

Protecting, retaining &
growing London's nightlife

LONDON NIGHTLIFE TASKFORCE

2026 Report

This report is by the independent London Nightlife Taskforce and the Greater London Authority and was prepared in partnership with VibeLab, The Autonomy Institute, and UCL Consultants.

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
MAYOR OF LONDON



VibeLab
Rapenburg 97-2
1011 TW Amsterdam
The Netherlands
vibe-lab.org



The Autonomy Institute
6 Kinnoul Mansions,
Rowhill Road
London E5 8EB
United Kingdom
autonomy.work



UCL Consultants
90 Tottenham Court Road
London W1T 4TJ
United Kingdom
ucl.ac.uk/consultants



Greater London Authority
City Hall
Kamal Chunchie Way
London E16 1ZE
United Kingdom
london.gov.uk

A love letter to London's nightlife

Dear London, after dark,

We see you.

You are more than a few bright lights and late nights – you are part of this city's DNA. You are where stories are told, friendships are formed, ideas are sparked, and culture comes alive. From the hum of night buses to the rhythm of live music to the laughter spilling from late-night restaurants, pubs and theatres – you remind us that the night is not an ending but another beginning.

We imagine a city that **breathes after dark**. A London that fully embraces being 24 hours – where people can work, connect, create, eat and celebrate at all times. Where late-night activity isn't seen as a nuisance, but as vital culture: the heartbeat of the capital carried in basslines, conversations and the low hum of a city alive after dark.

We see **diverse scenes for diverse people**. From underground queer clubs to rooftop cocktail bars, from grime nights in outer boroughs to community halls, jazz cafés, shisha terraces, and night markets – a kaleidoscope of spaces where everyone feels welcome. Places to dance, to talk, to rest, to reflect.

We see a city that is **local and global, side by side**. Small venues thriving next to iconic institutions and centuries-old pubs; fringe theatres and hotel bars sitting shoulder to shoulder with world-class clubs. A London that celebrates its cultural exports – jungle, garage, grime, UK funky and more – while embracing global flavours and influences.

We see **public spaces reclaimed**. Beautifully lit parks open late, safe streets alive with conversation, canalside food trucks, plazas hosting night markets, buskers, open-air cinema, and families and night-shift workers sharing the same public realm. Public infrastructure built not just for commuting but for joy and connection.

We see a nightlife that is **safe, supported and respected**. Where everyone – from DJs to door staff, cab drivers to chefs, bar staff to street pastors, hotel concierges to cleaners – is recognised, valued, and fairly paid. Where safety is built in, not bolted on. Where women, queer people, and marginalised groups feel confident, not cautious. Where the police and night creators find new space for collaboration and compromise.

We see a future that is **sustainable and smart**. Green, creative, and tech-forward forms of nightlife powered by energy-efficient venues, waste-free kitchens, decarbonised transport, and noise-conscious design. Smart lighting that welcomes people in, digital tools that support wellbeing, and technology that opens new creative frontiers.

We see **joined-up governance**. A London where the Mayor, councils, Transport for London, licensees, planners, cultural institutions and the Metropolitan Police move in harmony – building a nightlife that is vibrant, safe, and economically resilient. A new civic contract where planning, policy, and community vision work together in support of our shared goals.

And above all, we see a **culture of care**. For the spaces we share, for the people we party and work with and for the communities around us. A nightlife rooted in consent, compassion, and creativity. A nightlife that supports mental health, champions inclusion, and values itself as a public good.

This is our love letter to our city – to a London that never sleeps, belongs to every one of us, as Londoners; and shines even brighter after dark.



Cameron Leslie (Chair)



Alice Hoffmann-Fuller



Georgina Wald



Kate Nicholls



Lily London



Michael Kill



Nadine Noor



Nathanael Williams



Prohvat Rahman



Samuel Joshua Spencer



Sophie Brownlee

The Mayor of London's independent Nightlife Taskforce has been established to help bring this vision to life.

Contents

1. Introduction

| | |
|---|---|
| A love letter to London's nightlife | 3 |
| The Taskforce | 7 |
| Defining nightlife | 9 |
| Methodology | 9 |

2. Research findings

| | |
|--|----|
| Diversity defines London's nightlife | 12 |
| A snapshot of London's nightlife | 13 |
| London's nightlife economy | 17 |
| London's night workers | 19 |
| Safety at night | 21 |
| London's night-time transport | 24 |
| Licensing, planning and managing sound | 28 |

3. Recommendations

| | |
|---|----|
| 1. Support a new Nightlife Commission | 32 |
| 2. Recognise nightlife as culture | 33 |
| 3. Support nightlife small businesses: venues and beyond | 34 |
| 4. Seed-fund the evolution of nightlife | 35 |
| 5. Strengthen access to space for nightlife | 36 |
| 6. Plan for a 24-hour city | 37 |
| 7. Align night-time transport with nightlife demand | 38 |
| 8. Rethink approaches to night-time sound | 39 |
| 9. Create safer nights through collaboration and harm reduction | 40 |
| 10. Update planning and licensing for nightlife | 42 |

4. London Nightlife Commission

| | |
|--|----|
| Introduction | 44 |
| Why a Commission? | 44 |
| What would the Commission be mandated to do? | 45 |

5. Conclusion

| | |
|----------------------------------|----|
| Glossary | 48 |
| References | 49 |
| Endnotes | 50 |
| London Nightlife Taskforce | 51 |
| Project team and partners | 51 |

I. Introduction

The Taskforce

In recent years, London's nightlife and night-time industries – along with those of other cities in the UK and around the world – have faced a wide range of challenges. These include the long-lasting impact of the pandemic; rising rents and business rates; staffing shortages; licensing and planning issues; and pressures around the cost of living and the cost of doing business.

In February 2025, the Mayor of London announced a new independent Nightlife Taskforce. This brings together a range of experts from the frontline of the capital's nightlife, tasked with helping to support the capital's life at night.

Over the last six months, the Taskforce has met regularly to examine the issues facing London's nightlife; commission new research; and ultimately provide recommendations to the Mayor so that the city's night-time culture, communities and economy can thrive. This report is the culmination of that process.

Taskforce Members



Cameron Leslie (Chair) is the Co-Founder and Director of fabric, one of the UK's most iconic nightlife spaces since its establishment in 1999. A seasoned entrepreneur with over 25 years of experience in business development, Cameron leads a portfolio of diverse and innovative businesses and has been instrumental in shaping London's nightlife industry.



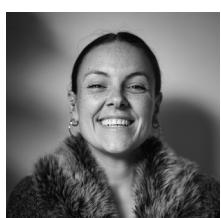
Alice Hoffmann-Fuller is a consultant who previously worked as Head of Operations and Art Director of Corsica Studios, one of London's iconic grassroots music venues. With over 20 years of experience in music events, venue management and operations, and more recently art curation and programming, Alice was pivotal in sustaining Corsica Studios as a cultural lynchpin. She is a director of the Good Night Out Campaign; a vocal panellist and supporter of the Music Venues Trust and Help Musicians; and a passionate advocate for accessible arts and grassroots creativity.



Georgina Wald is the Corporate Communications Manager at Fuller, Smith & Turner PLC, overseeing corporate affairs, communications and media relations. She has led public relations for major food and hospitality businesses and associations. As Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Beer Group Steering Industry Committee, Georgina is a champion of the cultural and economic contributions of pubs and brewing, promoting their integral role in UK society and tourism.



Kate Nicholls is the CEO of UKHospitality, representing the hospitality sector since 2018. She also chairs the Institute of Licensing and is a member of the Government's Visitor Economy, Hospitality and Food & Drink Sector Councils, helping to develop government strategies in those areas. Formerly Chair of London's Night Time Commission, Kate led the groundbreaking "Think Night" report on London's nightlife and continues to advocate for the industry's growth and sustainability.



Lily London is a radio host, DJ, promoter and community leader dedicated to fostering inclusivity and diversity within London's music scene. As a host on both Foundation FM and Subtle Radio, and the organiser of community-focused events, Lily creates spaces for in-depth conversations with talent across the music industry, while showcasing sounds from the UK and beyond.



Mike Kill is the CEO of the Night Time Industries Association (NTIA), a leading advocate for the UK's night-time economy. He is also the Vice President of the International Nightlife Association and Chair of the UK Door Security Association. With extensive experience across the independent, corporate, and public sectors, Mike is widely recognised for his work championing policy reform and industry recognition. The NTIA is actively promoting best practices for independent and multi-site venues, bars and pubs, including a focus on festivals and live music venues, in collaboration with police and local authorities.



Nadine Noor is the Founder of Pxssy Palace, a globally recognised platform that creates inclusive nightlife experiences that centre queer and trans people of colour. As an educator within the music industry, Nadine has pioneered safety standards in nightlife that have now become an industry norm. Their work emphasises advocacy for access, safety and well being within marginalised communities, while celebrating diversity and freedom of expression through transformative nightlife events and creative programmes.



Nathanael Williams is the Founder and Director of Colour Factory, one of London's Black-led music venues, located in Hackney Wick. With a commitment to championing LGBTQ2IA+ and POC artists, Nathanael curates events that foster inclusivity and celebrate London's diverse culture. As a multi-instrumental artist, author, street food kitchen pioneer and co-founder of Jumbi in Peckham, he continues to innovate in music and hospitality.



