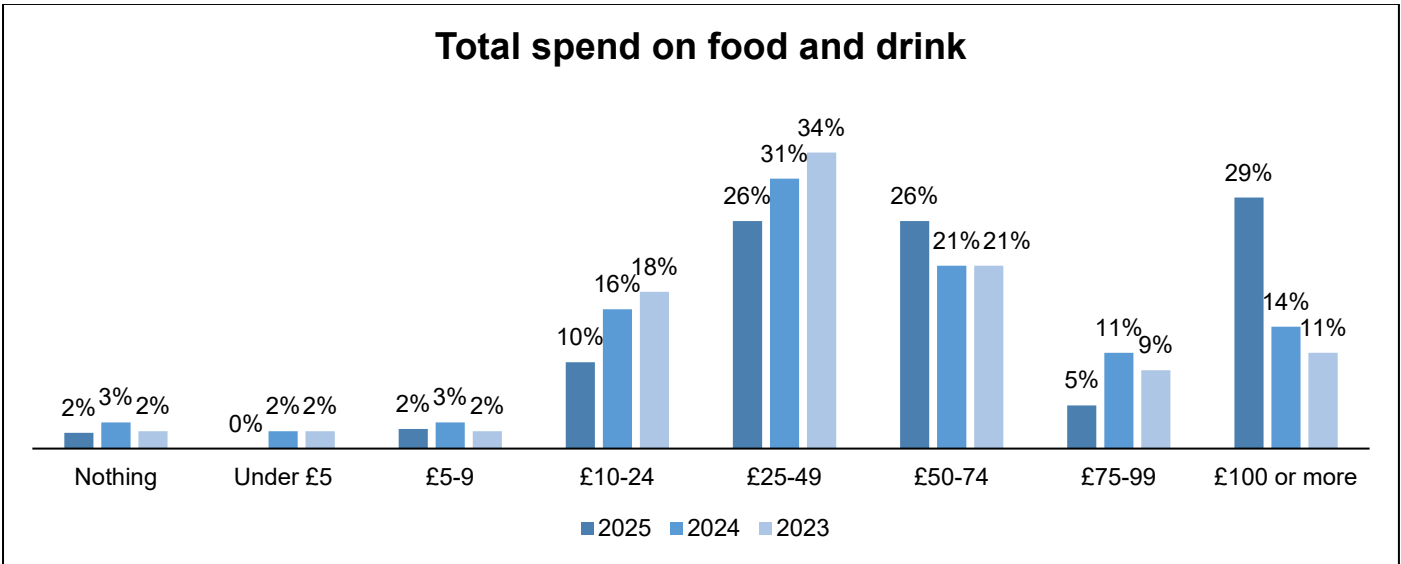


Base: 243

3i. Visitor spending

Spend on food and drink

Respondents were asked to outline how much they spent on food and drink at the festival in total across all visits. 222 responses were received. 29% of respondents spent £100 or more, which is a 15% increase from the previous year, whilst 31% spent between £50 and £99. 38% of respondents spent up to £49 at the festival. A minority of respondents spent nothing (2%) at the festival.

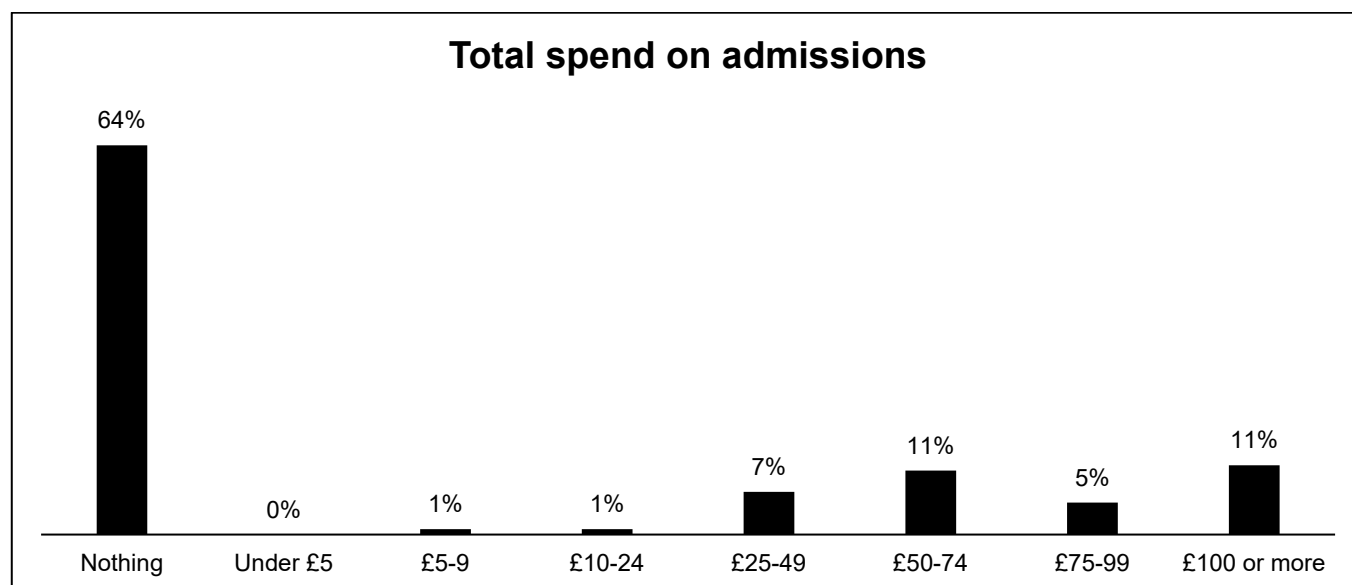


Base: 222

Spend on admissions

Respondents were asked to share how much they spent on admissions charges for ticketed events. 64% of respondents did not spend any money, and those that did spend on admissions spent between £5 to £100

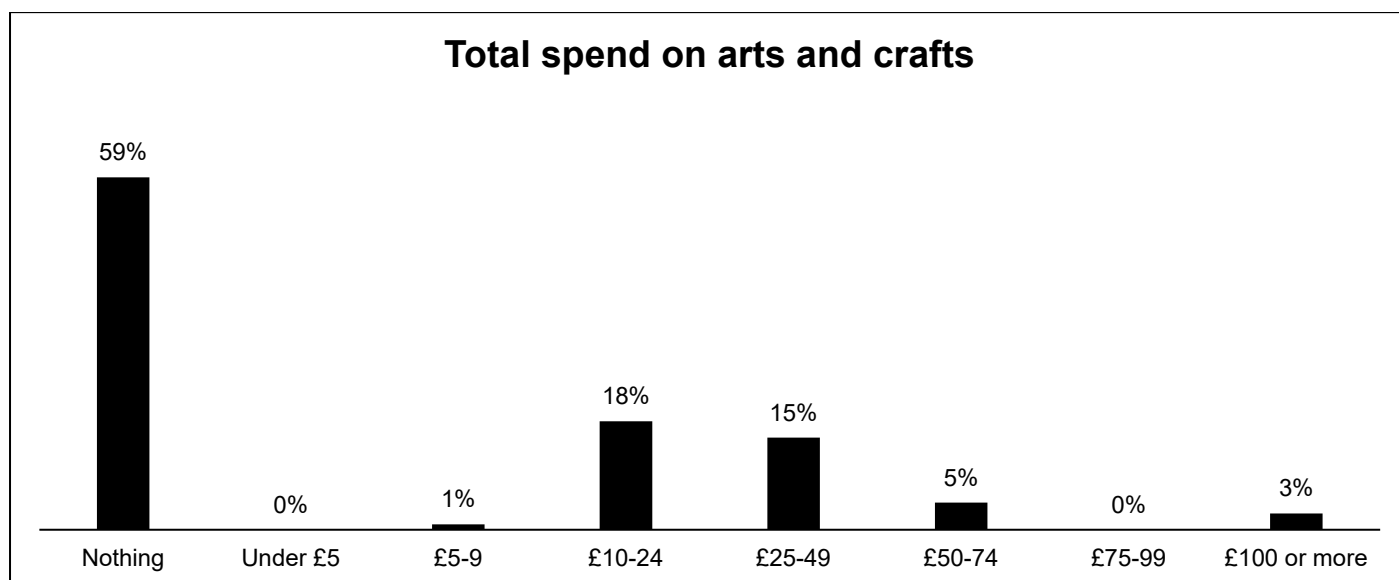
or more, with one respondent spending £400 in total. Just under a quarter (23%) of respondents spent between £25 and £99 and a minority of respondents spent less than £24.



Base: 114

Spend on arts and crafts

Respondents were also asked to share their expenditure on arts and crafts during the festival. 59% of respondents spent nothing on arts and crafts, and of those who did, the majority spent between £10 and £24 (18%), followed by £25 to £49 (15%). Three respondents spent £100 or more, where the highest figure was £200.

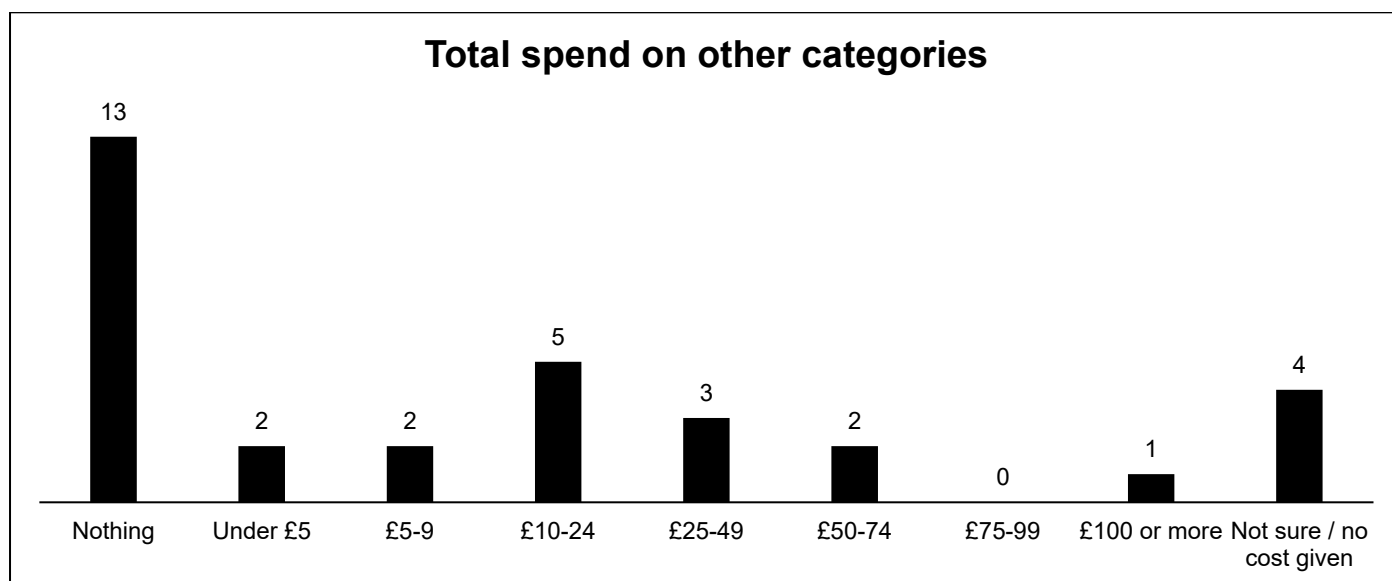


Base: 111

Other spending

Respondents were asked to share the total cost of any other spending from the festival, which received 32 responses. Most respondents spent nothing on “other” items, and 4 respondents were not sure or did not provide a cost of the items they spent on. Other items listed by respondents with no total cost were

“presents” “fair ground rides and parking” and “James Martin book”. Items with a cost attached included: “14 on food”, “24 rides”, “25 on a bike”, “4 toy” and “6 spray perfume”. Of those that did spend on other items, 5 spent between £10 and £24. One respondent spent £200 on other items.

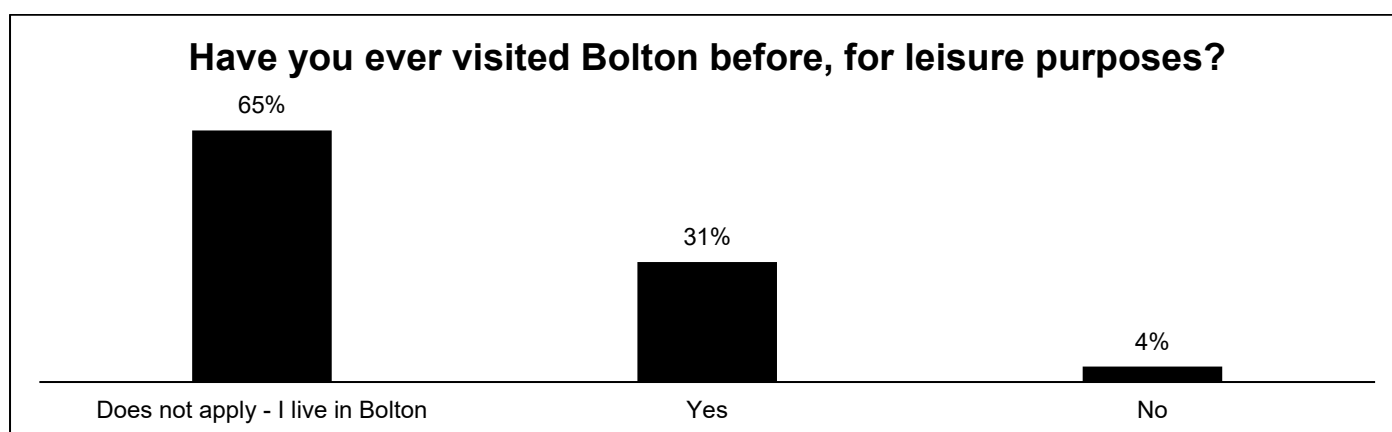


Base: 32

4. Perception of Bolton

4a. Previous visits

Respondents were asked to clarify whether they had ever visited Bolton before for leisurely purposes. Of the 243 responses received, 65% stated that they live in Bolton, 31% said they had and 4% have not.

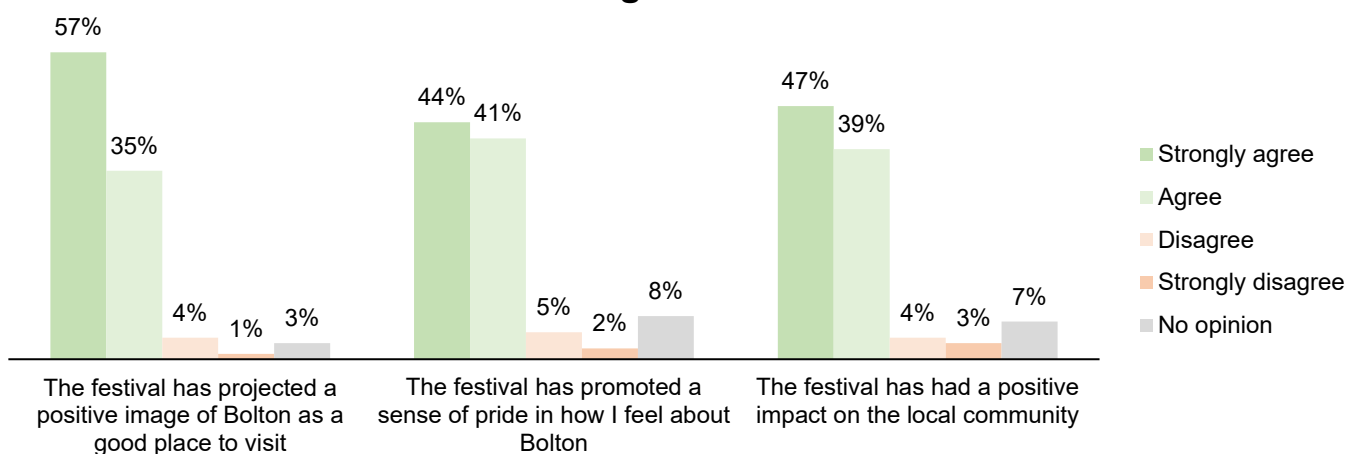


Base: 243

4b. Resident sentiment

Those who stated they live in Bolton were asked to what extent they agreed with several statements about Bolton. Overall, residents agreed that “the festival has projected a positive image of Bolton as a good place to visit” (92%), “that the festival has promoted a sense of pride in how they feel about Bolton” (85%) and that “the festival has had a positive impact on the local community” (86%).

As a Bolton resident, how far do you agree / disagree with the following statements?

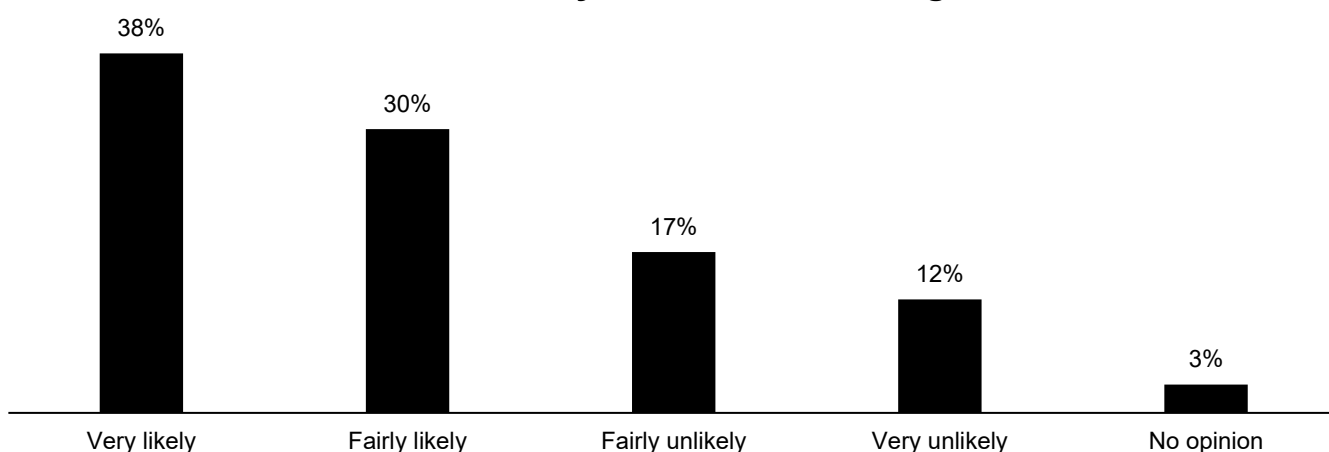


Base average: 157

4c. Recommend Bolton

Respondents were asked the likelihood that they would recommend Bolton as a place to visit to a friend, family member or colleague. Of 242 responses, 68% said they were likely to recommend Bolton and 29% were unlikely to recommend. 3% of respondents had no opinion.

How likely are you to recommend Bolton as a place to visit to a friend, family member, or colleague?



Base: 242

4d. The positive impact of Bolton Food and Drink Festival on Bolton

An average of 189 respondents described in three words what positive impact Bolton Food and Drink Festival has had on Bolton as a place.

The word cloud below has summarised the responses into 50 words from 567 responses in total.



Base: 567

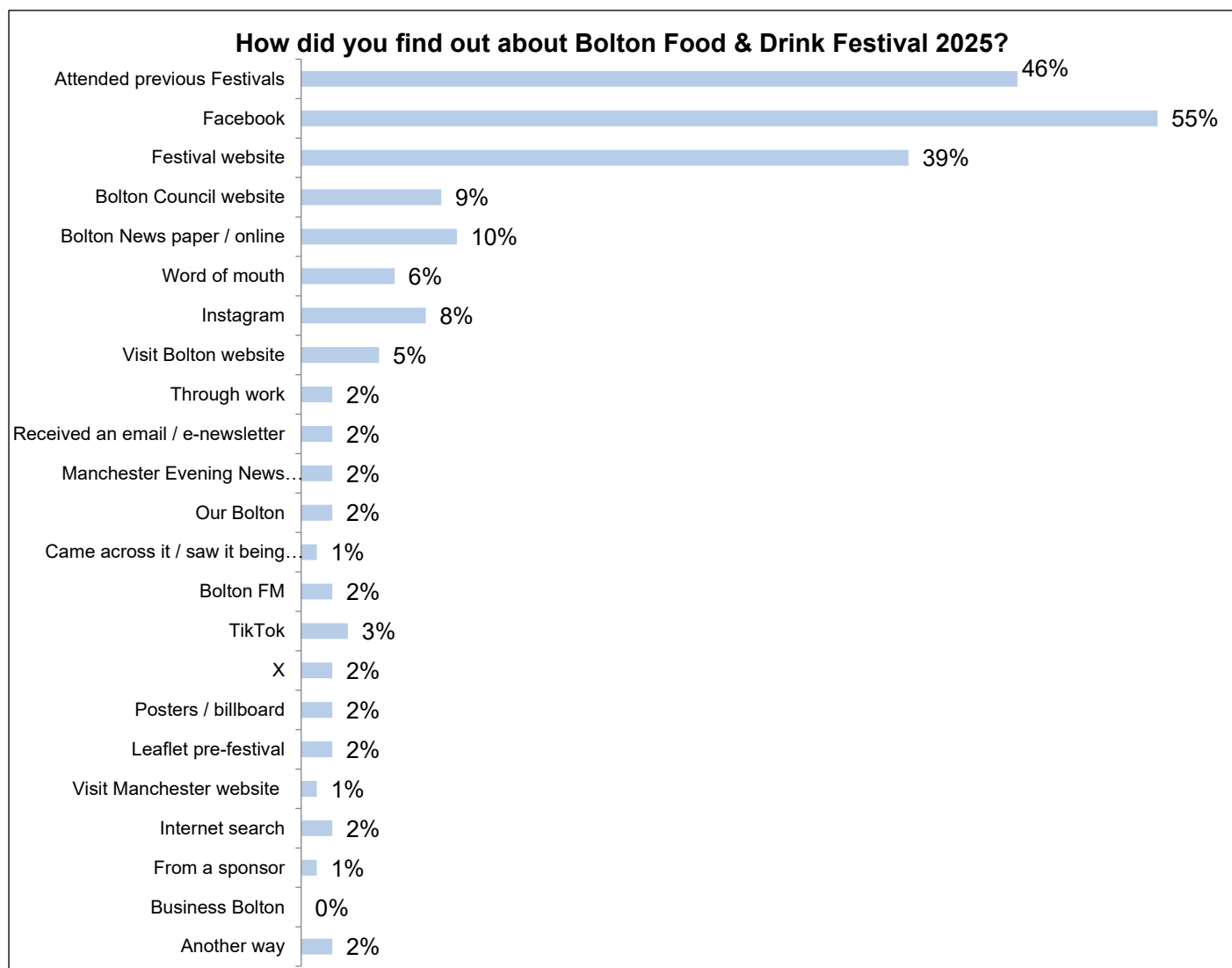
When coded, the words reveal a strong sentiment surrounding community spirit, atmosphere and positive energy (422), economic benefits (52), tourism (47) and inclusion / accessibility (42). A minority of comments raised concerns e.g. *“theft”* and *“corruption”*.

5. Information

5a. Awareness of Bolton Food and Drink Festival 2025

243 respondents discussed how they became aware of BFDF 2025. Almost half (46%) of respondents stated they found about the festival as they *“knew it was on as I’ve been in previous years”*. 39% of respondents found out via the BFDF website and over half (55%) found out via Facebook. Other ways that respondents discovered BFDF included the Bolton Council website (9%), Bolton News (10%), Instagram (8%) and by word of mouth (6%). No responses were received for the following:

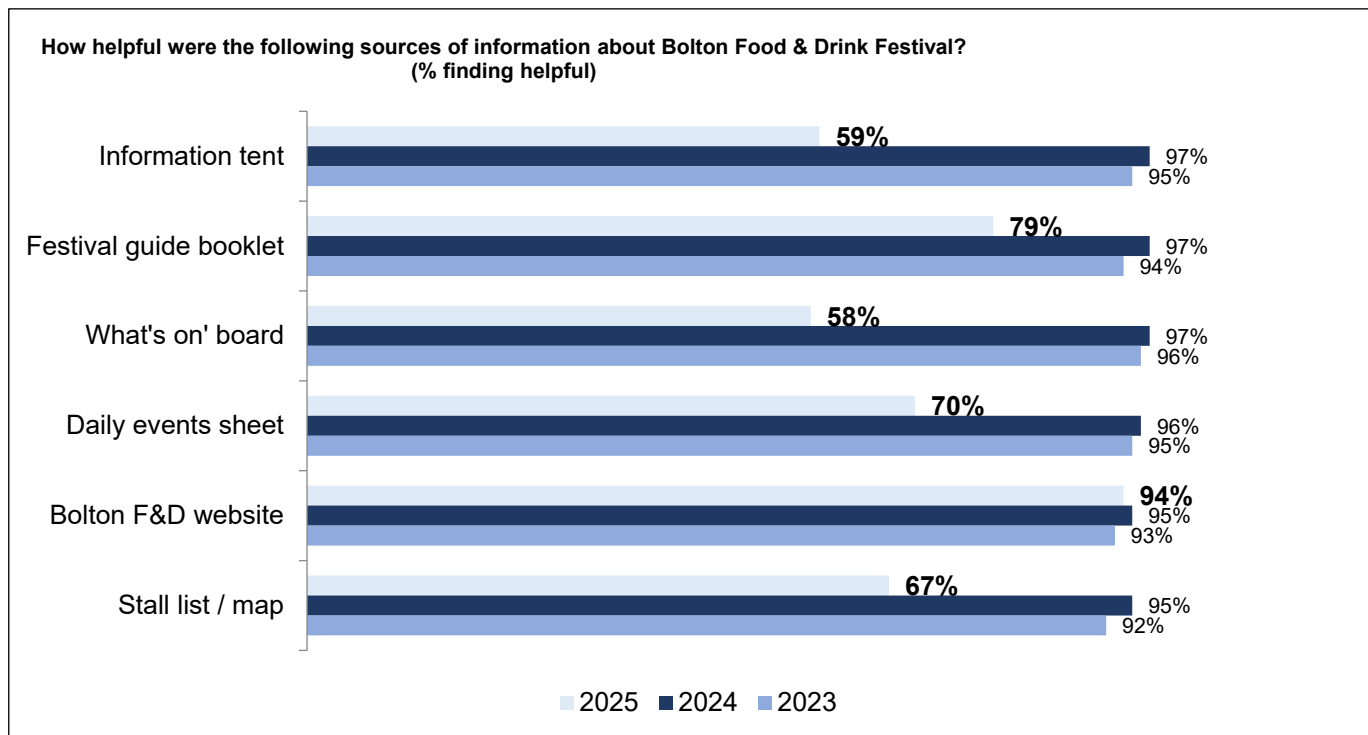
- Asian Leader magazine
- Lancashire Life magazine
- Cheshire Life magazine
- Northern Life magazine
- ITV X
- XS Manchester
- Railway station
- YouTube
- Snapchat
- Discover app



Base: 243

5b. Sources of information

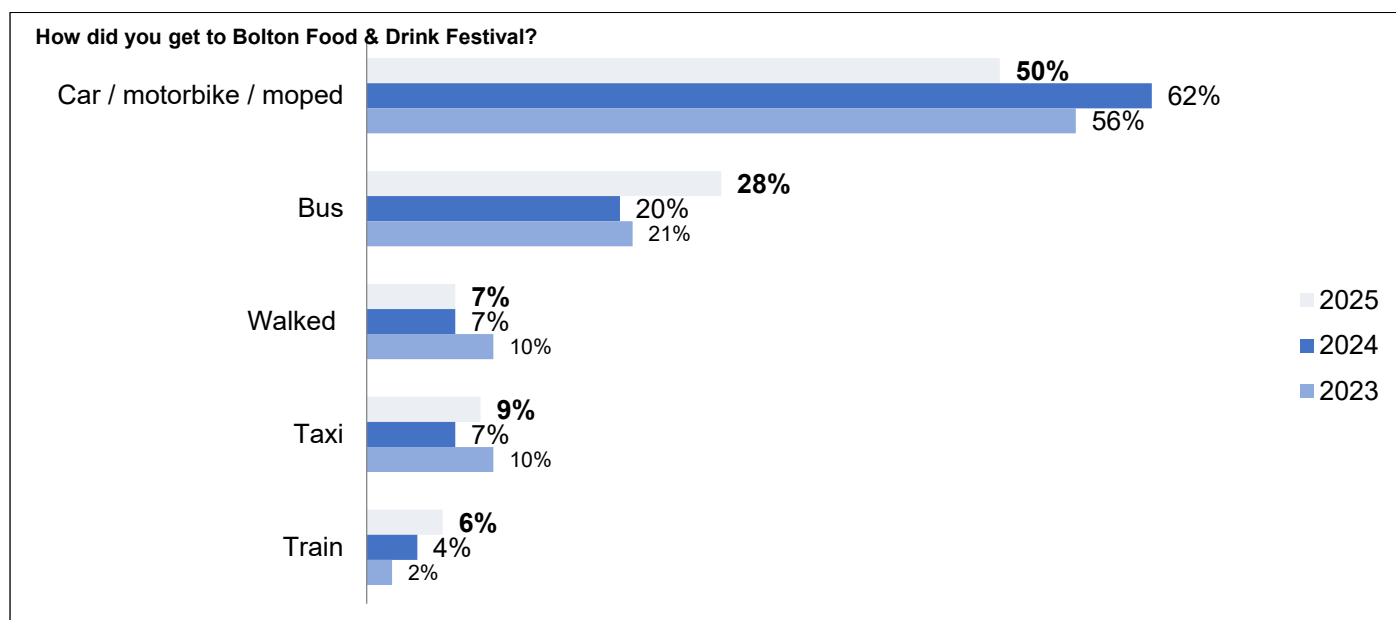
Respondents were asked to share how helpful they found different sources of information. Respondents who did not see or use different sources of information were discounted from calculations. Overall, there was a decrease compared to previous years in how many respondents found information sources useful. *“The Bolton Food and Drink website”* was the only source of information seeing an increase (94%), whilst other sources saw a significant decrease, including the *“information tent”* (59%) and the *“What’s on board”* (58%).



Base average: 239

6. Travelling to Bolton Food and Drink Festival 2025

This year, 243 respondents provided how they travelled to the festival, demonstrating that half of respondents used a car, motorbike or moped. 34% stated they used public transport, which is a continuous increase from the previous two years. 7% walked and 9% used a taxi. One “other” response was received.



2025 base: 243; 2024 base: 435; 2023 base: 697

The “other” response received discussed the following: “Avoided by heading in the opposite direction and went to Bury where the town centre is clean and full of shops where you are not being harassed by local druggies every 10 steps”.

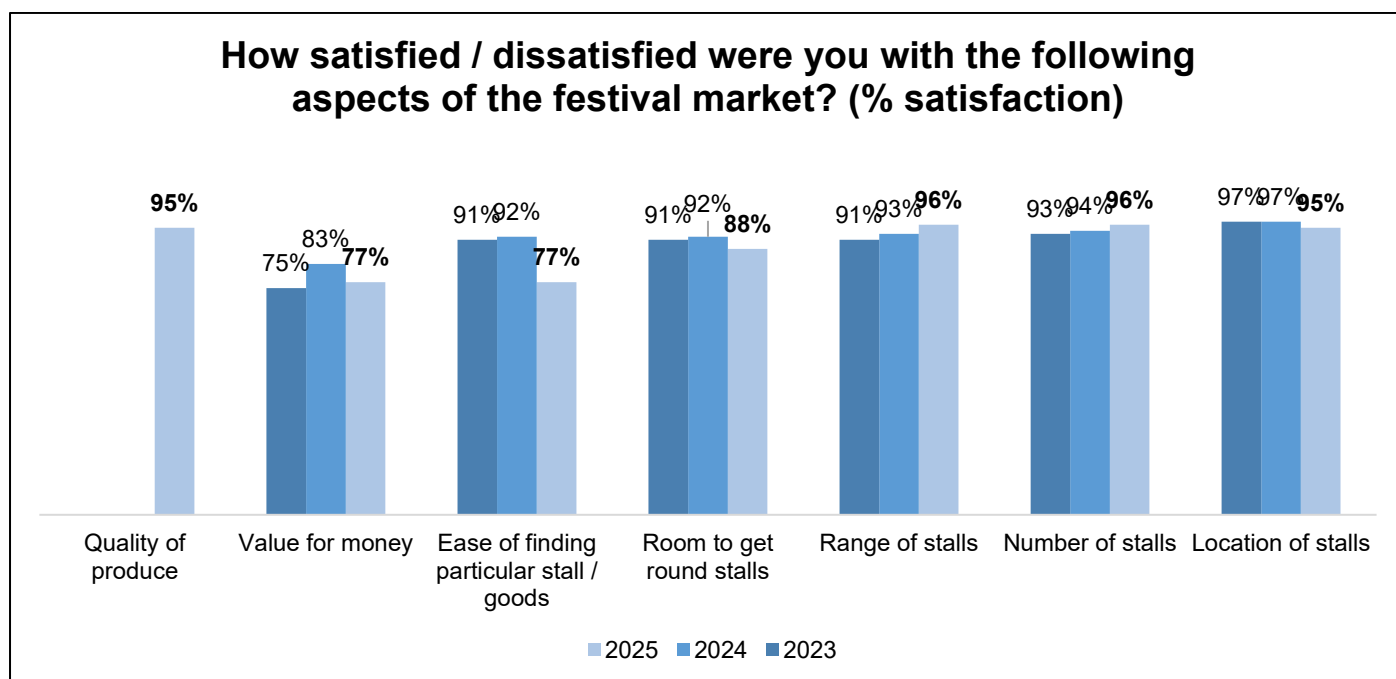
7. Festival market

7a. Attendance

The next series of questions discussed the festival market. Initially respondents were asked whether they visited the festival market, of which 242 responses were received. 213 (88%) attended and 29 (12%) did not attend.

7b. Satisfaction with different aspects of the festival market

Visitors were asked to outline their satisfaction with different aspects of the festival including the stalls, the value for money, produce quality – a new addition to the question options – and navigation. 207 respondents shared their views, where there was an increase in satisfaction for “value for money” (77%), “ease of finding particular stall / goods” (77%), “range of stalls” (96%) and “number of stalls” (96%) from the previous year. Areas seeing a decrease in satisfaction include “room to get around stalls” (88%) and “location of stalls” (95%).