Provhat Rahman is the Founder of Daytimers Collective and co-founder of Dialled In Festival, which champions South Asian artistry. As a DJ and producer, Provhat has created opportunities for underrepresented artists while raising significant funds for global charities. His work continues to elevate South Asian voices in the UK's cultural landscape.



Sam Spencer is the Director of Live Operations at Broadwick Live, a business within Broadwick Group. He is part of the team behind renowned venues such as Printworks London and Silverworks Island, as well as a wider portfolio of groundbreaking spaces and festivals. Sam plays a key role in shaping the future of live events at the intersection of music, culture and space. With over a decade of experience, Sam began his career at Manchester's Albert Hall and has since become one of the select few with deep expertise in transforming non-traditional spaces into globally recognised cultural destinations. His passion for experience, audience welfare and operational excellence ensures Broadwick Live continues to set new standards for live events and immersive cultural moments.



Sophie Brownlee is an Associate Director at Whitehouse Communications with experience in advising a variety of household names and organisations on political messaging, stakeholder engagement, and campaigning. She was formerly the External Affairs Manager at Music Venue Trust, leading their advocacy; and public affairs strategy. She worked with them to achieve the national £1 ticket levy on stadium and arena tickets and to protect, secure, and improve grassroots music venues across the UK. With a background in politics, public affairs, and policy, Sophie continues to work with clients to achieve their campaign goals, including those within the creative and cultural sectors.

Defining nightlife

As part of their collaborative process, the Taskforce identified the need to develop a working definition of nightlife.

Nightlife is made up of the activities, events and spaces that encourage social and cultural participation primarily between 6 pm and 6 am.

By providing spaces and opportunities for Londoners, communities, artists and the creative and cultural sectors, nightlife is considered culture. Both its social benefits and cultural significance must be recognised, alongside its contributions to London's night-time economy.

The Taskforce recognises that London's nightlife is beautifully varied and defies easy categorisation. It encompasses many forms of artistic production and social expression, from the creative industries to the experience economy, taking place everywhere from cultural spaces to community centres, from the grassroots to the underground, to the wholly commercial. It even sometimes stretches into the daytime hours.

One single definition couldn't ever capture this breadth of perspectives. The Taskforce's definition is not meant to be exhaustive or definitive, but to act as a starting point for collaborative policy-making. In attempting to define nightlife, the Taskforce also explicitly recognises the social and cultural impact of spaces that have not historically been considered part of London's night-time fabric, or fully celebrated for their contribution to it.

Methodology

This research is the result of collaboration between VibeLab, The Autonomy Institute, University College London Consultants (UCLC), the Greater London Authority (GLA), and the Nightlife Taskforce. The research was conducted between February and August 2025. A multi-method approach was used to explore London's nightlife, combining community engagement with economic and spatial analysis.

Focus groups

Between May and June 2025, five in-person focus groups engaged 82 people, all active in London's nightlife – including nightlife-goers, nightlife operators, artists, promoters, collectives, activists, academics and community organisers, as well as representatives from the Metropolitan Police (the Met), licensing officers and local authorities. The first four sessions were curated to provide insights into specific themes. The final session took the form of a town hall, gathering perspectives from the wider community to explore the barriers and the potential for London's nightlife, going forward.

Surveys

Two surveys were conducted to capture voices across nightlife as well as the general sentiments of Londoners:

- **London Nightlife Taskforce survey:** Conducted by VibeLab in partnership with the Taskforce (5 May–1 July 2025), this online survey gathered 932 responses from those at the heart of London nightlife, including nightlife space operators and dedicated nightlife goers, capturing challenges, priorities, and visions for the sector.
- **Londoners' survey:** Conducted by insights agency Obsrvant on behalf of VibeLab and UCL Consultants, this online survey (24–28 July 2025) gathered responses from 2,025 London residents. This offered a demographically representative view of perceptions of, behaviours around, and attitudes towards nightlife.

Interviews

Between July and August 2025, six virtual interviews were conducted with subject experts. These interviews aimed to supplement insights from the focus groups and surveys; gain specialist perspectives; and advise on the feasibility of early recommendations. The Nightlife Taskforce Advisory Board were in dialogue with project and research leads, as required, to provide expertise and assessments throughout the project.

Economic and spatial analyses

Data packs were generated across four themes:

- People, Scenes & Culture
- Regulation
- Crime
- Transport

The data packs combined spending data; footfall counts; venue records; licensing and workforce statistics; crime reports; and transport accessibility mapping. Analytical methods included inflation-adjusted indexing of monetary data series, matching data to geographic coordinates, accounting for seasonal patterns, and statistical modelling to test the relationship between variables. This comprehensive approach provided a vivid picture of the scale, challenges, and opportunities across London's nightlife.

II. Research findings

Diversity defines London's nightlife

A selection of the scenes, communities and audiences that make up London nightlife, taken from responses to the Taskforce's survey of nightlife operators.¹

Adults with learning disabilities, African and Afro-diaspora, African and Afro-Caribbean communities, African diaspora, Afro-electronic, Alternative scene, Ambient and downtempo, Anyone who enjoys good music through quality speakers, Arsenal fans, Artists, Aspiring musicians, Audiophiles, Beer geeks, Bermondsey locals and workers, Bizarre drag scene, Black & Brown people, Black and South Asian, Chess players, Cocktail nerds, Communities from within and outside London, Contemporary theatre audiences, Counter-mainstream culture audiences, Country lovers, Covid-conscious people, Crafters, Culture-seeking Londoners, Dance music fans, Disabled people, Diverse, Drag brunchgoers, Drum and Bass lovers, East Londoners, Ecstatic dancers, Electronic music enthusiasts, Emerging artists, Eurovision fans, Everyone 18–80, Families with children, Fashion crowd, FLINTA, Folk dancers, Funk fans, Gen Z, Gin distilling, Global Majority, Goths, Grime fans, Hard Techno fans, Heavy metal, Hot desking, House lovers, Immigrant artists, Immunocompromised people, Industrial experimental, Intersectional community, Jazz heads, Karaoke singers, Kink scene, Latin American community, Latin music, Lecture audiences, Left field underground communities, Lesbian and trans community, LGBTQIA+, Live music fans, Local Hackney and wider East End, Marketgoers, Melodic dance, Mixed, Mods, Music lovers, Music producers, Musicians, Naval events, New Romantics, Neurodiverse people, North London divas, Open mic, Open to all, Pantomime, People from all walks of life, People interested in culture and art, People looking for experiential moments, People that just wanna go out and dance, Performers, POC, Poets, Post-punks, QTIBIPOC, Queer and working-class communities, Queer Latinx community, Queer people, Quiz night audiences, R&B, Rap, Ravers, Rock'n'roll, Salsa dancers, Saturday punters, Sex positive people, Sex workers, Slam poets, Soul lovers, South Asian drum n bass garage hip hop, Southeast London queer scene, Sports enthusiasts, Standard punters, Stripping, Students, The gilfies, Trance and techno, Trendy, UK-based electronic music, Underappreciated heritage acts, Underground DJ culture, Underground house, Vegans, Visual artists, Wellness and fitness audiences, Wide variety of people, Women and non-binary people, Workers, Working class people, World music lovers, Young UK artists, Young adults, Youth