Base average: 207

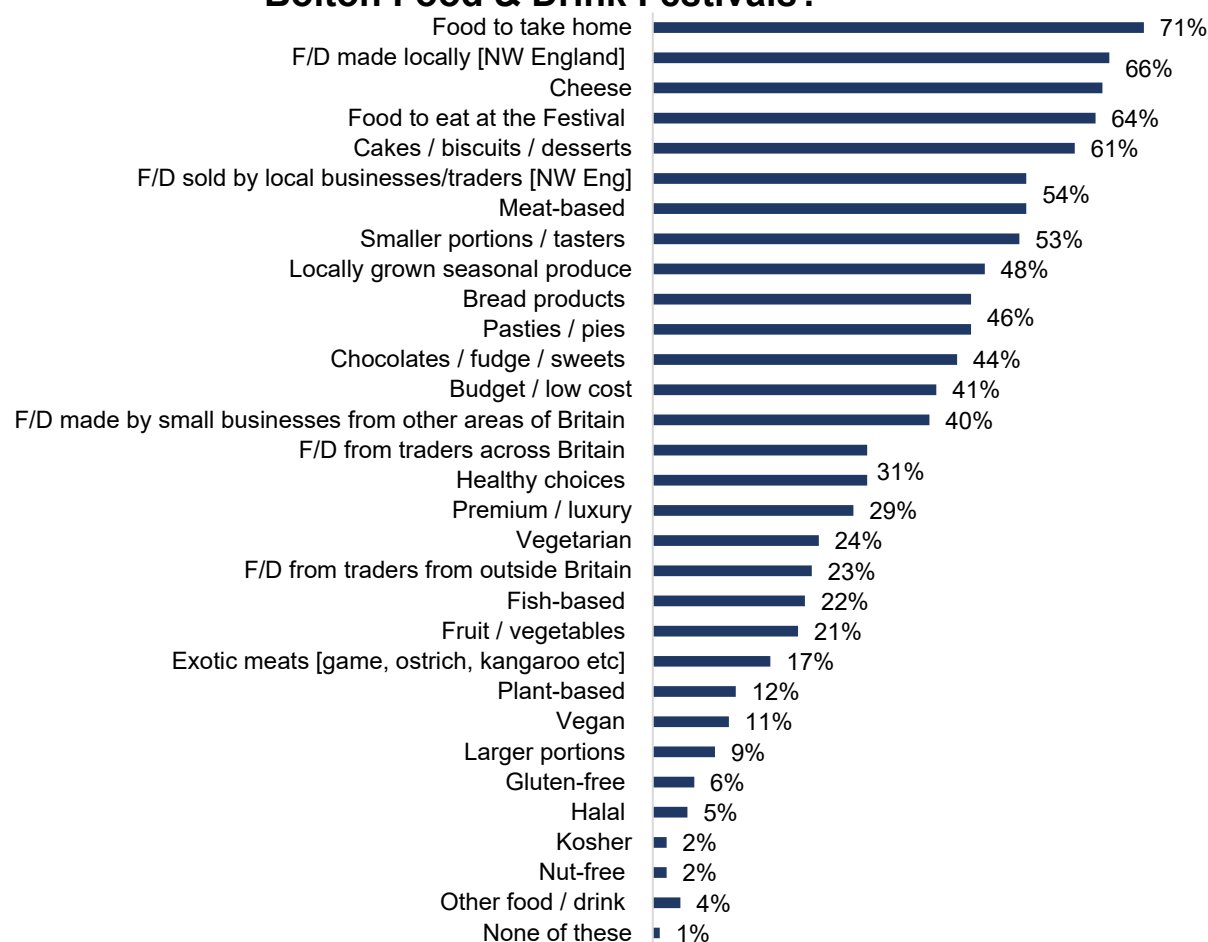
7c. Produce

Visitors were asked to share what types of produce they would be interested in buying at Bolton Food and Drink Festival. 213 responses were received. The top choices for visitors are food to take home (71%), food and drink made in the North West (60%) and cheese (64%). 4% of respondents selected “other food and drink”.

Other suggestions for the produce that could be available at the festival included:

- “A selection of stalls showcasing local produce and businesses alongside nations and international producers. Also would like to see more of the local bars and breweries supplying the drinks”
- “More world food. Different types of produce - craft beer. Fruit and veg, tea, speciality chocolate, liquorice”
- “Pork scratching stall (previously at festival)”
- “A Real Ale Bar showcasing the local independent brewwrs in Bolton / Manchester with up to 16 real ales  available on hanpull (cask ale, not keg or nitro-keg). In addition provide a large stall with bottled beers from the breweries taking part.”
- “Wines”
- “Coffee beans”

What kinds of produce would you be interested in buying at Bolton Food & Drink Festivals?



Base: 213

7d. Trading times

Visitors were asked whether they were happy with the trading times. 89% of 212 responses were happy and 11% were not happy. All 23 respondents who were not happy provided alternative timings, suggesting food traders could stay open later to compliment evening entertainment.

Extending trading times:

- *"It would be good to have even a small choice of food options open late so we can come down in the evening to eat, have a drink and listen to the music"*
- *"Prefer later trading on the weekend so people who work can have time at the festival"*
- *"Longer! We spent a couple of hours in the bar - after a 40 minute wait to get in - and had no idea the stalls closed at 6pm!"*
- *"I think food stalls - or at least some should be able to stay open till the music finishes."*
- *"Would prefer the food stalls to be open until about 8pm"*
- *"Later on Saturday, maybe til 7"*
- *"I think having the food stalls open later would attract more people to the evening show, because they'd be in town to eat and hear the music, so they'd head over there. It would also cater to those that are hungry during the music and they would be able to grab something to eat. I don't tend to make it to the evening show (though I would like to) simply because we go to the pub between our visit to the festival and the evening music. By the time we've been at the pub, we're hungry, so we go home to eat and miss the music. I know some people who drink get a bit lairy if they haven't eaten enough, so having some food options available would sort that out. We wandered through the festival while it was closed on our way home and we'd have spent extra there on food had there been options available."*
- *"Stay open later for people who have to work please"*
- *"Would have preferred 10am to 6pm on the Monday!"*
- *"Friday, Saturday and Sunday 10am to 8pm Monday 10am to 6pm"*
- *"Flexible times so that if there were people around later (ie in the bars or heading to the main stage shows) they could browse and buy"*

Start trading later:

- *"Starting at 9 would be better and if you are going to advertise being open until 6, stay open until this advertised time"*
- *"Could open later"*

7e. Satisfaction with festival markets

Visitors were then asked how satisfied they were with the festival markets.

94% of respondents were satisfied with the festival markets out of 212 responses.



8. Regional chef demos

8a. Attendance

Visitors were asked whether they saw any of the free regional chef demonstrations. Of 243 responses, 80% did not attend but 20% did (48).

8b. Attendance - regional chef demonstrations

Visitors were asked to share which demonstrations they saw at the festival, of which the responses received are summarised below. 42 responses were received and were coded into chef demonstrations and alternative comments. Three respondents could not remember. An unrelated comment discussed challenges with finding halal food: *"Saturday and Sunday 1pm but was very disappointed because they*

were not halal and no one knew what the chef was cooking until the chef arrived, which is very poor. Could you please very kindly consider Halal options too because Bolton does have a huge Muslim community”.

Chef	Total
James Martin	3
Michael Caines	19
Tom Henthorne	1
Joe McLeod	4
Andrew George	2
Bakina Nana	3
Kwoklyn Wan	6
JoJo	1
Scott Bannon	1
Helen McGill	1
Gill Howard	1
Paul Cairns	1
Nicolas Urrutia	1
Omelette demonstration	2

Base: 42

Other comments included: ice cream, Smithills café, cake and restaurant demonstrations, and a variety of stall holders, and two unnamed chefs.

8c. Satisfaction of chef demonstrations

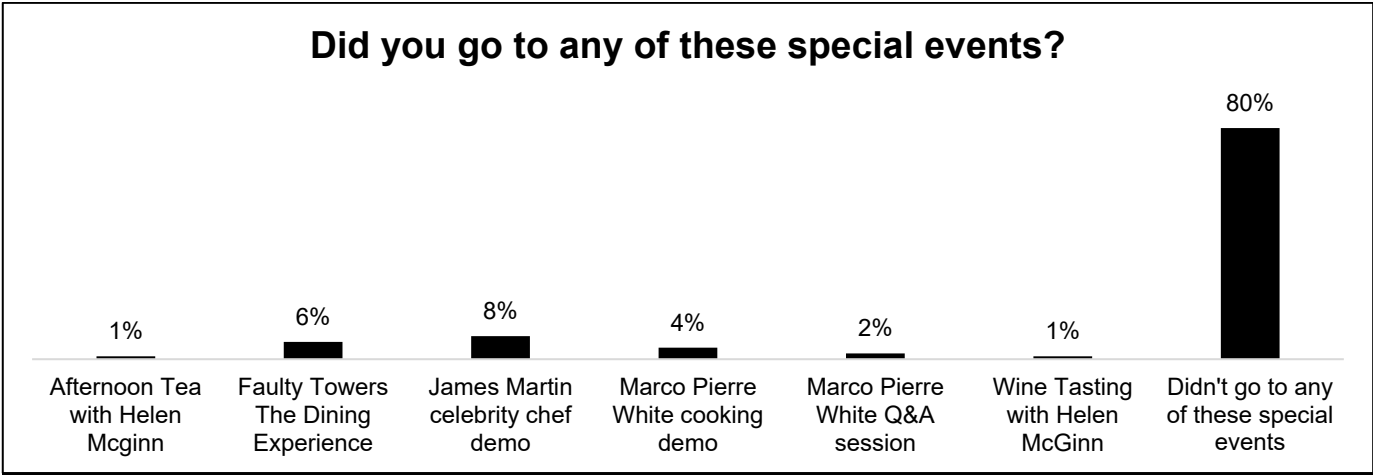
Those that attended chef demonstrations (47) were asked to share their satisfaction with the demonstrations. 98% of respondents were satisfied.



9. Special events

9a. Attendance of special events

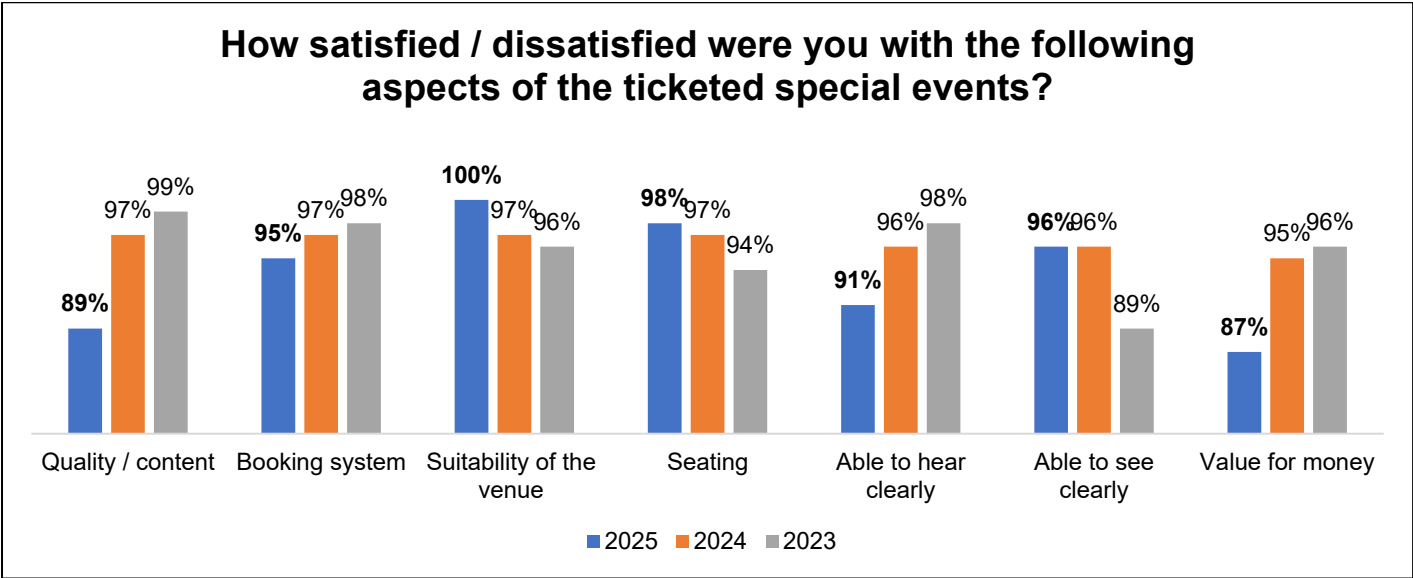
Visitors were asked whether they attended any of the special events during the festival. Of 245 respondents, 80% did not attend, and the most popular events for those who did attend were the James Martin demo (8%) and the Faulty Towers Dining Experience (6%).



Base: 245

9b. Satisfaction with aspects of special events

Respondents were asked to outline their level of satisfaction for the special ticketed events. “Suitability of the venue” received a 100% satisfaction rate, and the “seating” had a 98% satisfaction rate, but “value for money” had the lowest satisfaction rate (87%), which is a decrease of 12% from the previous year.



Base average: 45

9c. Overall satisfaction

Next, visitors were asked to provide their overall satisfaction of the special events. Of the 48 responses received, 86% were satisfied, 10% were dissatisfied and 4% had no opinion.



9d. Suggested special events

Respondents were then asked to suggest any other special events that could be offered at future Bolton Food and Drink Festivals. 88 visitors took the time to provide suggestions which were coded into five categories, including improvements to the festival delivery, festival facilities, events at the festival, general feedback from visitors, events or activities that cater for children and families.

Please use this space if you'd like to suggest any special events that we could offer at future Bolton Food & Drink Festivals.		
Rank	Category	Number of respondents
a.	Festival suggestions: features, traders, improvements	29
b.	Events	23
c.	Overall festival feedback	19
d.	Children / family-friendly activities and events	16
e.	Festival suggestions: facilities	13

a. Festival suggestions: features, traders, improvements

29 comments provided suggestions for Bolton Food and Drink Festival, focusing primarily on improvements to trading, such as prices, portion sizes, variety of produce and tasters, and suggested features for the festival, including sample menus, themed events, or reduced plastic packaging. Having more halal, gluten free and vegetarian options was raised by visitors.

Traders:

- *"Highlight local chefs and bakers instead of celebrities"*
- *"It could also be slightly cheaper for food"*
- *"More free products on food stalls and free give aways"*
- *"It's disappointing that all the stalls only seem to sell full size meals. I'd much rather try 3 or 4 small dishes"*
- *"I think the prices of food and drinks is sky high prices.. i think the pitch for the stall holders needs to come down so that they can lower the costs. If things were cheaper we would have stayed for the entire day enjoying the food and drinks all day long . However we stayed 2 hours due to cost and how heaving it was around the stalls."*
- *"Food was quite expensive could do with a few other stars like things from Bolton i.e souvenirs from the town"*
- *"More local produce stalls. There seemed to be a lot of 'market' / tat stalls"*
- *"I felt more fresh produce or fruit and veg based products would have been good"*
- *"Allotment or green grocery addition would be a benefit"*
- *"More gluten free"*
- *"More food to buy and take home theres to many instant food stalls i dont go to eat i go to buy to take home"*
- *"instead of a separate Halal Festival maybe More Halal traders should be invited. After all are we not a multi cultural town."*

Suggestions:

- *"Competitions to win free tickets for events"*
- *"Smaller, taster sample menus from vendors"*
- *"I would suggest maybe some themed events."*
- *"A food world record attempt"*
- *"A quarterly food and artisan market with some live entertainment in the town centre would be ideal."*
- *"Please eliminate single use plastic at this event. The amount used was shocking and unnecessary in this day and age. Hasn't Bolton pledged to be plastic free by 2024?"*
- *"Be honest with the public and show where the money made by the council actually goes."*
- *"Some sort of area dedicated to farming matters and environmental impacts of today's system"*

b. Events

23 comments were shared by respondents that discussed a range of events including demonstrations from local or regional chefs, competitions with the public, or chefs, and community-building events like strength competitions or workshops such as bread making. Arts and crafts and experiences such as meet and greets were also raised.

- *"More events at Bolton Market like you used to like cooking demos from stall holders. Let's celebrate Bolton people, and independent stall holders from Bolton."*
- *"Healthy, easy and easy evening meals demo"*
- *"Would like more events that incorporate Q+A with something like an afternoon tea. More regional chefs demos too!"*
- *"World food Vegan events cooking demos"*
- *"More free demos from local chefs (you used to have them in the market - nothing there this time) Watching these made us visit their restaurants"*
- *"Having Gok Wan back would be great"*
- *"Band meet and greets"*
- *"Bake Off style competition with local bakers."*
- *"More celebrity chef Q&A and celebrity chef cooking demos Or maybe introduce a celebrity chef cooking class"*
- *"Arts & Craft Workshop for Autumn"*
- *"Contests for the local people to enter, for example, a cake-baking contest where people bring their bakes and they're judged on taste and presentation and awarded ribbons. I think that would give the local people something fun and inexpensive to get involved in."*
- *"The Oil and Vinegar stall (think it's The Gift of Oil?) was excellent and they were saying they hold a tasting event where they show their products elsewhere."*
- *"Chef Vs Chef could be fun too, where two of the headline chefs compete against each other in making a dish. I think that's a chargeable event I'd go to see as it would be interesting to see two established chefs interact and see the twists they'd add to the same dish."*
- *"Have fitness events like strongman or functional fitness! They worked well at Festival of Horwich"*
- *"Bottomless brunch Bingos bingo brunch"*
- *"Meet the cast of the faulty towers dining experiences"*
- *"Breadmaking workshop"*

c. Overall festival feedback

19 visitors shared reflections on the festival, including the special events. There was a mix in feedback, with several sharing their enthusiasm and anticipation for the next festival, and others sharing their experiences

dining at the special events as “appalling”, “awful”, “dreadful” and “very poor”. Challenges raised with the events included quiet microphones, value for money, and the quality of the meals for guests.