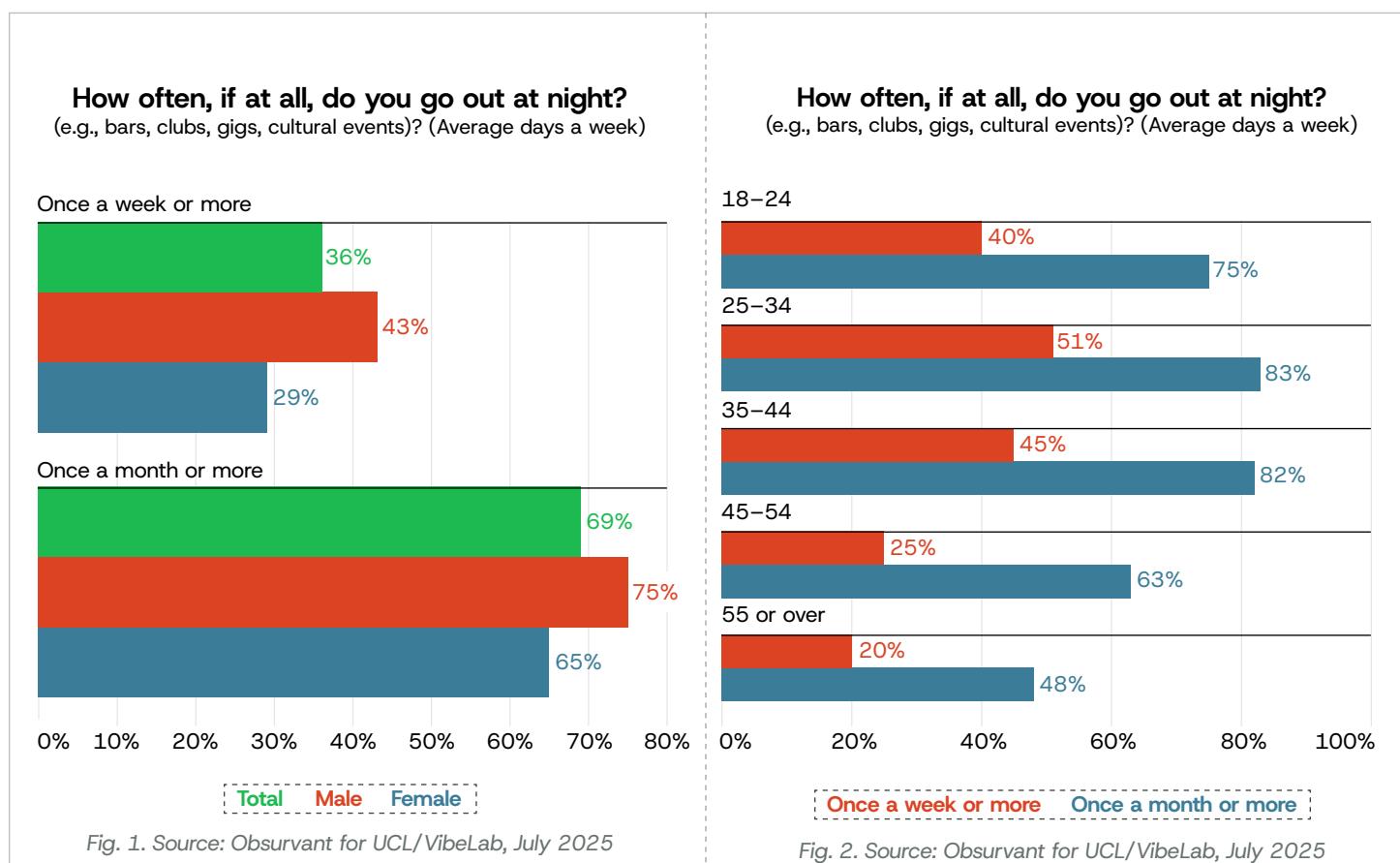
¹ Condensed and lightly adapted responses from venue operators and promoters when asked: "Describe what scenes, communities, and/or audiences your venue(s) or events cater to," and "Describe what programming activities take place in your venue(s)."

A snapshot of London's nightlife

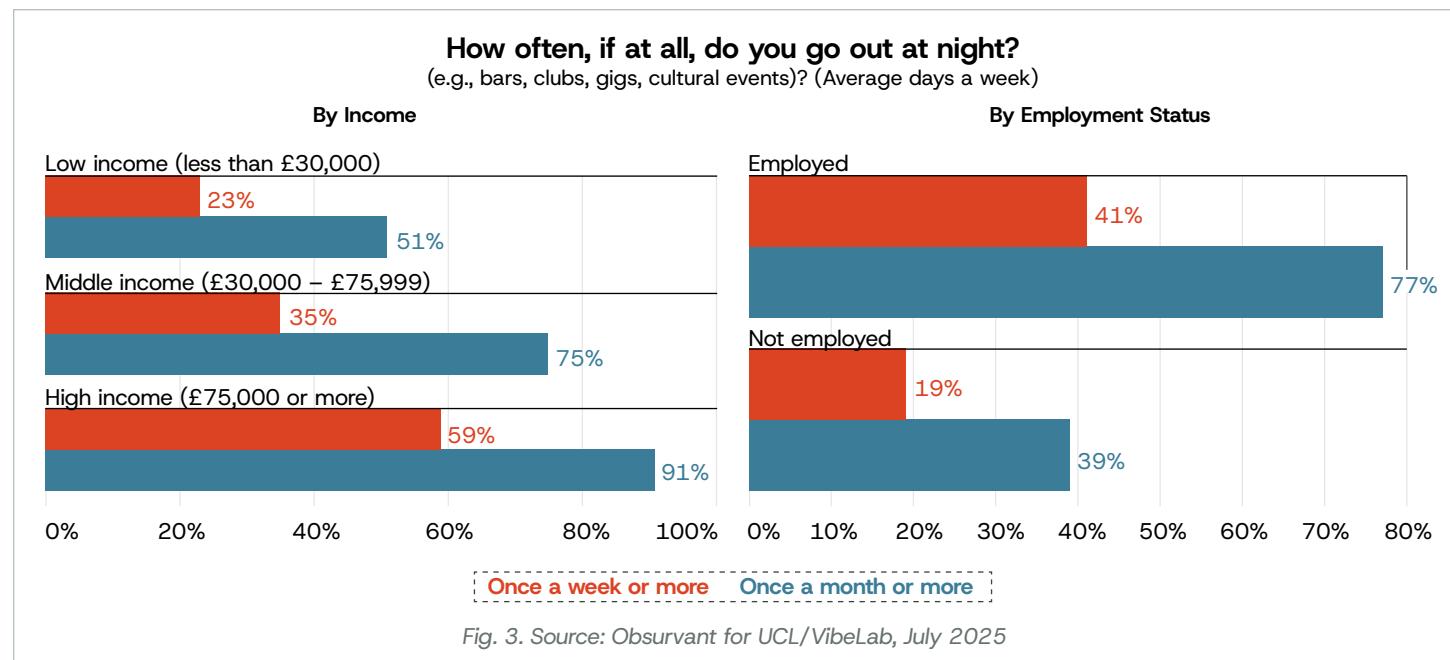
As part of the Taskforce's research, we asked London's nightlife operators and event promoters about the programming they present, and the scenes and communities they serve. Their answers, presented on the previous page, are a snapshot of London nightlife: from Afro-electronic music to jazz heads, and New Romantics to kink events.

Who goes out at night?

A majority of surveyed Londoners go out at night at least once a month. Those aged between 25 and 44 are the most consistent nightlife goers (Figures 1 and 2) – 82% go out at least once a month. 51% of those aged 25–34 and 45% of those aged 35–44 go out more often, once a week or more. Their younger counterparts go out slightly less often, and those over 55 least of all.²



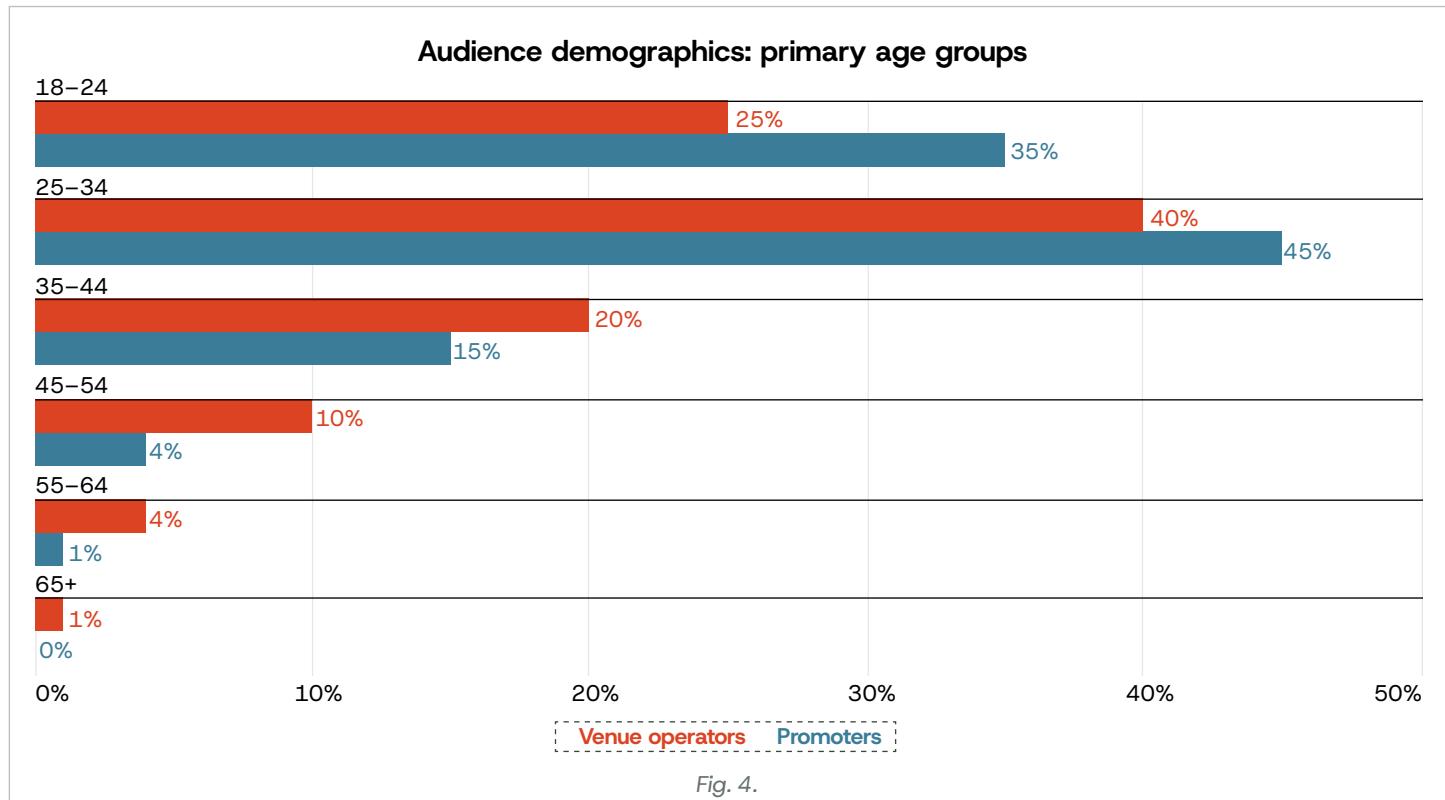
² Obsrvant research for UCLC/VibeLab, July 2025.



Men go out at night more often than women.³ 75% of men in London go out once a month or more, compared with 65% of women (Figure 1). But the gap widens amongst those who go out once a week or more, with 43% of men and only 29% of women.

Going out correlates with income and employment status. The proportion of Londoners we spoke to who go out weekly or monthly increases with income, and is significantly higher among employed Londoners (41% and 77%, respectively) than among those not (19% and 39%) (Figure 3).

Nightlife space operators and promoters tell us that their biggest audiences skew younger. They estimated that, while audience ages vary, the majority of their audience members are under 34. A smaller proportion are between their mid-30s and 50s (Figure 4).



³ Due to small sample sizes, this analysis excludes non-binary respondents and those who preferred not to state their gender.

Where does nightlife happen?



Hot spots

London's busiest nightlife hubs based on footfall data⁴ are Soho, Camden, Shoreditch, Hackney, Brixton, King's Cross and the South Bank.



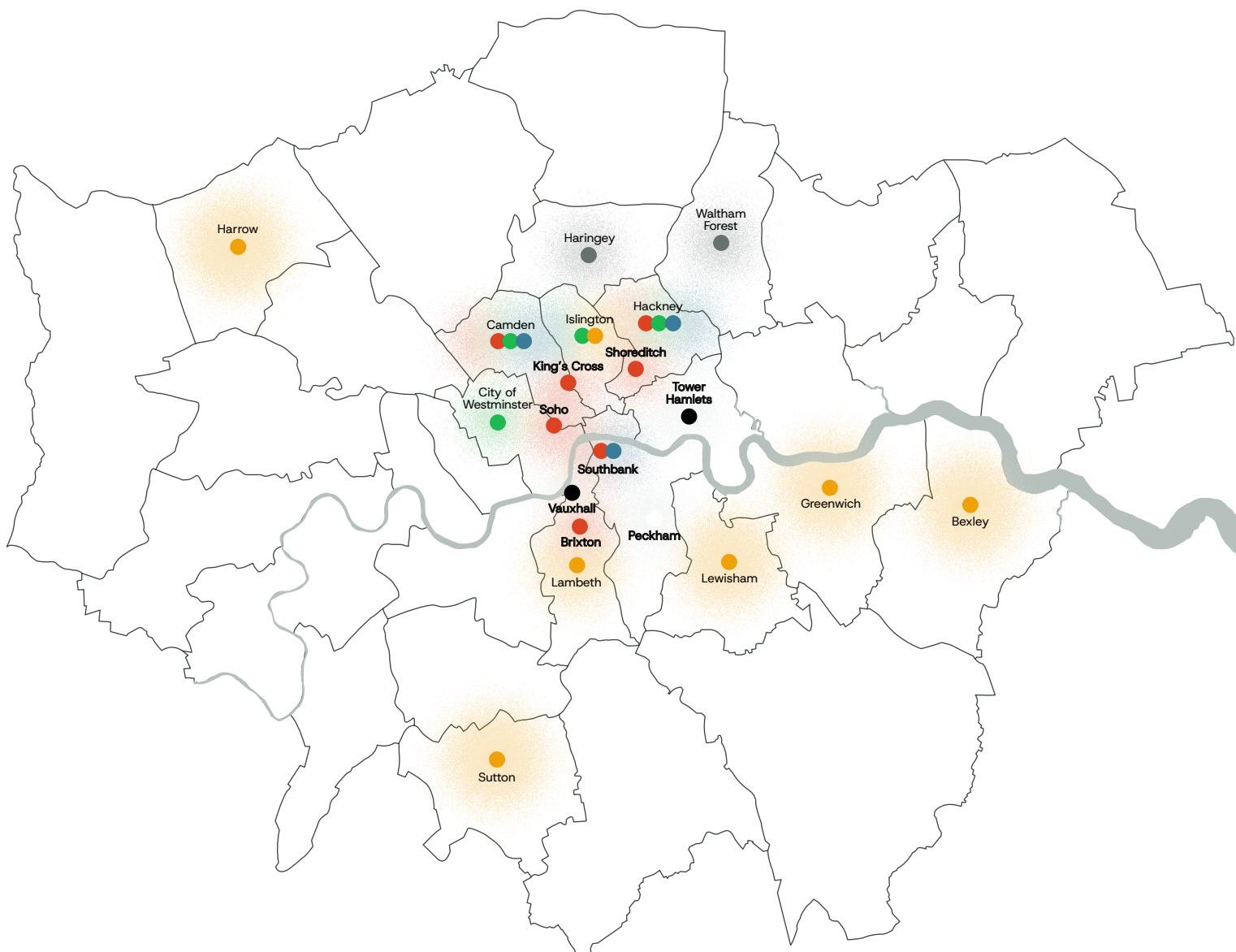
Biggest spenders

Westminster sees the most spending, followed by Camden, Hackney and Islington.



Late-night activity

Tower Hamlets (Shoreditch and Brick Lane), Vauxhall and Peckham stay busy later than most.



Quieter areas

Such as: Lambeth, Islington, Lewisham, and Greenwich, have lively early evenings, but activity drops off later on. Outer boroughs such as Bexley, Harrow and Sutton stay quiet.



Emerging areas

Waltham Forest and Haringey are seeing growth, in tandem with an increase in the number of grassroots and independent spaces.



Seasonal change

In general, summer sees bigger crowds and later nights, especially in Hackney, South Bank and Camden. In winter, overall spending falls sharply after midnight.

What do Londoners want from nightlife?

The Taskforce's survey of operators and audiences⁴ revealed a diverse and dynamic nightlife scene across the capital. When we asked people about how this might be improved, they showed a strong desire for more accessible and sustainable night-time ecosystems, putting community needs ahead of commercial incentives. The five most commonly-mentioned issues were:

1. **Support for independent spaces (57.2% of respondents)**, especially those facing pressures around development, closure or commercial competition.
2. **More inclusive nightlife that serves all Londoners (46.7%)**, such as age-inclusive offerings; LGBTQ+ safer spaces and culturally diverse programming taking place in physically accessible and gender-inclusive contexts.
3. **Prioritising safety (35.7%)**, including harassment-free nightlife spaces, women's safety, well-lit streets and public spaces.
4. **Licensing and regulatory reform (35.1%)**, from extended or 24-hour operations to more flexible approaches that support nightlife spaces, to finding a better balance between nightlife and residential needs.
5. **Greater economic accessibility (28.9%)**, was of equal concern to nightlife space operators and audiences, along with **promoting cultural diversity (28.4%)**. This includes, for example, supporting emerging artists; and protecting non-commercial music and nightlife spaces and scenes.