General feedback:

- *“Brilliant market stalls”*
- *“The food festival is a complete waste of money for Bolton. The council do not publish figures of expense or income so we can only assume that the only people who make money are the over priced stall holders”*
- *“I loved every aspect of this years festival. Highly recommended”*
- *“My little girl has been joining in with children’s cooking since she was two and is now six. She looks forward to this more than her own birthday!”*
- *“Great event Congratulations to the organisers Already looking forward to next year.”*
- *“Great event very well organised and varied entertainment ... love the cooking demos , the vibe and the omelette challenge .. two fun days spent there”*

Special events feedback:

- *“More of the same James Martin a must. Would love to see Marco again too”*
- *“Didn’t understand what the VIP tickets gave us rather than lower priced tickets.”*
- *“The entertainment was fabulous! But the food was appalling and left a lot to be desired! Extremely small portions. Not very hot and quite tasteless.”*
- *“We went to the Marco Pierre White cookery demonstration. The quality of the sound was not very good and we often could not hear clearly. I feel that this was because a hand held microphone was used and not always held properly. The use of a headset microphone would have been far better. This did detract from our enjoyment of the demonstration.”*
- *“The entertainment was brilliant. Although it would have been better if they had been miced up as hearing them could be difficult. The food however was awful! Such tiny portions and very bland and tasteless! Would have been better if someone hadn’t tried to be fancy and failed. At first we thought it was part of the act but soon realised that that was all you got.”*
- *“The Faulty Towers dinning experience was dreadful. The food was inedible. The soup tasted horrible. The chicken was dry, the gravy tasted horrible , the aioli was horrible. The potato was horrible, the breaded chicken was awful. The flavours were terrible. The food was dried out and unpalatable. The rum ba ba had not seen any rum let alone been soaked in rum... I am unsure if the food was intended to mirror the calamity and farce of the actors performance. Congratulations this was the WORST meal I have had in a very long time. The price for inedible food and some acting that I could not see without straining my poor neck was not value for money. Everyone at the table, all strangers, were in agreement that the food was terrible. I also thought it rather unfair that wine had to be purchased as a whole bottle for those who would have just liked a single glass. No I would not recommend that this event is repeated.”*
- *“The food at Faulty Towers was very poor indeed: very dry chicken, very dry rum baba (everyone on our table, strangers to each other, agreed”*
- *“Performance was very good but the food was very poor. Most people complained about the food and a lot wasn’t eaten. Very disappointing for the price paid.”*

d. Children / family-friendly activities and events

16 visitors suggested more children, teenager or family-friendly activities and events for future festivals. Several mentioned having non-HAF events for families and more cooking opportunities for young people. Several provided other suggestions for entertainment, including music and craft events.

- *"Would love more proper cooking opportunities for kids 8+. We couldn't book the bookable ones as we aren't HAF eligible and child was too young - would happily pay for these! Making fruit pots doesn't interest him as he cooks properly at home so wants to learn more of that"*
- *"This year it was absolutely fanatstic what you provided for children. The variations of events and rides were very interesting and it would be great to see that level of commitment to the children each year."*
- *"Bookable things for families/children (not HAF!)"*
- *"Please keep the teen zone, it was great to finally see teens get recognition"*
- *"I would like more things to do for smaller children, toddler ages 3 and under"*
- *"More entertainment for small children and involving crafts and a USP, since everything felt a bit same-y. Example such as Kids rave or lego building, a foam party, a petting zoo, pottery painting, a bubble show, a gaming van or zine making."*
- *"More active games for children. In Elizabeth park a lot of children wanted to play badminton but as volley ball with one small net. Chances to win prizes through a game such as basket ball or penalty shoot out. The old bhs store was used for football tennis once which was good. Healthy eating and being active link so that would be good to see. A kids band like Andy and the Oddsocks."*
- *"Kids activities were fantastic. If the area would be bigger and have even more varieties of activities, that would be amazing."*
- *"Protected Teen activities, demos, spaces, 13plus with no younger children being admitted"*

e. Festival suggestions: facilities

13 comments discussed practical improvements to the festival, including facilities, signage and additional seating.

- *"Stall photos & their contact details/locations after the festival. I've had food & would eat their again but can't find their details to contact & support"*
- *"We need more areas that are licensed, to sell and serve alcohol.. the small bar, at the Acoustic stage, was great, run really well, except ut simply was too small, not enough places for families to sit"*
- *"I would like to see more advertising for these events. Only knew the festival was on ,as we come every year. A few people we spoke to from out of bolton and in, said they had no idea it was on. Needs signs on bill boards."*
- *"Free parking"*
- *"Please clearly display where the Halal food stalls are. We had to spend a huge time to actual find Halal food stalls. Also, it took a lot of time to find milkshake stalls and with children it is extremely difficult to walk around. Alas, all your leaflets, information point or the website had no information regarding the halal food stalls and no information on where we could purchase the milkshakes from too."*
- *"More seating areas, and baby changing units."*
- *"Larger bar/more bar areas needed for the amount of people."*

10. Live music - festival stage and acoustic stage

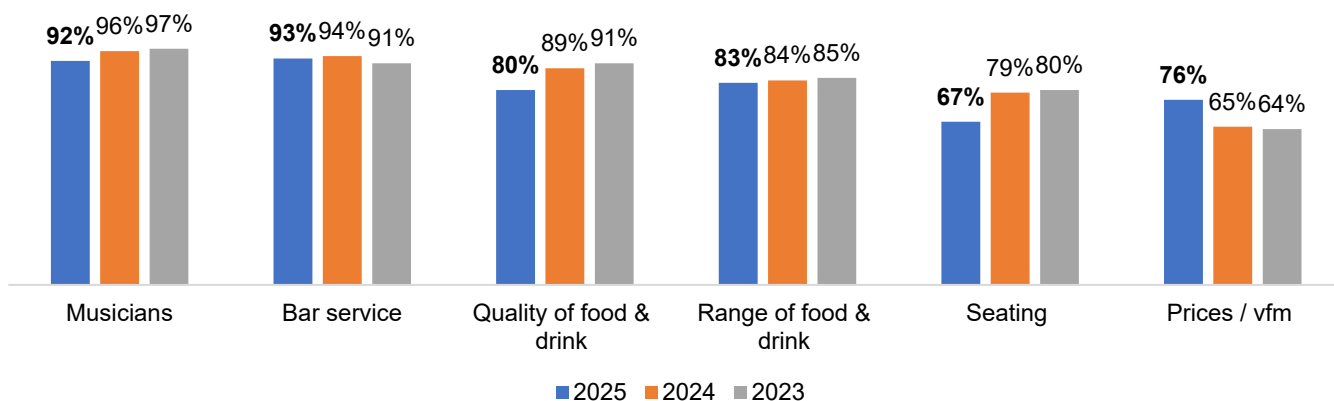
10a. Attendance of festival and acoustic stages

156 of 243 respondents visited the festival music stage (64%) but 87 did not.

10b. Satisfaction with live music

Of those that did attend the music stages, there was high satisfaction for the musicians (92%), bar service (93%) and the range of food and drink (83%) from an average of 152 responses. The area with the least satisfaction was seating (67%).

How satisfied / dissatisfied were you with the following aspects of the festival music stage / acoustic music stage?

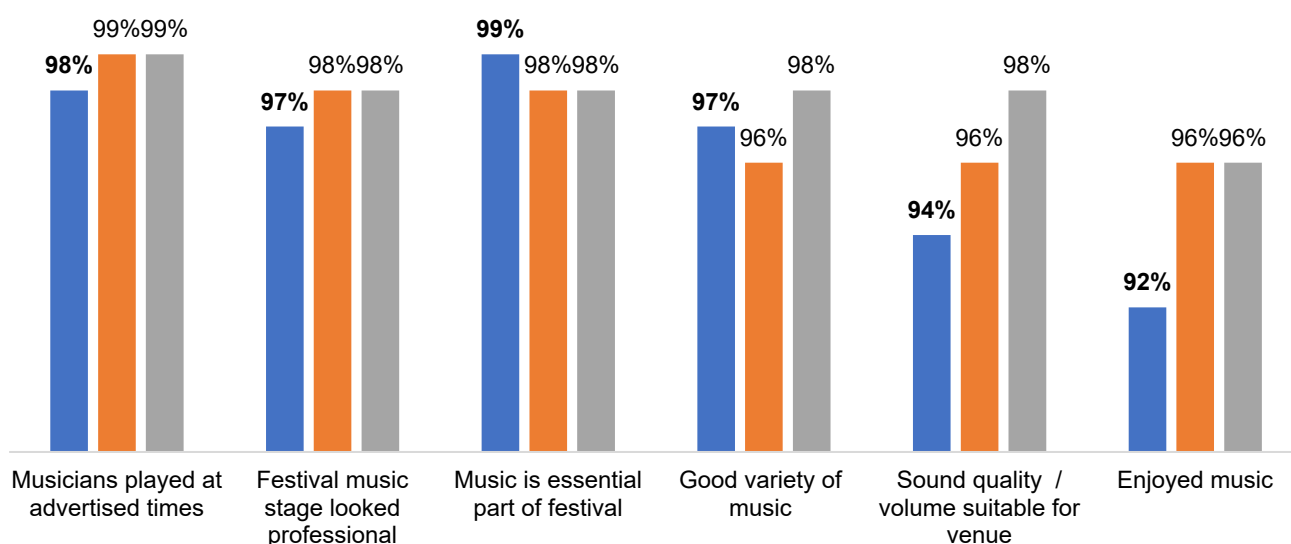


Base average: 152

10c. Perceptions of live music

Of an average of 146 respondents, all areas saw high agreement of over 90%. The areas seeing the highest agreement were “*music is an essential part of the festival*” (99%) and “*musicians played at advertised times*”. The areas seeing the least agreement was the level of enjoyment of the music (92%).

Just thinking about the festival music stage / acoustic music stage, how far do you agree / disagree with the following statements?



Base average: 146

10d. Overall satisfaction

96% of respondents were satisfied with the festival music stage / acoustic music stage out of 155 responses, which was a 2% decrease from the previous year.

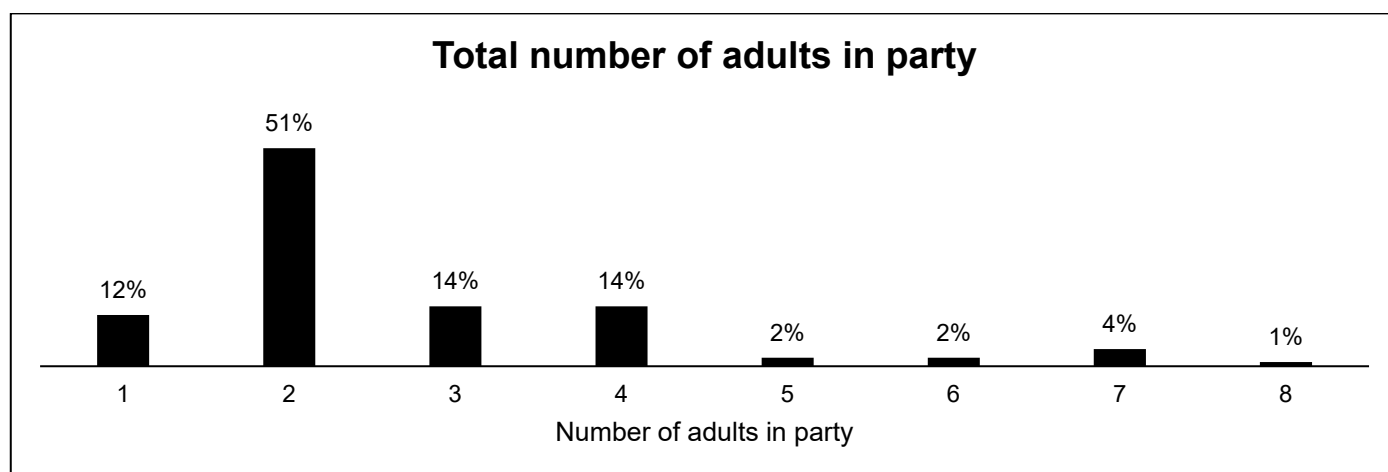
11. Activities / entertainment for children and young people

11a. Children in party

Respondents were asked whether any children attended the festival with them. Out of 242 responses, 41% of respondents stated they attended with children, while 59% did not attend the festival with children.

11b. Adults in party

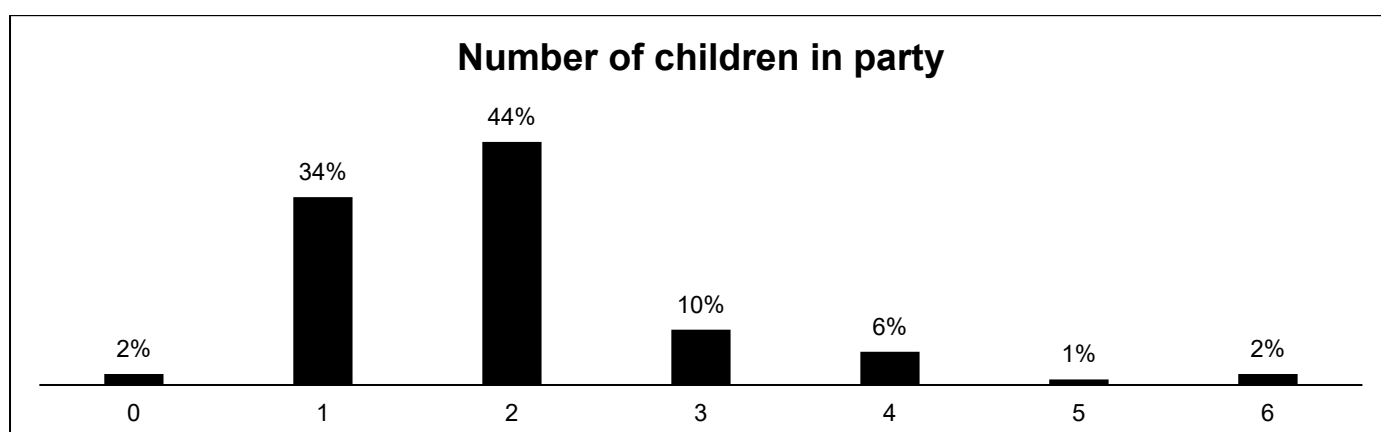
100 responses were received from respondents outlining the number of adults in their party. Over half (51%) of respondents had a party of 2 adults. The range of adults was 1 to 8 adults.



Base: 100

11c. Children in party

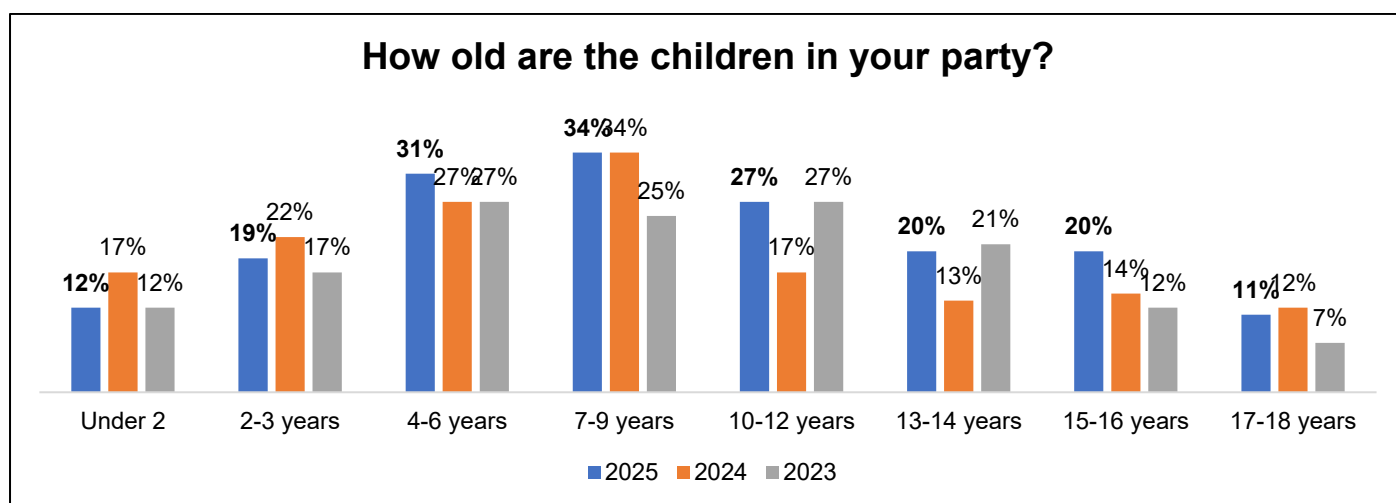
Visitors were asked to share the number of children they had in their party. Of the 99 responses received, 2% had no children, and the majority had 2 children in their party (44%). Over a third (34%) had 1 child in their party.