London's nightlife economy

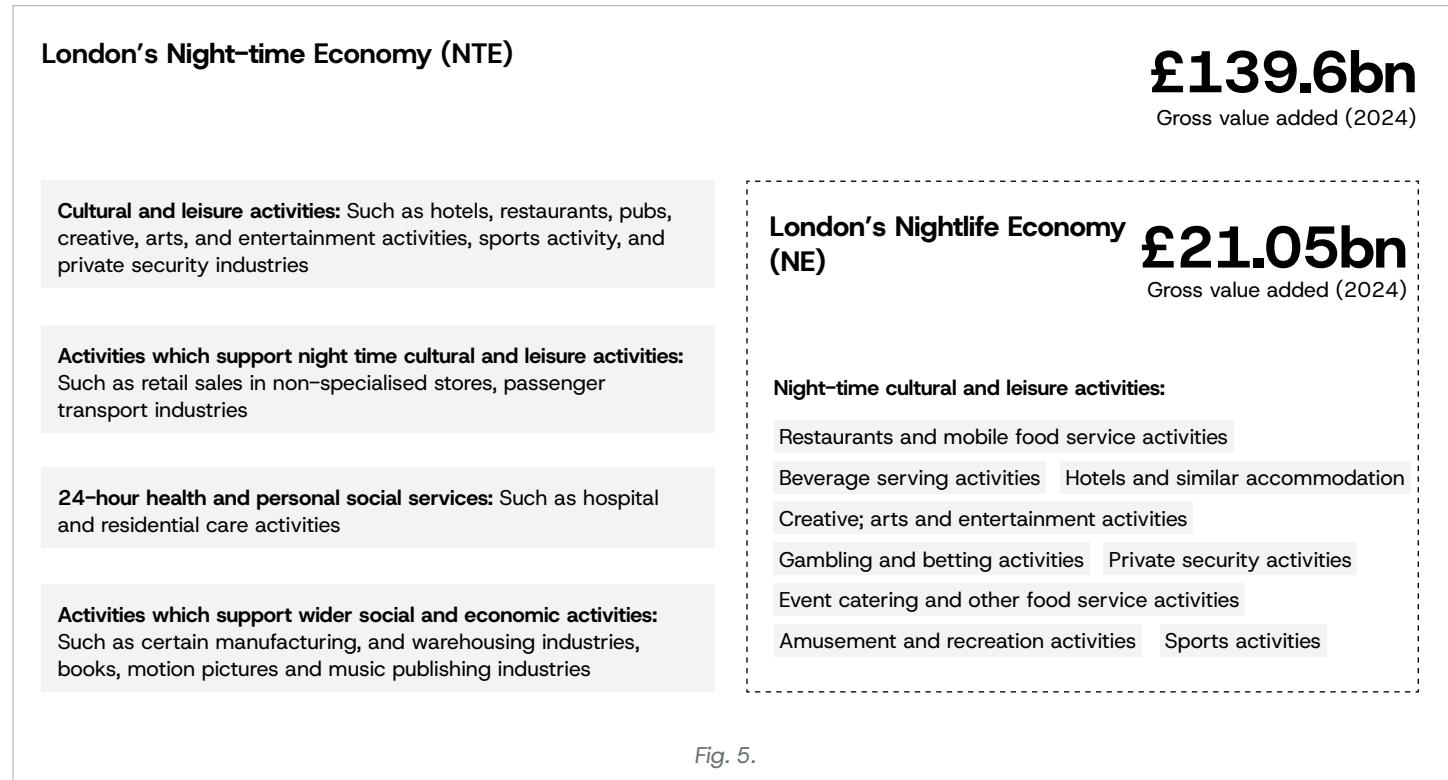


Fig. 5.

London's nightlife economy (NE)⁵ is an important subset of London's overall night-time economy (NTE), which covers all activity between 6 pm and 6 am. London's nightlife economy (NE) is a major contributor to both the capital's city economy and the wider UK economy. **In 2024, London's NE was estimated to generate £21.05 billion**, based on the industries defined by night-time cultural and leisure activities grouping by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and GLA.⁶ **In 2024, London's NTE generated £139.6 billion:⁷ roughly one quarter of the city's economic output, and 5.6% of the UK's total economy: comparable to the 5.9% contributed by the UK construction industry.⁸**

A survey of Londoners asked "Roughly how much do you spend in an average month on nightlife?" and "How often, if at all, do you go out at night (e.g. bars, clubs, gigs, cultural events)?". The answers indicate that **Londoners aged 18–64 spent approximately £11.5 billion over the year**. This equates to £1,885 per person annually, with the average Londoner going out 0.91 nights per week.⁹

⁵ This section of the report was developed by UCLC.

⁶ This figure is reported in Gross Value Added (GVA). The economic analysis draws on datasets from the Office for National Statistics (ONS), the Greater London Authority (GLA). The methodology combines 2022 ONS two-digit SIC GVA figures with London-specific three-digit business share data. Following the GLA's classification of night-time industries into four broad groupings – cultural and leisure, support services, 24-hour health and social care, and wider economic activities – our focus here is on the night-time cultural and leisure activities grouping only. This includes hotels and similar accommodation (SIC07: 551), restaurants and mobile food service activities (SIC07: 561), event catering and other food service activities (SIC07: 562), beverage serving activities (SIC07: 563), private security activities (SIC07: 801), creative, arts and entertainment activities (SIC07: 900), gambling and betting activities (SIC07: 920), sports activities (SIC07: 931), and amusement and recreation activities (SIC07: 932). The final figure is adjusted for 2024 taking into account London's compound annual economic growth. Please see Annex E for further information.

While the calculations and methodology followed the GLA's classification of night-time industries into four broad groupings, we recognise the need to develop new ways of measuring night-time economy data. For example, the final figure does not include cooperatives or social enterprise models, which are not yet fully captured by SIC codes or existing datasets, but are playing a growing role in sustaining nightlife, with a focus on community and social value rather than purely commercial growth.

⁷ This figure is in Gross Value Added (GVA). Economic analysis draws upon datasets from the Office of National Statistics (ONS), Greater London Authority (GLA), and 2025 polling data from Obsrvant. Please see Annex A3 for further information.

Nightlife gives Londoners a sense of community; brings people to London; and gives them a reason to stay.

61% of employed Londoners said that nightlife contributes to their sense of belonging in the city. 50% said it improves their wellbeing, and 60% thought nightlife helps them feel more connected to their local community, even while people generally rated London's sense of community as low. Nightlife plays a vital role in building community and social cohesion, which may not be offered by other aspects of urban life.

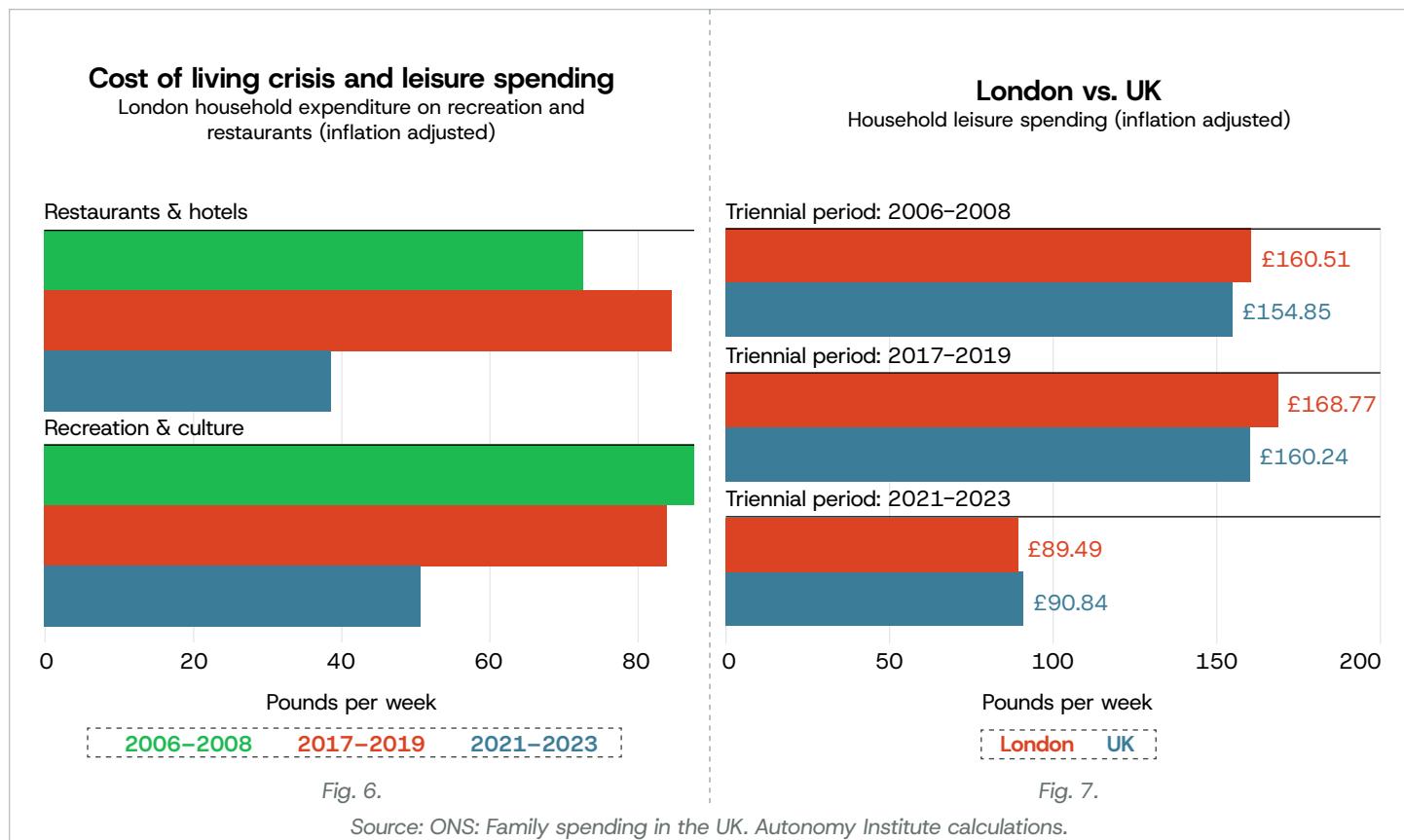
49% of all Londoners surveyed said nightlife influenced their decision to stay in London. This group has an average income 22% higher than city averages. Among tech and IT workers, for example, 73% felt it played a role. This data suggests that nightlife is a retention factor: by retaining talent in sectors that drive innovation and growth. By contributing to local economies through spending and increased tax revenues, nightlife plays a crucial role in supporting these sectors.

But nightlife behaviours are changing: young people and Londoners are going out less.

In 2025, **61%** of those aged 18–30 have gone out after 10 pm less often than in 2024, while **68%** feel that current economic conditions have caused them to participate less in night-time activities.¹¹

39% of 18–24 year olds do not drink alcohol at all: a clear challenge for nightlife, given its historic and present-day connection to licensed spaces and the drinks industry (which the drinks industry is adapting to).¹²

In the years since the Covid-19 pandemic, as broader living costs have risen, London households' spending on leisure has decreased sharply (Figure 6). For the first time, Londoners are now going out less and spending less on nightlife than the rest of the UK (Figure 7).



London's night workers

One in four working Londoners, or roughly 1.32 million people, work in the evenings or at night: everyone from DJs and door staff to Tube drivers, cleaners, and paramedics. Despite night work accounting for a significant proportion of London's workforce, gaps in provision and awareness mean that night-time workers don't always get the support they need.

What does evening and night work look like?

Night workers come from all sections of society. In 2023, **60%** of London's evening and night workers were male, and **40%** were female, according to GLA data. In a recent study by UCL, which included categories beyond the male/female binary, the distribution was as follows: male, **53%**, female, **39%**, non-binary, **5%** and trans, **3%**. Night workers¹³ are just as varied in other ways: a third are from global majority¹⁴ backgrounds – a figure that has grown **71%** over the past decade. **50%** of London's evening and night workers are aged between 25 and 44, but the proportion aged 55 to 64 is growing: up from **12%** in 2017 to **16%** by 2022.¹⁵ Many have recent migration backgrounds, or were born outside the UK.¹⁶

Night work can be challenging. In addition to working hours that disrupt sleep and increase stress, a lack of provision for night work also makes it harder to manage family, health and personal responsibilities. Evening and night workers are more likely to struggle with affordable access to essentials such as transportation, childcare, healthy food options, and public toilets. Low pay is also a concern: **17% of London's night workers** earn below the UK Real Living Wage, compared to **12%** of day workers.¹⁷

Night workers are concerned about conditions and support. One recent study has revealed night workers' concerns about their working conditions, professional culture, and employers' approach to their duty of care.¹⁸ This research suggests that even if night workers report harassment, discrimination or other issues, precarious work arrangements and a lack of robust processes or alternative approaches may make it challenging to take effective action.

Night workers are organising: While many evening and night workers are employed on a casual basis, unions and workers' initiatives are becoming more active through collective action, advocacy, and research.

Nightlife workers are a vital part of the wider night-time workforce.

Nightlife workers are passionate about their work. Research into the experiences of nightlife workers show that their work offers people a powerful sense of community, new social connections and life-changing career opportunities.¹⁹

But nightlife jobs can be precarious. Nightlife workers such as artists, DJs, performers, technicians, security, bar staff, and event promoters often work informally or as freelancers, limiting their job stability, legal protections and benefits: over **70%** of event promoters told us about a lack of job security, and **91.5%** felt low pay to be the top challenge to their wellbeing²⁰.

Career paths are often unclear. Many nightlife workers start their careers with unpaid or casual work, and may lack mentorship or clear paths for career progression. It can be challenging to make the jump from DIY projects to larger-scale opportunities, as cost can limit access to official certifications, and some roles may have no training at all (e.g., welfare work). Venue leadership is still largely white and male, limiting opportunities for a more diverse workforce.

Nightlife work can encourage risky behaviour: In addition to the sleep disruptions of night shifts (the top issue identified by space operators (**46.2%**) for their staff²¹), workers are often exposed to others' risk-taking behaviour, such as drug and alcohol use, and can be put in situations that encourage less healthy choices. For example, free drinks may be more freely available for DJs or performers than healthy food options.²²

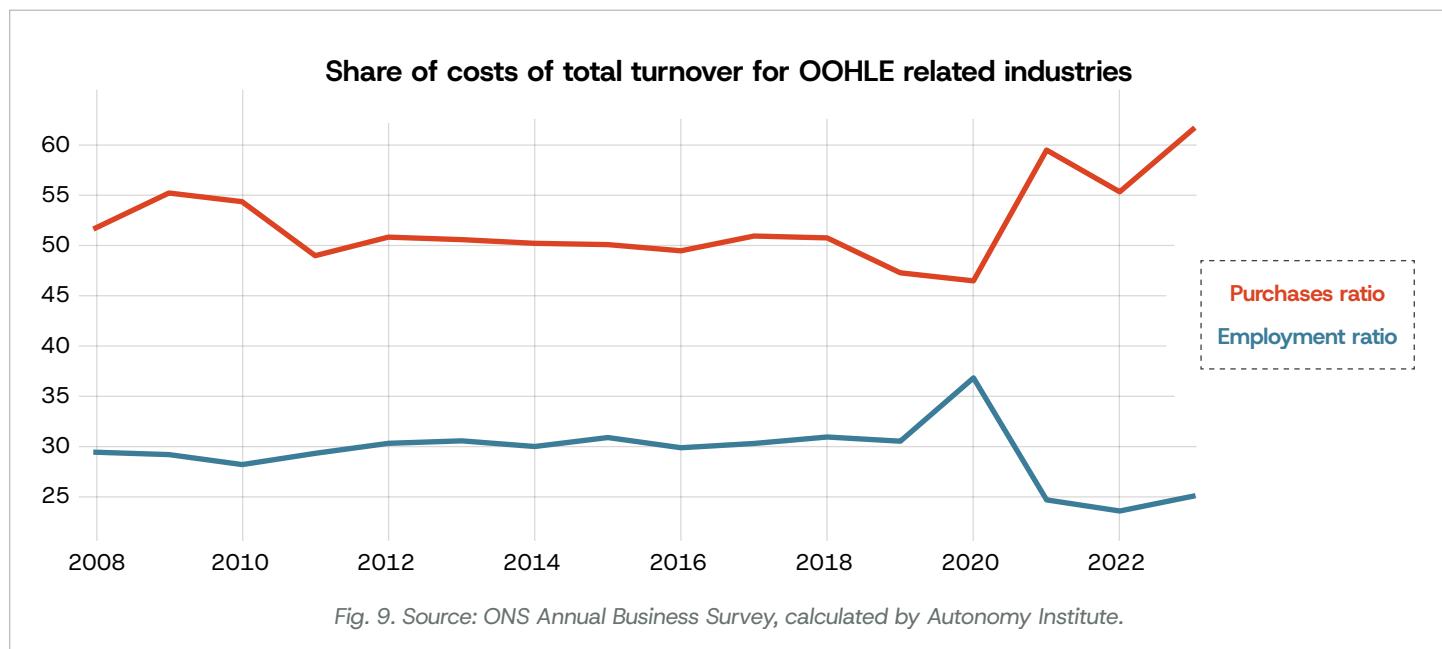
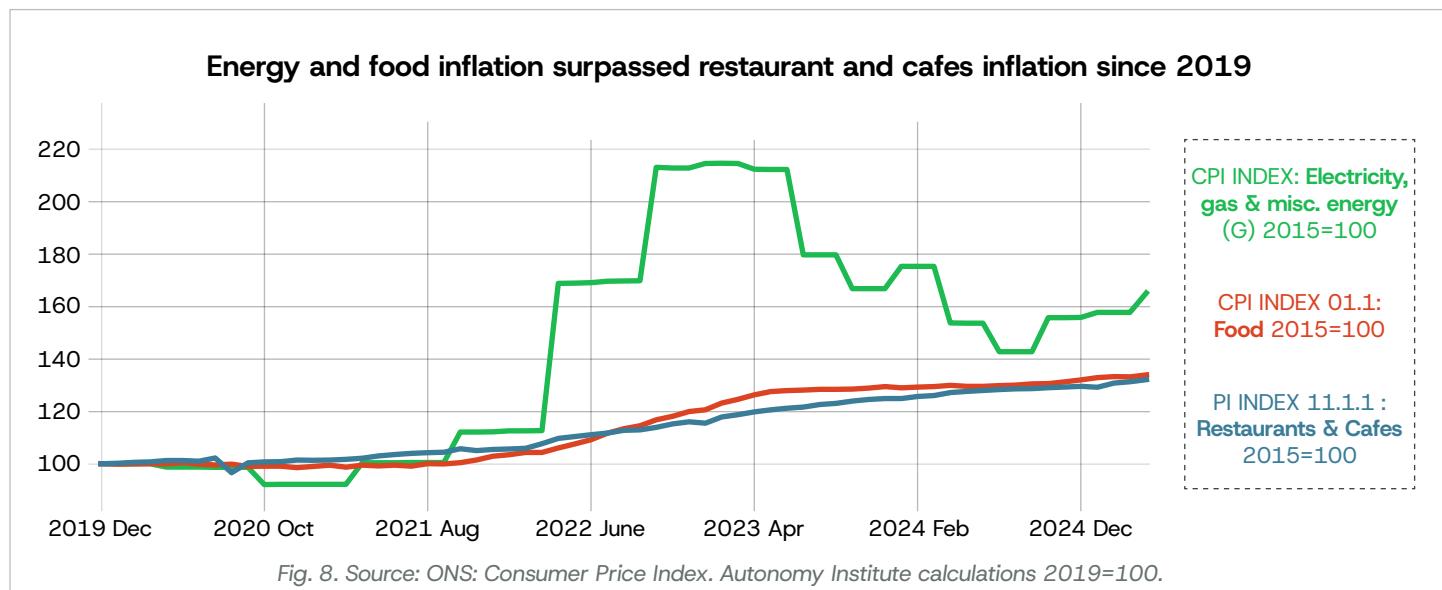
Harassment or antisocial behaviour is a recurrent issue. Nightlife space operators repeatedly cited harassment from patrons as one of the biggest challenges to staff wellbeing. A lack of organisational understanding about the specific issues faced by marginalised staff members can also make night-time careers harder to sustain.

Nightlife wages are being negatively affected by financial pressures on nightlife spaces.

The cost of running a space is rising faster than disposable income, according to the Music Venue Trust and Autonomy Institute (Figure 8).