Base: 99

11d. Age of children in party

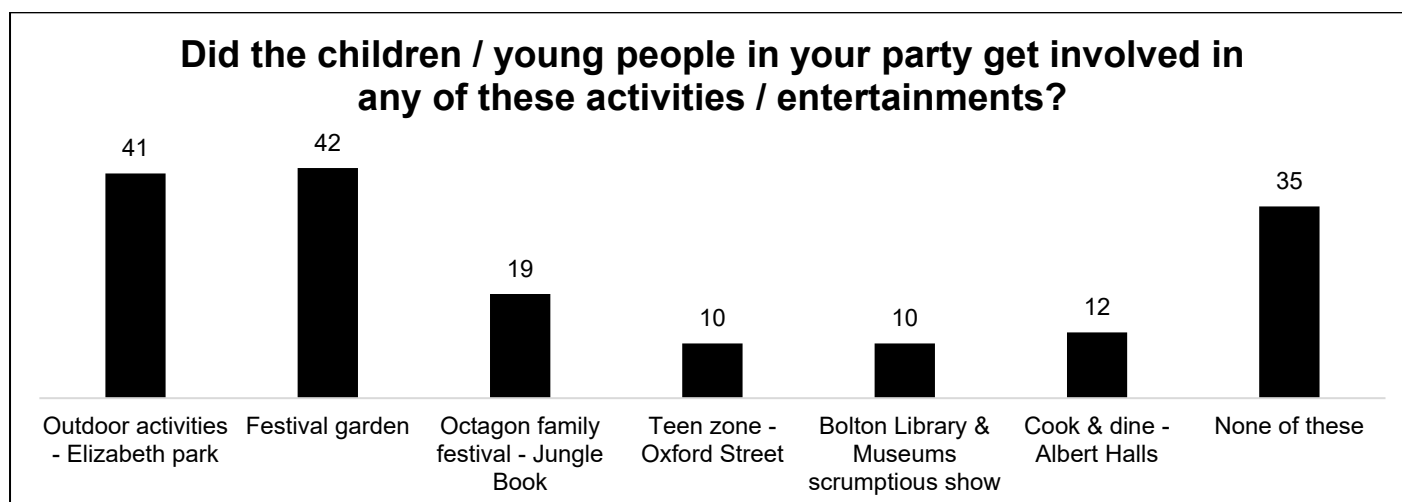
Visitors were asked to share the age of the children in their party. Of the 168 responses received, over a third were between 7 and 9 years old (34%) and 31% were between 4 and 6 years old. 51% of respondents had a teenager in their party.



2025 base: 168; 2024 base: 181; 2023 base: 252

11d. Engagement in activities

Next, respondents shared which activities the children and young people in their party got involved with (97). 42 attended the festival garden, 41 participated in outdoor activities in Elizabeth Park and 19 attended the Octagon family festival, 35 respondents stated “none of these” were used.

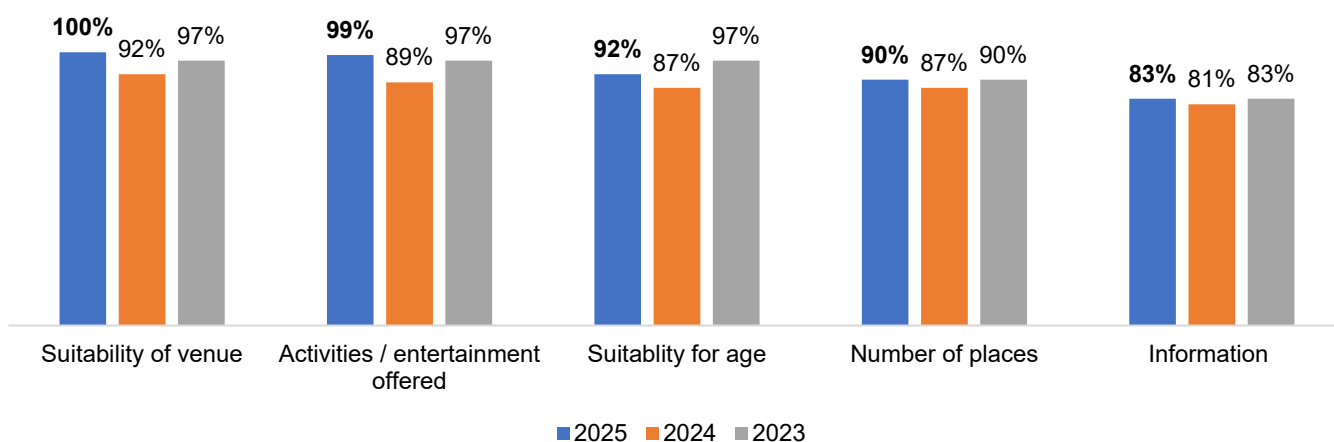


Base: 97

11e. Satisfaction with children's events / activities

An average of 93 respondents outlined their satisfaction with the children's events and activities available at the festival. The suitability of venue saw a 100% satisfaction rate, and the offer of activities and entertainment received a 99% satisfaction rate. The area with the least satisfaction was the information (83%).

How satisfied / dissatisfied were you with the following aspects of activities offered for children / young people?

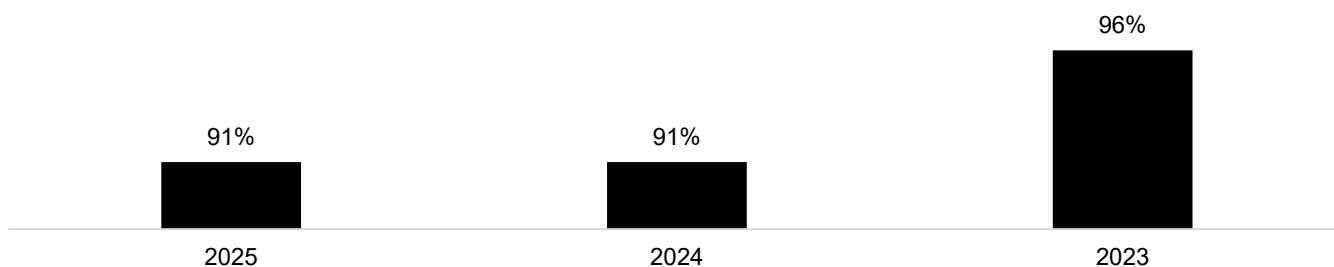


Base average: 93

11f. Overall satisfaction

83 respondents provided their overall satisfaction for the activities and entertainment for children and young people at the festival. The satisfaction rate was 91%, with 76 people stating they were satisfied. This was consistent with the previous year.

Overall, how satisfied / dissatisfied were you with the activities / entertainment for children & young people?



Base: 83

12. Sponsors

167 respondents attempted to guess the sponsors for the 2025 Bolton Food and Drink Festival. The responses have been categorised into the table below. "Other" categories or sponsors include Bolton FM, Greggs, Aldi, Bolton at Home, Uni of GM, Orbit Developments, Market place, BWFC, Caldwells, Franca's pizza and Warburtons.

Category or sponsor	Number of respondents
No / can't remember	75
Yes	3
Kia	28
Carrs Pasties	45

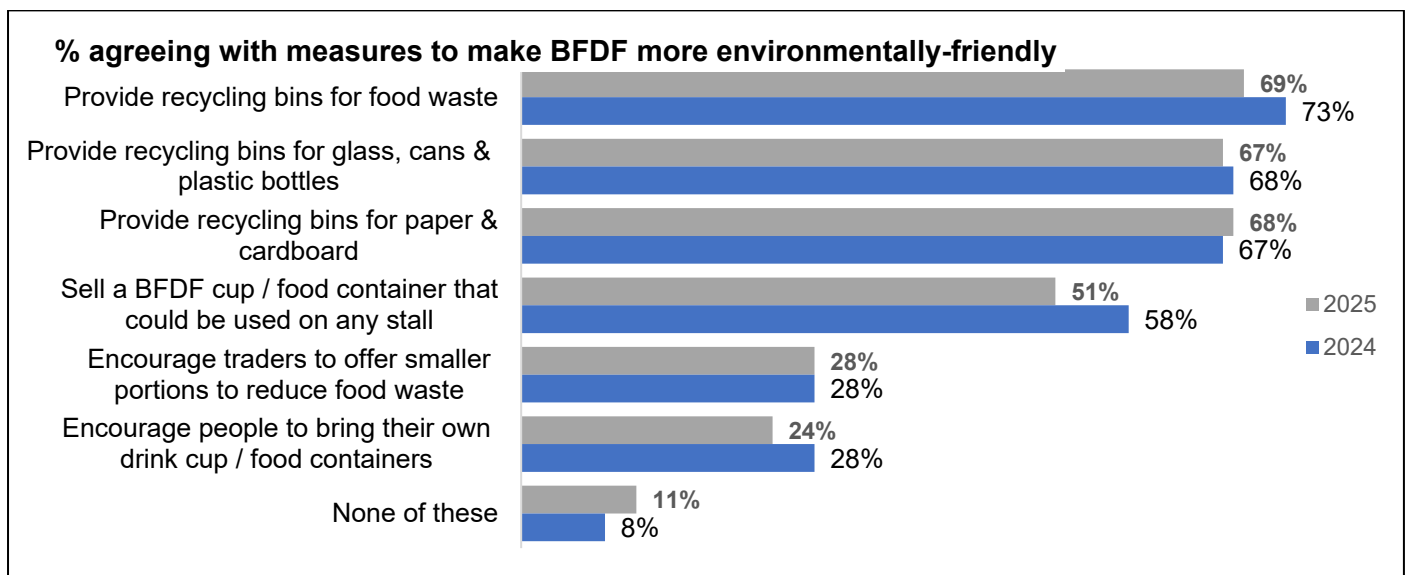
Peel Holdings	15
Stateside Food	40
Watson Homes	8
Other	31

Base: 167

13. Environmental impact

13a. Environmentally friendly practices

234 respondents shared their level of agreement with a range of environmentally friendly practices. The most favourable environmental practices were “provide recycling for food waste” (69%), “provide recycling bins for glass, cans and plastic bottles” (67%) and “provide recycling bins for paper and cardboard” (68%). 11% selected “none of these”. Compared to the previous year, the area seeing the largest decrease in support was “selling a BFDF cup / food container that could be used on any stall” (51%).



Base: 234

14. Overall views

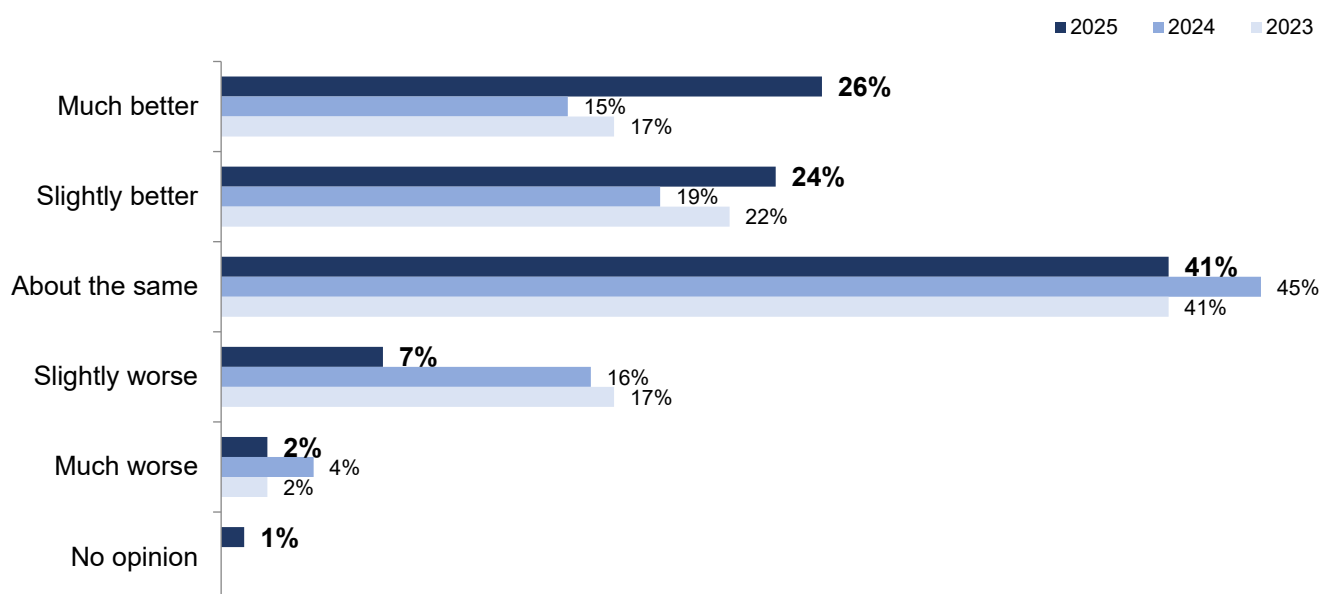
14a. Previous visits

239 respondents shared whether they have visited BFDF last year. 80% shared they did (192).

14b. Comparison to previous year

Respondents were asked to compare the 2025 festival to the previous year, revealing that half of the respondents think there was an improvement (50%), which is an increase from the results from the two previous years. 41% said there was no difference and 9% stated the festival has worsened.

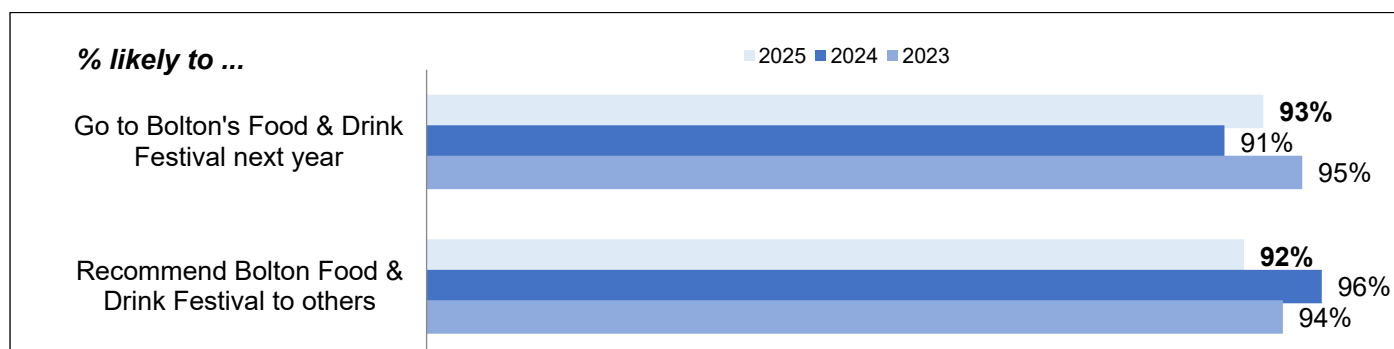
Compared to last year's festival, would you say that this year's festival was...?



Base: 191

14c. Likelihood of revisiting / recommending

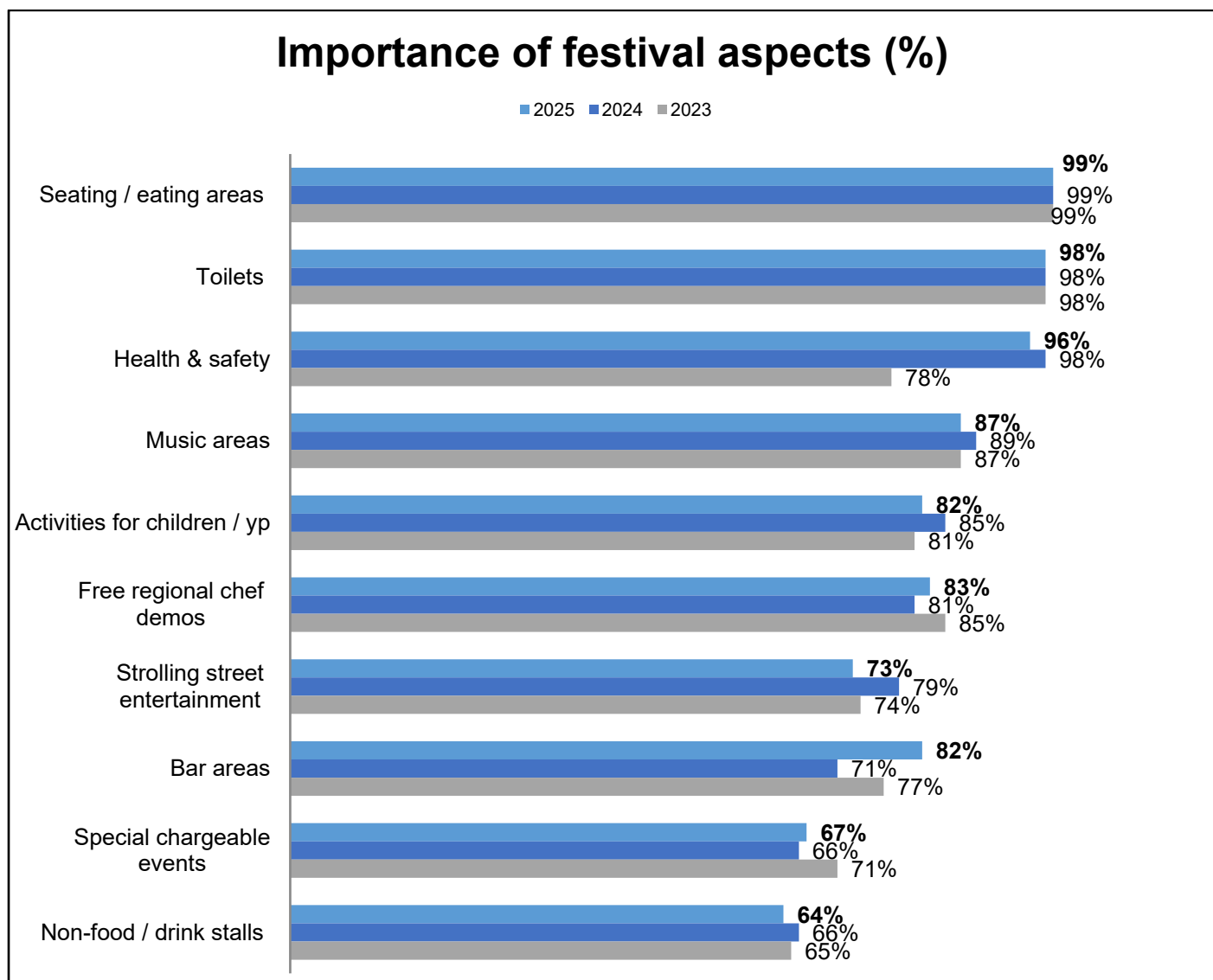
240 respondents shared the likelihood that they would go to the festival next year. 93% said they would. 92% shared they were likely to recommend the festival to others.