Costs, licensing, and planning complexities are threatening the financial sustainability of nightlife spaces. The most significant operational constraints cited by space owners include VAT and business rates (68.2%); energy bills (66.7%) (see Figure 9²³); staff wages (61.9%); and rent and landlord costs (60.3%), complicated by other factors like licensing complexity (53%); dealing with noise complaints (48.5%); and skyrocketing waste management costs.

This leads to **nightlife workers missing out on opportunities**. As operating costs rise faster than revenue, and operators' profit margins narrow, staff wages are suppressed to maintain the same proportion of turnover (Figure 9).



Pressure on nightlife spaces also impacts emerging artists and promoters.

Promoters struggle to find affordable spaces suitable for their audiences. Nightlife space hire fees are the greatest single cost burden highlighted by grassroots and DIY promoters (67.2%), followed by staff costs (60%) and talent fees (53.3%). Promoters also cite the knock-on effects of issues affecting spaces, such as licensing complexity (64.2%), VAT/business rates (49.1%), noise complaints, and planning constraints (43.4% each).

Accessibility is also a major barrier. Event requirements, like proximity to late-night public transport, step-free access, or the ability to use amplified sound after 11 pm, can eliminate many spaces as options. At the same time, bar spend minimums can also effectively exclude primarily sober events from night spaces.

The razor-thin profit margins of nightlife spaces impact workers, promoters, and audiences. Event promoters explain the impossible dilemma of keeping ticket prices low – especially for economically marginalised audiences – while covering space hire fees or Temporary Event Notices (TEN) costs, and paying staff and artists fairly.

Some promoters aspire to launch their own nightlife spaces but encounter obstacles such as limited access to relevant training, contacts, and resources, as well as the financial and logistical barriers of opening new cultural spaces.

Safety at night

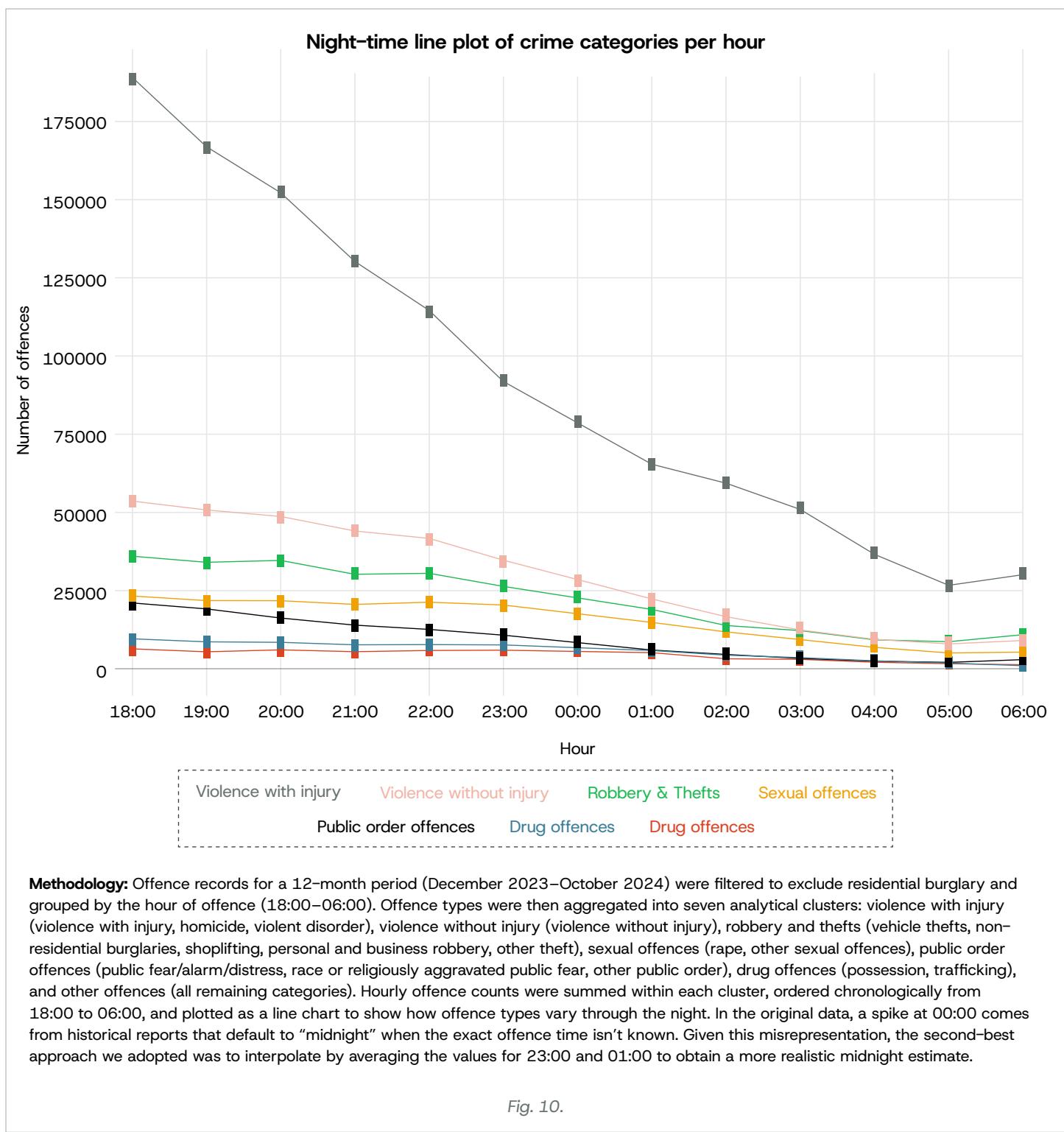
London's nightlife is built on keeping ourselves and each other safe: a responsibility shared by nightlife operators, artists, audiences, businesses and public services alike.

Nightlife spaces are not crime generators.

Overall crime levels tend to follow footfall, and not necessarily the concentration of nightlife spaces. Although total crime volumes are higher in some nightlife areas, an individual's risk of being a victim of crime is lower in busy areas than in outer areas. In other words, busy areas can have more crimes overall, but the individual risk is much lower.²⁴ Combining crime and footfall data shows that late-night non-violent crime is associated with busy areas of all kinds, whether these are associated with nightlife or not, rather than gravitating specifically towards clubs or other cultural spaces.²⁵ This is despite stereotypes about nightlife spaces being havens for crime. While some quieter boroughs record disproportionate crime levels at different times of the night, it's almost always the number of people in a given area, rather than the number of late-night spaces, that is the stronger predictor of recorded crime.

Violent late-night crime is relatively rare, particularly outside Zone 1. The most commonly recorded category of offence at all times of the night is "violence without injury", which includes less serious offences like common assault or harassment. Unlike non-violent crime, violent offences are more likely to be associated with lower levels of footfall and late-night activity.

Theft and robbery are often raised in licensing decisions for late-night venues. However, evidence from the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) shows that, across all of London, theft and robbery peak in the afternoon. As the night goes on, theft declines, while other crimes become more prevalent. By early morning, overall volumes drop, and the distribution becomes more balanced.



Nightlife spaces take crime seriously, even if serious incidents are rare.

Nightlife space owners and operators are most concerned with theft (54.4%), noise complaints (29.4%), and drug-related issues (25%).²⁶

But most nightlife spaces don't experience serious crime on a regular basis. Of operators surveyed by the Taskforce, 30.4% said that they “rarely” had to deal with crimes serious enough to require police involvement, while another 34.8% said that they experienced this only “occasionally”.

Crime in the vicinity of nightlife spaces is an ongoing issue for operators. Several survey responses highlighted thefts in the streets surrounding late-night spaces and the selling of nitrous oxide as particular concerns for nightlife operators and organisers.

Nightlife spaces raised a variety of concerns:

Lack of visible policing in areas of high footfall. Many businesses expressed frustration around shift patterns, as many neighbourhood policing teams do not work evenings and nights.

Police licensing came up as a common friction point for venues. Many venues expressed concerns about the lack of transparency and inconsistency in approaches to nightlife across the city.

Specific audience groups may have additional safety needs. Several responses highlighted the experiences of people of ethnic minority backgrounds, neurodivergent individuals and those with invisible disabilities when engaging with nightlife. There was broad recognition of the need for safety approaches that take the needs of these and other marginalised audiences into consideration.

People feel safer in areas with high levels of activity at night:

Many survey respondents described fear as a routine part of going out. Women and underrepresented groups reported having to “share live locations,” “avoid walking home,” and “constantly worry about being followed or harassed”.

There were repeated calls for safer travel options, better lighting, and visible policing – particularly around stations and on routes home.

Across both surveys, safe transport home was one of the most cited factors affecting whether people go out at all.

Hackney’s night-time strategy, published in 2025, asked residents to report where they felt safer. Shoreditch was the area with the highest level of crime, but interestingly, it was also where people reported feeling the safest.

People repeatedly asked for “more police or safety officers,” “night safety teams,” and “better lit streets” to help people and workers feel safer.

Drug-related risks pose particular challenges for nightlife.

Drug-related risks are a common concern amongst operators, with untested substances, drink spiking and over-intoxication cited repeatedly. Evidence provided by The Loop underlines the risks posed by the UK’s rapidly-changing drug supply chains, including the adulteration of recreational drugs with synthetic opioids,²⁶ which has also been a growing cause for concern.