Base: 240

14d. Importance of festival aspects

An average of 221 responses were received when respondents were asked to share the importance of a range of festival aspects to help inform the delivery of future festivals. The most important aspects for respondents were “*seating / eating areas*” (99%) and “*toilets*” (98%). There was a 6% decrease in the importance of “*strolling street entertainment*” compared to the previous year (79%), but an 11% increase in the importance of “*bar areas*” for respondents (82%).



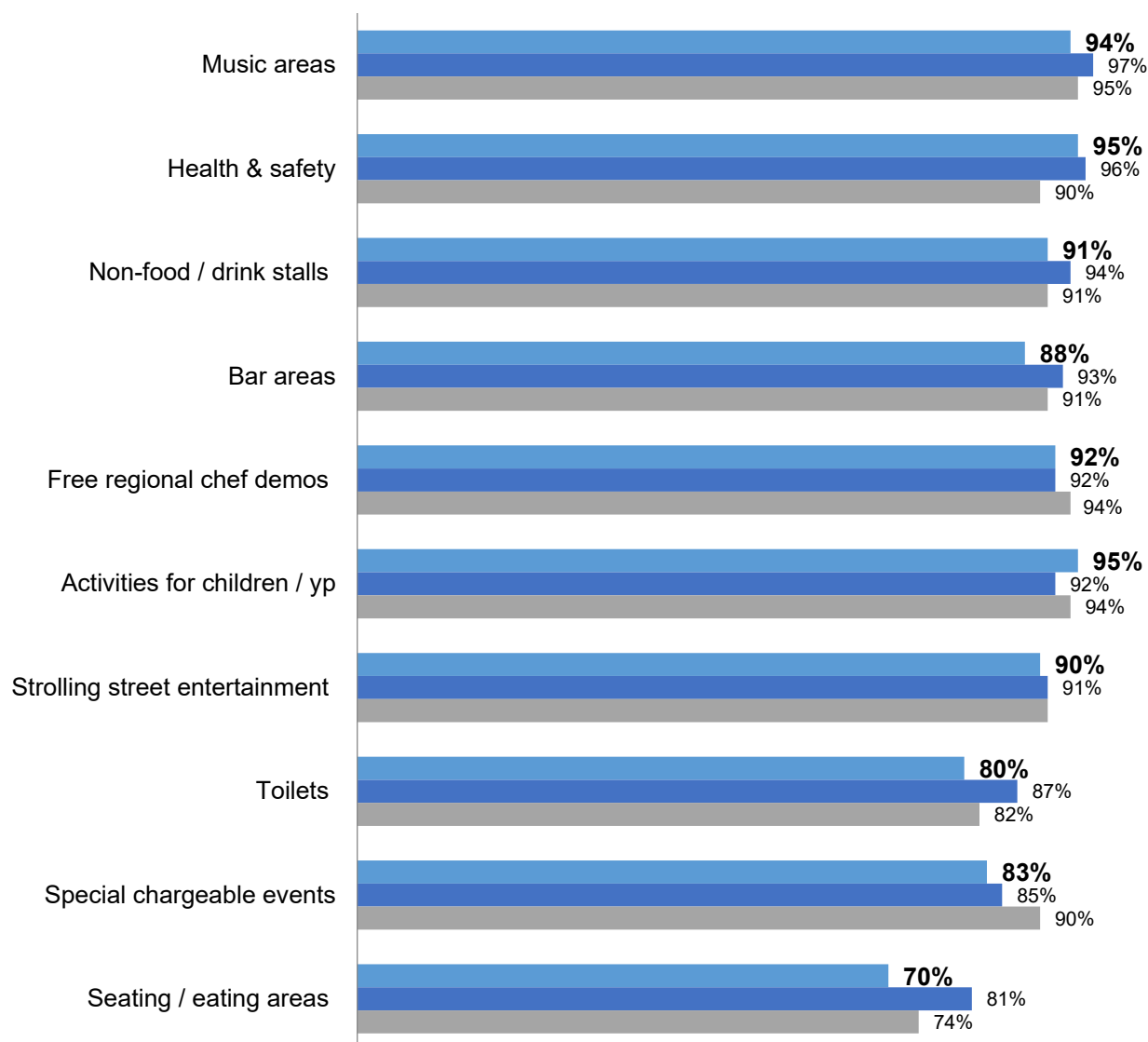
Base average: 221

14e. Satisfaction with festival aspects

An average of 161 respondents outlined their satisfaction with the same list of options as the previous question, revealing that satisfaction rates for all aspects of the festival were lower than the previous year, other than “*activities for children / young people*”, which saw an increase in 3% (95%). The option, “*seating*” saw the lowest satisfaction rate with 70% - an 11% decrease from 2024. Respondents were also highly satisfied with the “*music*” (94%) and “*health and safety*” (95%). Areas where satisfaction was below importance were “*seating / eating areas*” (-29%), “*toilets*” (-18%) and “*health and safety*” (-1%). All other aspects saw satisfaction exceeding the importance, with “*non food / drink stalls*” having the largest difference of 27%, followed by “*strolling street entertainment*” (17%) and “*special chargeable events*” (16%).

Satisfaction with festival aspects (%)

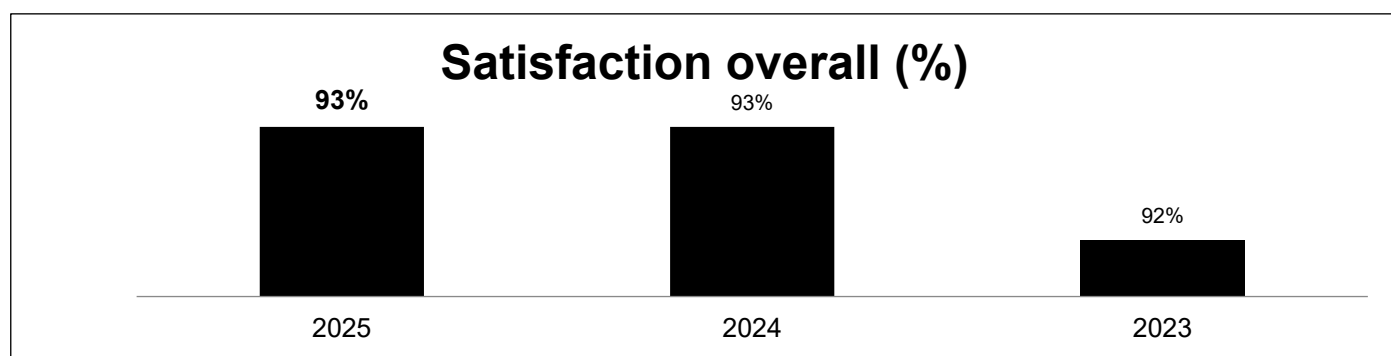
■ 2025 ■ 2024 ■ 2023



Base average: 161

14f. Overall satisfaction of BFDF 2025

234 respondents shared their overall satisfaction of BFDF 2025. 93% of respondents were satisfied overall, which was the same result as the previous year.



Base: 234

14g. Further comments

143 respondents provided further comments about Bolton Food and Drink Festival 2025, which have been categorised into three themes: suggestions for future festivals, challenges that visitors faced at the festival in 2025 and comments detailing visitor's satisfaction with festival. Each theme is broken down into subcategories, highlighting the common discussion points.

Please use this space for any additional comments about Bolton Food & Drink Festival 2025, or additional ideas for next year's festival.		
Rank	Category	Number of respondents
a.	Festival suggestions	83
b.	Challenges with festival	58
c.	Satisfaction with festival	63

a. Festival suggestions

83 comments were received that provided suggestions for future festivals. The layout of the festival was discussed with many respondents calling for additional seating, or changes to the layout of the event. Several mentioned parking interventions. Portion sizes and the cost of produce was raised as a challenge, so several visitors suggested that traders implement samples for customers or smaller portion sizes for those that want to try different foods at the festival.

Comments discussed the implementation of different sustainability initiatives, the entertainment offer and how to improve the stage areas. Suggestions pertaining to accessibility and inclusion were raised particularly for babies / children and young people, parents, people with mobility aids and neurodiverse individuals.

Socio-economic barriers were raised in relation to the cost of products and food for visitors.

Festival layout - seating / parking:

- *"There needs to be more toilets within the bar areas to save the hassle of as many headcounts or a ticket system"*
- *"Maybe the stalls could have a bit of space between them so I didn't have to block a shop when I waited for my cakes?"*
- *"There could be more seating in some areas, esp for eating."*
- *"This years food festival felt very different than before... there were fewer stalls. There used to be many stalls down the street facing the market place, and there was a lack of stalls inside of the market place. We had the weather for it but no atmosphere it seemed."*
- *"More licensed areas, to spread out the footfall, making it easier for everyone,"*
- *"Increasing the seating capacity abd introducing a check in system for people who want to use the toilet when watching the music."*
- *"There's not enough seating and the metal chairs were very uncomfortable"*
- *"Free parking Lower costs More seating outside stage areas"*
- *"The acoustic area could do with being a bit bigger and have toilets inside, like the festival stage. Noticed they did on Monday"*
- *"More toilets and bins. Stalls from local restaurants or cafes would help promote businesses and encourage custom. Cocktail, prosecco or gin bar seated area/garden not necessarily with the main music stages so people can chat and relax."*
- *"I think it needs to be better located. This year, it wasnt clear where the bar areas were located. Last year, there were a few different areas but they were all together this year which meant it was extremely crowded."*
- *"Make use of the disused street where the entrance to Crompton place is, maybe use some disguising of the derelict shopping centre (like the walls of the festival garden) to make an additional space for more seating. There aren't any food stalls down that way at all and it seems like wasted space that could be used to improve the event. A lot of the food stalls have food that's not made for walking around and eating, so more seating is needed to accommodate this. Perhaps some additional seating and stalls could be set up in the courtyard outside the Old Man & Scythe/Taste Of Greece/Hogarth's Etc to encourage more visitors to those establishments during the festival."*
- *"Baby changing unit"*
- *"Free parking would have been nice or free buses/trains from Bolton boroughs"*
- *"I do feel the acoustic area needs to be bigger if possible there were large queues to get in this year."*
- *"More seating in Le Mans Crescent for the music would be good."*
- *"Stalls spread out more so customers can actually see at the stalls"*

Portion sizes / traders / taster samples:

- *"I feel that there needs to be a way of trying multiple dishes on offer without having to buy a full portion."*
- *"Please think of the artisans that trade every year and have been unable to since 2024, while a lot have moved inside the shopping centre, they need to be included as part of the event"*
- *"More demos in Bolton Market and the Market Place please. Promote Bolton more! Please have more free demo chefs instead of "doubling up". A few were doing more than one day. Work with more independent Bolton businesses. How about doing pop up stalls at St Andrews Court? Bolton Council can't just rely on this event and Iron Man in the year. The people of Bolton deserve more."*
- *"Cheaper smaller food portions so u can try more than 1"*
- *"More trade stands offering food to take home - meat, sausages, olives, pies, pasties"*
- *"Options of smaller portions on the food stalls and more foods that aren't ultra processed or processed foods."*
- *"More pizza options the only one that's there isn't great for the size and price and woodfired pizzas are better at events like this"*
- *"Could you encourage some brewery stalls to sell draft beer at the festival please. Food outweighed to drink at this food and drink festival which felt lop-sided"*

- *"Invite more chefs and invite big names to come join us to help promote our town as well as the festival"*
- *"Have more free samples, people walking about with free samples, free goodie bags, vouchers"*
- *"Food stalls should do taster dishes for half the price so you can try a few different places."*
- *"A reduced rate for attracting more local suppliers (or Bolton suppliers especially) might be a good idea."*
- *"I think we should spend less on big names bands, we have so much local talent to show case and use the money we save to make the festival more accessible to our most marginalised communities. They after all are the only ones who frequent the town centre all year round and then are excluded from this vast event and investment. Using the socio- economic duty would help us redress this. I'd really love to see local beer served on the bars too. Again so much local talent, it felt a missed opportunity to serve generic beer on the bars."*

Accessibility / inclusion:

- *"More activities for teenagers"*
- *"More options for teenagers and older children/youth. Eg cost friendly, more suitable entertainment options etc"*
- *"It would help adults & teens with food sensitivities to have food stalls, that offer simple options, without additional sauces or spices."*
- *"More children acts"*
- *"More fairground games for children."*
- *"I recommend a space (if applicable) for neurodivergent and kids/teenagers/adults with special needs who might just need a space to chill. this could have comfy seats like beanbags or low to the floor chairs, different textures and things to touch."*
- *"More gluten free options"*
- *"As the festival is so expensive it doesn't offer anything much for some many of our low income families."*

Entertainment and stage areas:

- *"Please also consider additional bar areas with extra seating."*
- *"We missed the bar area opposite McDonald's this year. It was a nice place to sit that wasn't too loud"*
- *"Maybe coldplay , queen, tributes on would be awesome"*
- *"More music, great that odyssey and East 17 were headliners. Music was much better this year. Young kids rock group were excellent."*
- *"Singers sing more cover songs not as much of their own written songs and more tribute groups"*
- *"Maybe some bigger names for the band/staging area to draw even bigger crowds"*
- *"On the Monday, the festival (including the wonderful, live, entertainment) ended very abruptly, at 5pm. Would have preferred it to carry on until 6pm !"*
- *"Please bring back the smaller bar that always used to be on Deansgate."*
- *"Increase licensing numbers and improve exit and reentry arrangements."*

Sustainability initiatives:

- *"A refundable cup/cold drink cup would be so useful and also places to refill water bottles."*
- *"More local produce products for next year too"*
- *"In regards to the environment, how about paying a deposit for your cup that you get back if you use it for your next drink?"*
- *"Definitely need to move sustainability up the agenda."*

b. Challenges with festival

A range of challenges with the festival were raised by 58 respondents. Challenges raised include the cost of food and drink options and value for money, a lack of seating across the festival, crowds and queues and paid parking, challenges with accessibility or inclusion, entertainment dissatisfaction or, rarely, challenges and a lack of trader variety. Several respondents highlighted negative experiences they had because of these challenges or other issues with security.

Cost:

- *"It is very expensive to take a family to the festival and buy the food available. It would be over £50 for a family."*
- *"Franca's pizza's were extortionate! All other vendors had reasonable prices but was really disappointed with Franca's,"*
- *"Food prices could be slightly cheaper."*
- *"£8 for a cookie on one stall, and same price for a cup with about 5 strawberries and some pistachio cream. Quite unbelievable really. £7 for a cup of lemonade! The stalls that got our money were the ones that were reasonably priced for good quality...for example porto catering!"*
- *"The price of the meals are quite expensive and therefore i felt had to commit to a choice of which meal i wanted rather than the chance to try various smaller portions"*
- *"Drinks at bar pricey"*
- *"Perhaps the excessive pitch fees have caused issues in attracting food based stalls, this was pointed out by one stall holder who had a terrible event and would barely make anything once the pitch fees were deducted."*
- *"Some stalls felt more of a rip off eg £2 for a bottle of water!"*
- *"I liked how there was a choice of drinks venues at the acoustic stage, £3.50 a pint was very reasonable. This should happen at the festival stage... not everyone can afford £11 street food. That's why so many went to McDonalds."*
- *"I know they pay for the stands but £14.00 for salt and pepper chips with 6 prawns outrageous."*
- *"All too expensive. Stalls taking advantage"*
- *"Why is everything so expensive as it puts lots of people off"*
- *"This year you could feel the impact of price rises."*
- *"All foods we bought were not good and very expensive"*

Festival layout - seating / crowding / parking:

- *"There are now only 2 areas with seating where you can get an alcoholic drink. Both these areas are where the stages are and are both quite close together...there used to be bars near Vodafone and opposite the town hall steps (the Aldi stall). Not only have you reduced the number of bar areas but the seating at the acoustic stage is completely inadequate."*
- *"Why the queuing at the acoustic stage, yet none at the festival stage? It put us off."*
- *"Seating is also required for when you have bought food as you were trying to eat it but everyone was just walking into you"*
- *"Top end of festival market (area by post office) did at times become too crowded and was impossible to move through crowds this could have been due to narrow street area, maybe try limiting number of stalls in this area and placing them further down the town centre where the street is wider"*
- *"Queues at the drinks bar were ridiculous and not enough staff. Not enough seating and toilets. Not enough tables chairs to sit whilst eating, no sanitizer stations, no recycling facilities."*
- *"If people are driving into Bolton and spending lots of money, I thought there would be free parking to encourage people to come like they do at Christmas. People want more for their money and value for money so don't make anything smaller e.g food portions."*
- *"Did seem a lot of spaces they could have had more businesses around... definitely need more stalls around"*

- *"No food was available in the bar area."*
- *"Things were too spread out this year."*
- *"Difficult to find somewhere to sit and eat the food you buy."*
- *"Adults only bar not big enough and queuing was bad you could see empty seats but not allowed entry also the toilets were position outside the bar area"*

Accessibility / inclusion:

- *"There was very little accommodation for disability awareness for things like toilets and seating. The kids activities didn't offer any SEN sessions for our neurodiverse children and cookery for kids 10+ in age means so many younger kids miss out and parents can't get adequate chance to have both kids in an event. It's a family event and the council seem to have forgotten that many families have multiple children and activities should be aimed at all ages"*
- *"I had a baby this year and it was hard to feed them. There was not enough seats for me to feed the baby so it made it difficult to spend more time at the festival."*
- *"Was hardly any vegan options this year. It would be nice to have some vegan only businesses attending next year there are a few in Manchester like wholesome junkies, purezza, teatime collective and vegan ethical businesses too"*
- *"People way too drunk and we visited at lunch time"*
- *"My children (5 and 7) felt that the variety of free activities available for them was significantly less this year than in previous years and that having games etc out in Elizabeth Park wasn't sufficient to compensate. The Festival garden was lovely but not sure what age it was aimed at - probably younger children. They have previously enjoyed being able to make something to eat but that was not on offer this year for their age bracket or without being HAF applicable."*
- *"Far too busy and very hard to navigate with wheelchair"*
- *"Street food needs to be better value for money. Ok for us as there are just me & husband, but would get prohibitively expensive for less well off families - needs to be more inclusive."*
- *"The festival always promises to be great fun but is actually a sensory overload."*

Entertainment:

- *"Perhaps have more music dotted around the venue, if it was spread out a bit more I would have stayed longer."*
- *"Also, the music wasn't as good this year without Bolton FM acts - I remember a time when they used to have both the main stage and Bolton FM acts... I suppose this has stopped happening now which is a shame."*
- *"Music programming on Saturday was a bit strange...blowjangles were in the wrong place. Seemed to be a local community band and should have been much earlier in day. Bands either side of them were far better musicians and more polished acts."*
- *"The Fawltly Towers dinning experience was diabolical"*
- *"The artist running order on the main stage wasn't as good this year, I believe it should be a non stop party in that area from 5 onwards and this year that stage was empty at around 6-7 due to the act on stage not being that good at that time One of the main things I've said for the past 4-5 years is the music stages need a proper host or a DJ in between acts just to keep the momentum going, as one example,"*
- *"Acoustics at main bar was bad."*
- *"Didn't see many street entertainers as in previous years."*

Trader variety:

- *"I thought there wasn't enough drink stalls , there was a lot more last year , they was only the two stages that sold drinks that i could see, and we had to queue to get in the one on town hall square ,which we havent done before"*
- *"The stalls were in the same place and selling the same goods. I prefer to take baked goods home and there seemed to be less choice this year, with more stalls selling eat-now food and fewer cake stalls"*

- *“This is a quality food and drink festival and tat stalls are taking over which ruins the whole ethos and credibility of the event.”*
- *“The drink offer is abysmal. We have SO MANY local breweries – please use these for the bars. The bars were so disappointing. The offer was terrible. We ended up going to a local pub for decent drinks!”*
- *“Too many repeat stalls. Eg about 4 churros stalls at least. There used to be a couple of tea stalls but didn’t see any this time. Would like a tea stall. . Would have liked some stalls with craft beer or wine”*

Other comments included challenges with advertisements of information and signposting as *“I may have been more involved if I had known about some of the events. Found out about most, after they’d happened”* and one respondent who was not local struggled to find other activities for children: *“We only did the festival gardens. We aren’t local we came from Halifax way so it would have been good to signpost the sand pit area near the library etc.”*

A couple of respondents mentioned that poor food hygiene *“put me off buying”* and wasps were mentioned as a challenge. Other health-related challenges raised were the lack of *“hearing protection”*, which one respondent said *“should be available (on sale) and encouraged... Too many toddlers right in front of those speakers dancing”*.

Some individuals raised challenges they had with security near the stage areas, including *“hostile”* behaviour:

“Please ensure all security staff follow the same rules and not make their own rules. I encountered one particular member of security who was happy to make 6 people wait outside the Acoustic Stage area even though there was plenty of standing space and the bar had zero people queuing. He also told me I couldn’t get any food and bring it back into the stage area. It’s a food and drink festival for goodness sake. It took a festival organiser to overrule him. This individual was the only blight on an otherwise enjoyable event.”

“I was on a guestlist for one of the bands doing content creation, therefore had to come in and out of the festival stage area to ensure I got different angles of the band performing and security were refusing to let people into the area, stopped me and my friend to check our bags but didn’t check them, which slowed us down massively and reduced the amount of content we could get (which is our job). Throughout the day, the security manning the green room/ backstage area were extremely hostile towards me, the band and other members of our party. One member of security even tried to come at me and my friend physically, screaming at us for having drinks in a PLASTIC cup outside the green room, which we were recommended to use instead of cans via the rules we were sent in advance. Additionally, a member of the backstage security attempted to square up to one of my friends, just because he’d brought a drink outside (even though it was a plastic cup). Throughout the day, multiple members of security yelled at us and were extremely hostile towards us because we had drinks outside, even though they were in plastic cups at all times, which shouldn’t have been the case considering there were no signs anywhere that stated otherwise, or in the rules we were sent in advance. The poor treatment of me and my party from security made me feel extremely unsafe at the festival as they wouldn’t speak to us calmly and constantly responded with aggression, unprovoked. It was extremely unprofessional and really ruined my experience, which is severely disappointing considering how good of a day me and my friends were having just chilling and getting some content.”

One respondent offered their services to assist with the stage entertainment as *“I’ve been a Bolton DJ for nearly 30 years, I worked at Ikon & Jaxx in its heyday and many other places across the years & I’ve been*

at Bolton FM as well as other radio stations for 13 years. I also host & DJ at various festivals across the north west I would love to help make it even better than it's been since I've been attending. Please feel free to contact me at any time if I can be of service". This respondent provided their name and email address.

c. Satisfaction with festival

63 comments were received that outlined satisfaction with this year's festival. It was rather common for respondents to praise the festival and the staff involved. Several mentioned that the festival makes them "proud" and puts Bolton "on the map", meanwhile others focused on the value it brings for families, having a day out and the atmosphere it brings to the town centre. Several discussed their excitement for next year's festival and outlined how far they travel to attend. The organisation of the festival was also praised, but one noted poor recycling facilities.

Bolton Town Centre / pride:

- "I would also like to comment how clean the town was kept and the toilets where some of the cleanest portaloos I have ever been in."
- "I love what it brings to Bolton, it's great to see it busy & safe"
- "Its amazing and i will have memories every year going to enjoy with family and friends"
- "Not only does it bring much needed visitors to boost our economy, it also puts us on the map. The free kids activities and chefs demos really showed what outstanding entertainment we can provide. The chance for small non food businesses to trade is such a nice change!"
- "This years festival was excellent. The amount of variety was brilliant and fun for all the family. Food was delicious and the music made it much more enjoyable. The kids areas were outstanding."
- "Loved it again. Been every year since it started. Look fwd to it & never disappoints."
- "Myself and my two young daughters had such a nice time on the Sunday that we returned on the Monday! Great job Bolton Food Festival team!"
- "I grew up in Bolton and in recent years, it has really deteriorated and I rarely go into the town centre. Going to the festival enabled me to see what improvements are being made to improve the town and gave me hope that maybe in time it could have the potential to be like it used to be. It was also a lovely atmosphere, I never see any trouble which Bolton can have a reputation for so it was nice to have pride in my Bolton roots:)"
- "We felt that the range of food, stalls and general atmosphere was absolutely epic this year the best it's ever been. It felt like being in some amazing holiday destination! We really loved it this year"
- "I think this years festival was the biggest and best yet."
- "I missed last year but I usually go every year. I go to quite a few food festivals and this is my second favourite after Nantwich. It's a great day out and you have a huge amount of stalls. We travel from Wirral to visit. We'll definitely be there next year."
- "Overall great show this year, the acoustic acts were amazing and the added arrival of the Bolton Gin company in the main area was great and very welcomed well done to all involved 🍷"
- "Love visiting the festival. I drive up from Clacton on Sea, Essex, to stay with my sister for a week every year especially to go to the food festival."
- "The festival made me proud to be Boltonian and had a great vibe. It had something for all generations. It helped that the weather was kind. Everything from the stalls to the children's entertainment to the music was just right. Well done and see you next year."
- "Loved the northern soultrain band, The appy mundays surprised me with how much I enjoyed them. They were the first 2 acts on, and for me were the best."
- "First time attending. I didnt know it existed as had not heard of it before. Will definitely attend next year."
- "Bolton food and Drink festival is the biggest in the Country and Bolton should be proud to host it every year"

- *“Loads of different stalls and something for everyone, the atmosphere was fantastic. I found lots of stalls I wanted to look at and bought quite a few things from bread to coffee... I will look out for stall maps you provide at next years event and plan my day better”*
- *“Great day out with family and friends . Good transport links . A must visit annual event”*
- *“I just wanted to comment on the Haf cook and dine my daughter absolutely loves them and takes part every year”*

Festival organisation / staff / traders:

- *“The staff and traders should be very proud of there selves we absolutely loved it and can’t wait for next year”*
- *“The helpers in the tshirts were very informative.”*
- *“Fantastic stall holders, delicious food and £2.50 for a slice of cake i think is very good. The grumpy baker, again quality ingredients and more reasonable than other foods on the go.”*
- *“The markets team deserve a medal”*
- *“The arts and craft stalls are good”*
- *“The extra space to move around was perfect.”*
- *“It really bothered me that residents have to recycle yet everything was going in one bin at the festival.”*
- *“This year you had less stalls and activities for children compared to last year.”*
- *“Music amazing & so varied to cover all tastes”*
- *“Good visibility of medical crew. Seemed on it, good to see.”*
- *“Any staff encountered we’re all very pleasant”*
- *“Much better diversity of food this year.”*

Other comments discussed the entertainment offer at the festivals: *“I really hope you get the Northern soultrain back again, next year, but give them a later spot. I was also very surprised how much i liked the 'appy Mondays tribute”* whilst another visitor reflected on how safe they felt in Bolton: *“Felt safe in a town that usually feels quite intimidating for a solo visitor ... especially in the evening”*.

15. Demographics

15a. Geographic location

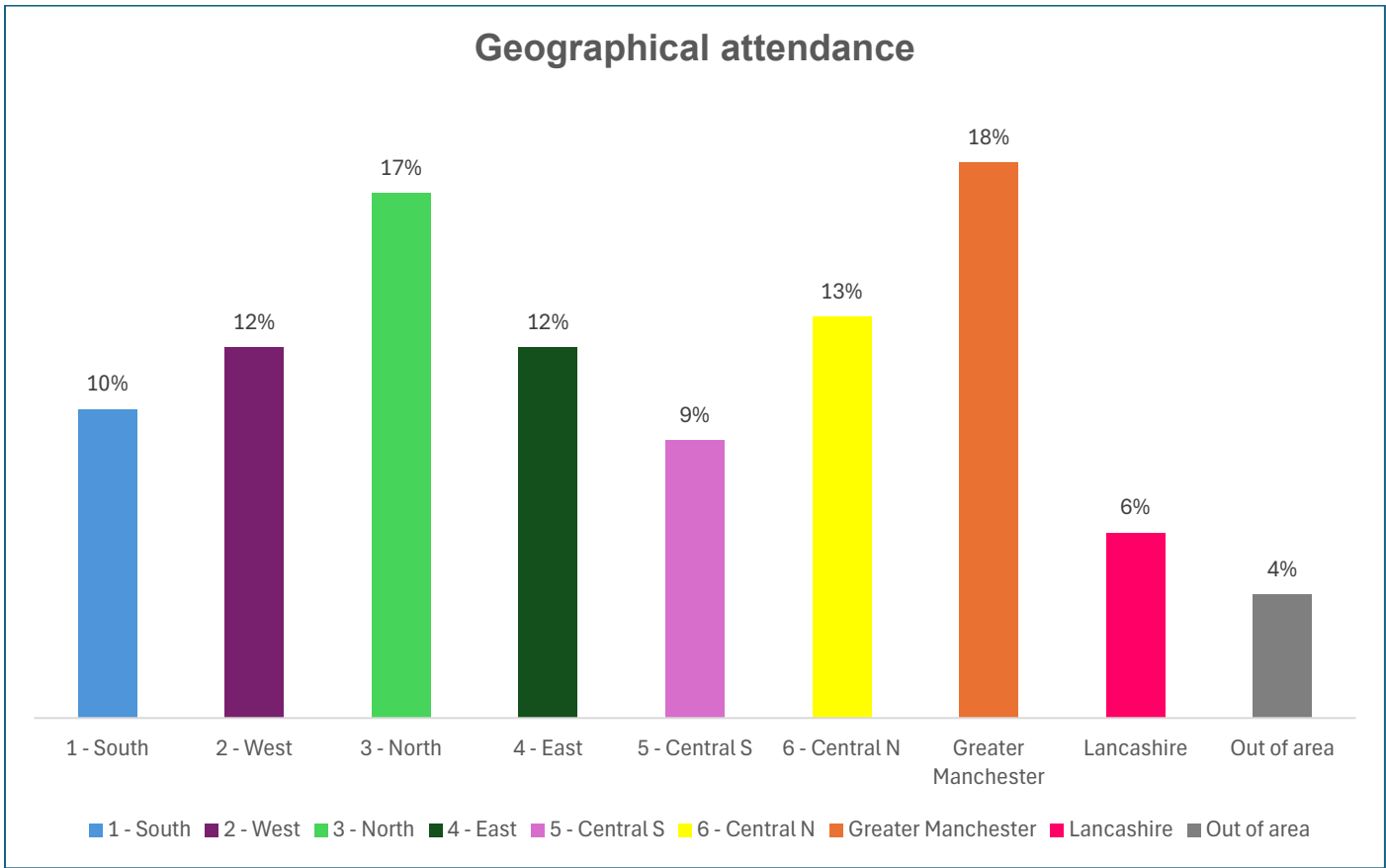
The table below outlines the demographics of respondents by geographical neighbourhood. A total of 234 valid postcodes were received. The bar chart below provides a breakdown by neighbourhood, with the table below showing the breakdown by ward.

The location in Bolton with the highest representation was the North (17%). 169 responses were from people out of Bolton Borough, with an additional 41 responses received from residents in the wider Greater Manchester area. 15 responses were from residents located in Lancashire and 9 responses received from visitors from further afield.

At a ward level, Astley Bridge was the area in Bolton that engaged most with the survey (10%).



*Neighbourhoods are a local geography for integrated health and social care; all have a population of around 50,000 residents.



Base: 234

Bolton wards	Number of responses
Astley Bridge	17
Bradshaw	11
Brightmet	10
Bromley Cross	8
Farnworth North	10
Farnworth South	4

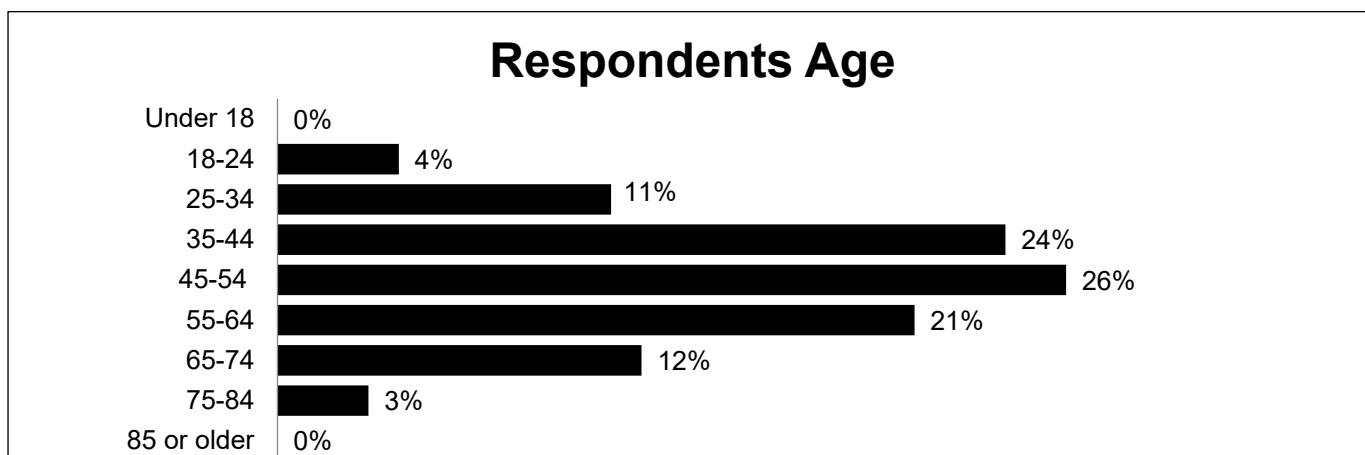
Great Lever	6
Halliwell	3
Heaton, Lostock and Chew Moor	9
Horwich North	11
Horwich South and Blackrod	3
Hulton	8
Kearsley	8
Little Lever and Darcy Lever	12
Queens Park and Central	12
Rumworth	4
Smithills	11
Tonge with the Haulgh	11
Westhoughton North and Hunger Hill	7
Westhoughton South	4

15b. Identity

239 respondents shared their identity. 84% of respondents are female (201) and 15% are male. One respondent identified in another way.

15c. Age group

238 respondents shared their age. Half of respondents were between the ages of 35 and 54 and a minority responded over the age of 65 (15%). No responses were received for the 85 or older category.



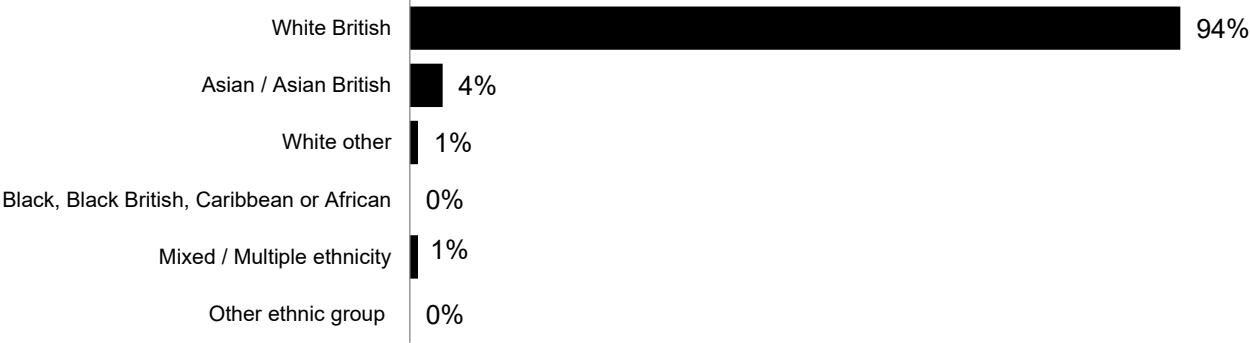
Base: 238

15d. Ethnicity

236 responses were received from visitors when they were asked to disclose their ethnicity. 94% of respondents were White British, 4% were Asian / Asian British and 1% identified as White other and Mixed / multiple ethnicities.



Ethnicity



Base: 236

Bolton Food & Drink Festival 2025 - Visitor Survey

We'd love to hear what you thought of our festival - you could win a Bolton Food & Drink Festival goody bag, which includes:

- 4 x tickets to in-house party nights at Mercure Georgian House;
- 1 x adult Food and Drink apron
- 2 x children's food and drink aprons
- 2 x festival flasks
- 2 x James Martin martini glasses
- 2 x Bolton badges
- 2 x Brand Bolton pens
- A copy of 'The Yorkshire Forager' signed by author Alysia Vasey.



Your response - keeping your data safe

All questions are optional so just skip any that you prefer not to answer.
Your responses will be anonymised and grouped together with those from other people in any report.
Reports may be made public.

Any personal data you provide will be held securely, in line with our retention schedule and privacy policy.

www.bolton.gov.uk/data-protection-freedom-information/privacy-notices

We use Snap Surveys professional software to collect and process your data. Snap Surveys Ltd. follow the UK General Data Protection Regulation. Their privacy policy can be found here:
www.snapsurveys.com/survey-software/privacy-policy-uk/.

Your visit

When did you visit Bolton Food & Drink Festival 2025? (Please select all that apply)

Were you there during the day, or in the evening [after 6pm]?

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| ☐ Friday - daytime | ☐ Saturday - evening | ☐ Monday - daytime | ☐ Didn't visit the festival |
| ☐ Friday - evening | ☐ Sunday - daytime | ☐ Monday - evening | |
| ☐ Saturday - daytime | ☐ Sunday - evening | | |

Are you a UK resident or an overseas visitor?

☐ UK resident

☐ Overseas visitor

Which country do you live in?

Did you visit the town centre specifically to go to Bolton Food & Drink Festival?

☐ Yes - that was the main / only reason for my visit

☐ No - I came for other reasons, but I also attended the festival

☐ No - I came for other reasons and did not attend the festival

☐ Not applicable - I live in the town centre

Did you stay in Greater Manchester to attend the Bolton Food & Drink Festival, somewhere other than your own home?

☐ Yes, in Bolton

☐ Yes, outside Bolton but in Greater Manchester

☐ No

How many nights did you spend in Greater Manchester to attend the Bolton Food & Drink Festival?

What type of accommodation did you stay in during your time in Greater Manchester? If you stayed in more than one type of accommodation, please select the one you stayed in for the most nights.

☐ In paid accommodation

☐ With friends and family

☐ Other (please specify)

If 'other' please specify

Did you do anything else while you were in the town centre?

☐ Food shopping [please don't include shopping at the festival]

☐ Non-food shopping [please don't include shopping at the festival]

☐ Drinking / eating at a pub, cafe, restaurant [not including eating and drinking at the festival]

☐ Health appointments / banking / financial / other business

☐ Work / volunteer

☐ Leisure eg library, gym, theatre

☐ Just visited Bolton Food & Drink Festival

☐ Other

If 'other' please explain

What attracts you to Bolton Food & Drink Festival? (Please tick all that apply)

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Chargeable special events / celebrity chef demos | ☐ Safe event |
| ☐ Free demos by regional chefs | ☐ Local event |
| ☐ Opportunity to buy / see / try different foods at the food & drink stalls | ☐ Activities for children / young people |
| ☐ Learning about different foods / ways to cook | ☐ Music stages / bar areas |
| ☐ Art / craft stalls | ☐ Street entertainers / wandering musicians |
| ☐ Free event | ☐ Festival garden |
| ☐ Something for all the family | ☐ Working at the festival / visiting someone who was working at festival |
| ☐ Good day out / socialise with friends / family | ☐ In town centre anyway |
| ☐ Nice atmosphere / buzz | ☐ Something else |
| | ☐ Prefer not to say / no opinion |

If 'something else' please explain

How long did you spend at Bolton Food & Drink Festival / in the town centre?

If you came more than once, please add up all your visits. Your best guess is fine!

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Less than 30 minutes | ☐ Up to five hours |
| ☐ Up to an hour | ☐ Up to eight hours |
| ☐ Up to two hours | ☐ Up to fourteen hours |
| ☐ Up to three hours | ☐ Over fourteen hours |
| ☐ Up to four hours | ☐ Don't know / prefer not to say |

Approximately, how much did you and your party spend at Bolton Food & Drink Festival 2025 on the following? Please give the total amount you spent at the Festival itself, during all your visits.

Food and drink stalls and bar: £

Admission charges for ticket events: £

Arts and crafts: £

Other (please specify)

Perception of Bolton

Have you ever visited Bolton before, for leisure purposes?

- ☐ Does not apply - I live in Bolton ☐ Yes ☐ No

As a Bolton resident, how far do you agree / disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion
The festival has projected a positive image of Bolton as a good place to visit	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The festival has promoted a sense of pride in how I feel about Bolton	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The festival has had a positive impact on the local community	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

How likely are you to recommend Bolton as a place to visit to a friend, family member, or colleague?

☐ Very likely ☐ Fairly likely ☐ Fairly unlikely ☐ Very unlikely ☐ No opinion

Describe in three words what positive impact Bolton Food & Drink Festival has had on Bolton as a place. (Please put one word in each box.)

Information

How did you find out about Bolton Food & Drink Festival 2025?

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Bolton Food & Drink Festival website | ☐ Twitter |
| ☐ Bolton Council website | ☐ Facebook |
| ☐ Visit Bolton website | ☐ Instagram |
| ☐ Visit Manchester website | ☐ TikTok |
| ☐ Our Bolton [Council magazine] | ☐ YouTube |
| ☐ Bolton News [paper / online] | ☐ Snapchat |
| ☐ Manchester Evening News [paper / online] | ☐ Internet search / Google |
| ☐ Asian Leader magazine | ☐ Discover app |
| ☐ Lancashire Life [magazine / online] | ☐ Received an email / e-newsletter |
| ☐ Cheshire Life [magazine / online] | ☐ Knew it was on as I've been in previous years |
| ☐ Northern Life [magazine / online] | ☐ Someone told me about it [family, friend colleague etc] |
| ☐ ITV X | ☐ Through work |
| ☐ Bolton FM radio | ☐ From a sponsor |
| ☐ XS Manchester | ☐ Business Bolton |
| ☐ Railway station | ☐ Came across it / saw it being set up |
| ☐ Leaflet seen before the Festival | ☐ Another way |
| ☐ Poster / Billboard | ☐ Can't remember |

If 'another way' please explain

How helpful were the following sources of information about Bolton Food & Drink Festival 2025?

	Very helpful	Fairly helpful	Not very helpful	Not helpful at all	Didn't see / use
Bolton Food & Drink Festival website	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Social media information	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Festival guide booklet	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Stall list / map	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Daily events sheet	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Information tent	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
'What's on' board	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Travelling to Bolton Food & Drink Festival 2025

How did you get to Bolton Food & Drink Festival 2025?

Please give the main method used.

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Bus | ☐ Train |
| ☐ Car / motorbike /moped | ☐ Bicycle |
| ☐ Coach | ☐ On foot [walked] |
| ☐ Taxi | ☐ Another way |

Please tell us how you travelled to the festival.

Festival market

The festival market covered the town centre and featured a wide range of traders and produce, from food and drink to art and craft.

Did you visit the festival market?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

How satisfied / dissatisfied were you with the following aspects of the festival market?

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Not applicable / no opinion
Range of stalls	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Number of stalls	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Value for money	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Quality of produce	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Location of stalls	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Room to get round the stalls	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
How easy it was to find particular stall / goods	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Regional chef demos

Did you see any of the free regional chef demos?

These free demos took place on Victoria Square in front of the town hall

☐ Yes

☐ No

Which regional chef demos did you see?

Overall, how satisfied / dissatisfied were you with the free regional chef demos?

Very satisfied

☐

Fairly satisfied

☐

Fairly dissatisfied

☐

Very dissatisfied

☐

Not applicable /
no opinion

☐

Special events

There were a number of special events held in The Albert Halls [Bolton Town Hall] that you had to buy a ticket for

Did you go to any of these special events?

- ☐ Afternoon Tea with Helen McGinn
- ☐ Faulty Towers The Dining Experience
- ☐ James Martin celebrity chef demo
- ☐ Marco Pierre White cooking demo
- ☐ Marco Pierre White Q&A session
- ☐ Wine Tasting with Helen McGinn
- ☐ Didn't go to any of these special events

How satisfied / dissatisfied were you with the following aspects of the ticketed special events?

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Not applicable / no opinion
Booking system	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Seating	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Able to see clearly	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Able to hear clearly	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Quality / content of event	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Suitability of venue	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

What kinds of produce would you be interested in buying at future Bolton Food & Drink Festivals?

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Meat-based | ☐ Cakes / biscuits / desserts |
| ☐ Fish-based | ☐ Chocolates / fudge / sweets |
| ☐ Cheese | ☐ Fruit / vegetables |
| ☐ Vegetarian | ☐ Pasties / pies |
| ☐ Vegan | ☐ Bread products |
| ☐ Plant-based | ☐ Food to eat at the festival |
| ☐ Halal | ☐ Food to take home |
| ☐ Kosher | ☐ Locally grown seasonal produce |
| ☐ Gluten-free | ☐ Food / drink made in locally [north west England] |
| ☐ Nut-free | ☐ Food / drink made by small businesses from other areas of Britain |
| ☐ Exotic meats [game, ostrich, kangaroo etc] | ☐ Food / drink sold by local businesses / traders from [North West England] |
| ☐ Premium / luxury | ☐ Food / drink from traders across Britain |
| ☐ Budget / low cost | ☐ Food / drink from traders from outside Britain |
| ☐ Smaller portions / tasters | ☐ Other food / drink |
| ☐ Larger portions | ☐ None of these |
| ☐ Healthy choices | |

What other kinds of food / drink?

Stall holders were able to trade from 10am to 6pm on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, and from 10am to 5pm on Monday.

Were you happy with these trading times?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

What times would you prefer?

Overall, how satisfied / dissatisfied were you with the festival markets?

- Very satisfied ☐ Fairly satisfied ☐ Fairly dissatisfied ☐ Very dissatisfied ☐ No opinion ☐

Value for money ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Overall, how satisfied / dissatisfied were you with the special events?

Very satisfied ☐ Fairly satisfied ☐ Fairly dissatisfied ☐ Very dissatisfied ☐ No opinion ☐

Please use this space if you'd like to suggest any special events that we could offer at future Bolton Food & Drink Festivals.

☐ No comments

Live music - festival stage and acoustic stage

Did you visit the festival music stage, or the acoustic music stage?

☐ Yes ☐ No

How satisfied / dissatisfied were you with the following aspects of the festival music stage / acoustic music stage?

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Not applicable / no opinion
Bar service	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Quality of food & drink in the bars	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Range of food & drink in the bars	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Price / value for money of food & drink in the bars	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Seating in the bar / music areas	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Musicians	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Just thinking about the festival music stage / acoustic music stage, how far do you agree / disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not applicable / no opinion
Musicians played at advertised times	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
There was a good variety of music	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I enjoyed the music I heard	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

The festival music stage looked professional	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The sound quality / volume was suitable for the venue	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Music is an essential part of Bolton Food & Drink Festival	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Overall, how satisfied / dissatisfied were you with the festival music stage / acoustic music stage?

Very satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Not applicable / no opinion
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Activities / entertainment for children & young people

Did any children / young people [aged 18 or under] go to Bolton Food & Drink Festival 2025 with you?

☐ Yes ☐ No

How many adults were in your party?

How many children and young people (aged 18 or under) were in your party?

How old are they?

☐ Under 2 years	☐ 10-12 years
☐ 2-3 years	☐ 13-14 years
☐ 4-6 years	☐ 15-16 years
☐ 7-9 years	☐ 17-18 years

Did the children / young people in your party get involved in any of these activities / entertainments?

- ☐ Outdoor activities in Elizabeth Park Family Zone [sandpit, music, magic, crafts, a Story Palace, story telling and games]
- ☐ Festival Garden on Le Mans Crescent [fruity snack making, s'mores toasting, clay boggart crafting, messy play, work hunting etc]
- ☐ Octagon Family Festival 2025 - [storytelling, disco, theatre, arts & crafts, bubbles etc]
- ☐ Bolton Library and Museum - Breadcrumbs show
- ☐ Teen Zone, Victoria Square [arcade games, air hockey, table football, music, tabletop games etc]
- ☐ Cook & Dine in Albert Halls [town hall] [for 11-16 year olds]
- ☐ None of these

How satisfied / dissatisfied were you with the following aspects of activities offered for children / young people?

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Not applicable / no opinion
Activities / entertainment offered	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Suitability for age of children / young people in your party	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Number of places available	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Suitability of venue	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Information [what was on, any cost, how to book etc]	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Overall, how satisfied / dissatisfied were you with the activities / entertainment for children & young people?

☐ Very satisfied
 ☐ Fairly satisfied
 ☐ Fairly dissatisfied
 ☐ Very dissatisfied
 ☐ Not applicable / no opinion

Sponsors

Without looking them up, can you remember any of the sponsors of this year's festival?

Environmental impact

We are looking at ways to make future Bolton Food & Drink Festivals more environmentally-friendly. This could include reducing food waste and providing recycling facilities.

Which of the following should we do to make future festivals more environmentally-friendly?

- ☐ Provide recycling bins for food waste
- ☐ Provide recycling bins for paper & cardboard
- ☐ Provide recycling bins for glass, cans & plastic bottles
- ☐ Encourage traders to offer smaller portions to reduce food waste
- ☐ Encourage people to bring their own drink cup / containers for any food or drink they buy
- ☐ Sell a Bolton Food & Drink Festival cup / food container that could be used at any stall
- ☐ None of these

Overall views

Did you visit Bolton Food & Drink Festival last year?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Compared to the 2024 festival, would you say that this year's festival was...?

Much better

☐

Slightly better

☐

About the
same

☐

Slightly
Worse

☐

Much worse

☐

No opinion

☐

How likely are you to...?

Very likely

Fairly likely

Fairly unlikely

Very unlikely

No opinion

Go to Bolton Food & Drink
Festival 2026

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

Recommend Bolton Food &
Drink Festival to others

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

We're keen to continue to improve the Bolton Food & Drink Festival, ensuring all our regulars have a great time whilst offering something new to keep things fresh and attract new visitors.

With this in mind, how IMPORTANT are the following for you?

Very
important

Quite
important

Not very
important

Not important
at all

No opinion

Non-food & drink stalls [such
as art or craft stalls]

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

Strolling street entertainment

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

Music areas

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

Bar areas

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

Activities for children & young
people

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

Free regional chef demos

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

Special chargeable events
[including celebrity chef
demos]

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

Seating / eating areas

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

Toilets

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

Health & safety

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

And how SATISFIED were you with the following?

Very satisfied

Satisfied

Dissatisfied

Very
dissatisfied

No opinion

Non-food & drink stalls [such
as art or craft stalls]

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

Strolling street entertainment

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

Music areas	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Bar areas	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Activities for children & young people	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Free regional chef demos	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Special chargeable events [including celebrity chef demos]	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Seating / eating areas	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Toilets	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Health & safety	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Taking everything into account, how satisfied / dissatisfied were you with Bolton Food & Drink Festival 2025?

Very satisfied

☐

Fairly satisfied

☐

Fairly dissatisfied

☐

Very dissatisfied

☐

No opinion

☐

Please use this space for any additional comments about Bolton Food & Drink Festival 2025, or additional ideas for next year's festival.

☐ No comments

About you

Your answers in this section help us to make sure we are getting views from different types of people. They won't be used to contact or identify you.

Please give your full postcode

eg BR1 1RU

Are you...?

☐ Female

☐ Male

☐ Identify in another way

Which age group are you in?

☐ Under 18

☐ 35 - 44

☐ 65 - 74

☐ 18 - 24

☐ 45 - 54

☐ 75 - 84

☐ 25 - 34

☐ 55 - 64

☐ 85 or over

What is your ethnic group?

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ White British | ☐ Asian or Asian British |
| ☐ White other | ☐ Black, Black British, Caribbean or African |
| ☐ Mixed or Multiple ethnic group | ☐ Other ethnic group |

Getting involved in Bolton Food & Drink

Would you be interested in volunteering at future Bolton Food & Drink Festivals?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

Please leave your contact information (e.g. name, email, mobile number)

Prize draw

To thank you for your time, you can now enter our prize draw to win a Bolton Food & Drink Festival 2025 goody bag.

One entry per person, winner will be notified by email and must respond within two weeks or prize will be forfeited.

Your name and email address will only be used to contact you if you win.

Would you like to enter our prize draw?

- ☐ Yes, please count me in ☐ No thanks

Email
address

Name

Thanks! Please click 'submit' to send your response through to us