Zero-tolerance drug policies and the absence of drug testing were also cited repeatedly by operators and event organisers as issues. This environment is seen as a barrier to businesses that take harm reduction measures, and discourages people who’ve consumed drugs from seeking appropriate help.

Some nightlife businesses fear that taking harm reduction approaches will result in police scrutiny and legal consequences. Several responses, both from The Loop and nightlife spaces themselves, identified a reluctance from some operators to be fully transparent about drug-related harm reduction, for fear of inviting involvement from the police. This approach can limit data collection and make it harder to assess the effectiveness of different harm reduction strategies.

London's night-time transport

Safe night-time transport is a critical factor in keeping London's nightlife thriving. Yet too often it does the reverse: 28% of Londoners say that limited or unreliable public transport stops them staying out after 10 pm, while 27% cite the high cost of transport.²⁷

When working outside of your home at night, how do you usually travel to/from work?

Please select all that apply

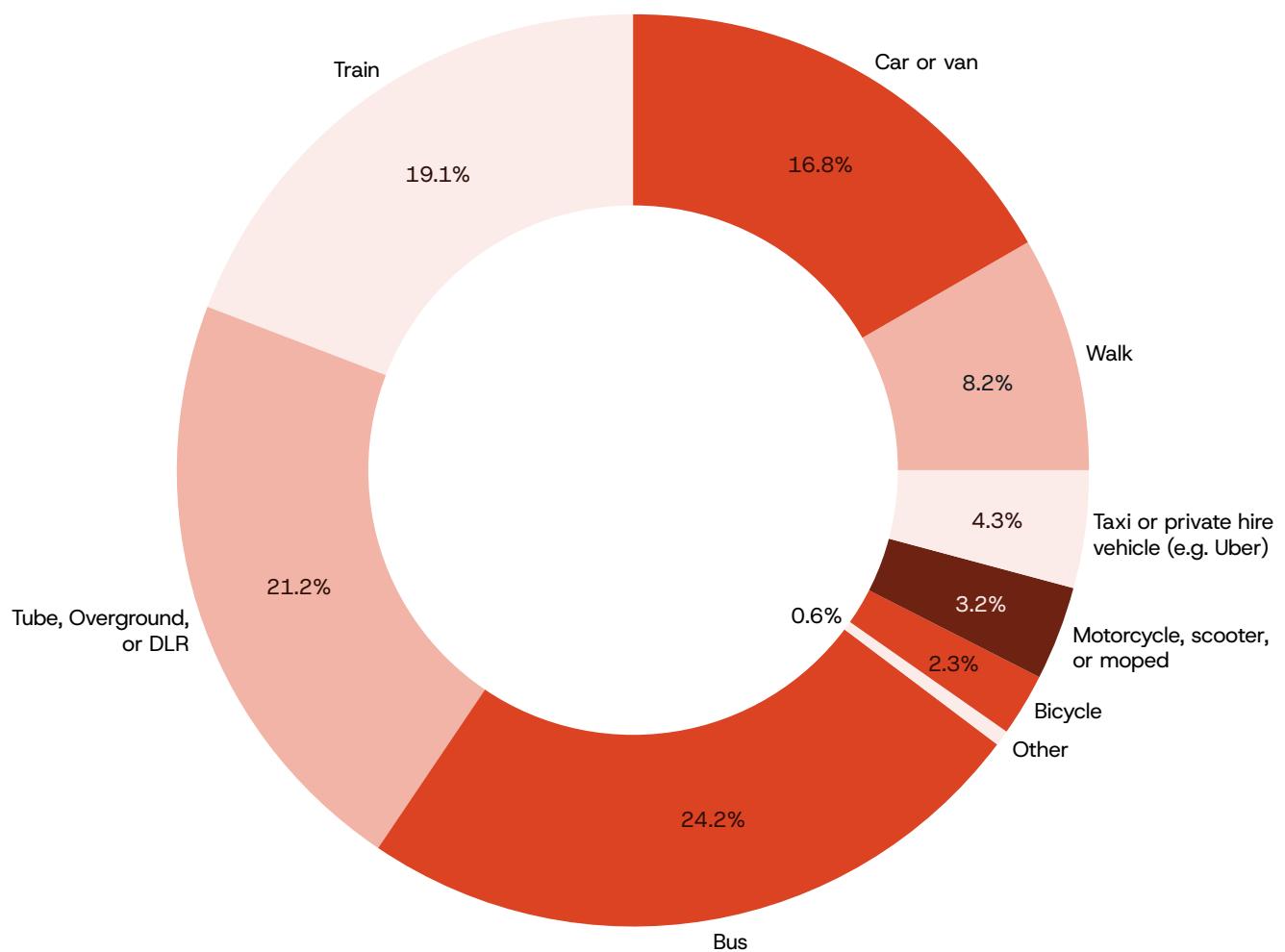


Fig. 11.

Public transport is essential for nightlife workers and audiences.

When you ask people what they would most like to change about London's nightlife, the most common answer is transport. Almost a third of responses to the Taskforce's survey (31.2%) mentioned public transport as a top priority.²⁸

This extends from the Tube to buses and trains. Despite attention being focused on the Night Tube, buses are actually the main form of transport for London's night workers (24%), followed by the Tube (21%) and trains (19%).²⁹

Transport provision is out of sync with demand for nightlife.

Demand for transport changes throughout the night, but supply does not adapt accordingly. Mapping data on the movements of night workers and visitor footfall shows that our need for after-dark transport shifts to different boroughs and stops at other times of the night.³⁰ However, service provision doesn't always reflect these changes.

While nightlife is expanding outward, current services remain centrally concentrated. Participants described insufficient coverage, especially in south and south east London; outer areas (Zones 3-4); and non-residential zones where nightlife spaces are often located.

Transport timetables and licensing hours aren't always aligned. Nightlife audiences and workers generate particular transport demand at specific moments, such as when licensed hours come to an end, and spaces close their doors. But late-night transport provision rarely seems to be designed in tandem with licensed operating hours, which can vary dramatically across different boroughs.

Large events need additional services. While there's some existing practice of extending service after large events, event organisers noted challenges around arranging this for any but the biggest events.

To what extent, if at all, do you feel safe or unsafe when you...

Travel to/from work at night?

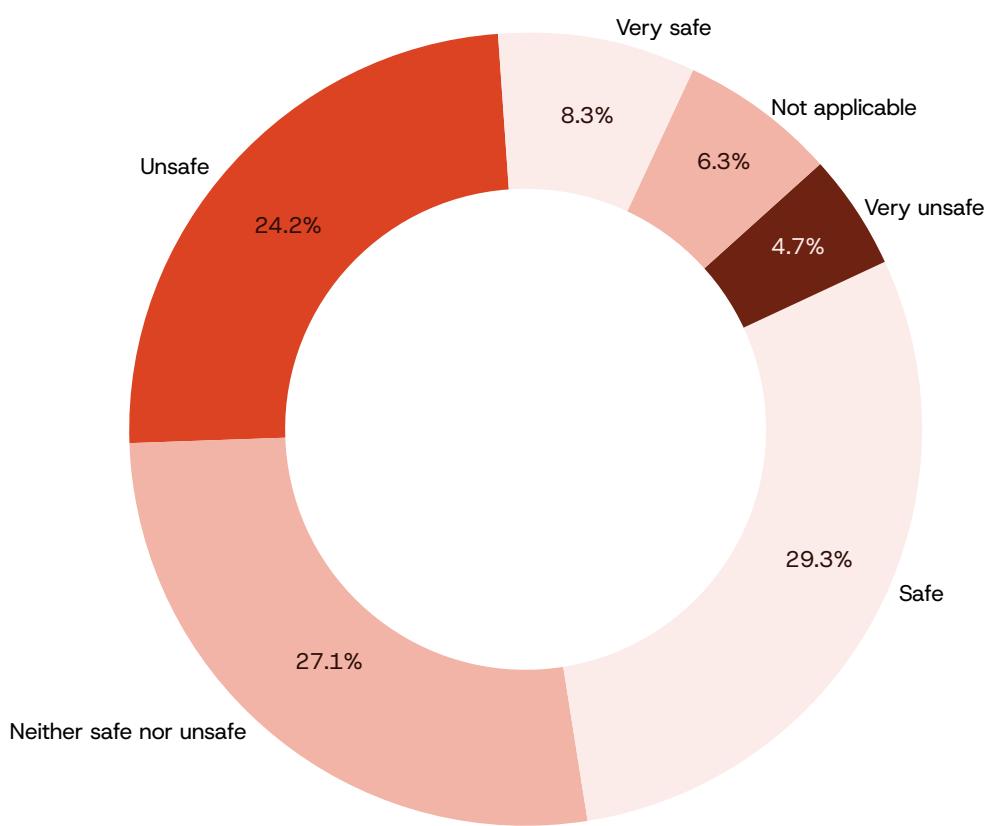


Fig. 12.

Safety concerns focus heavily on public transport at night – especially for women, the global majority and disabled people.

London night-time workers have mixed feelings about safety when commuting after dark (Figure 12³¹). Almost 30% of women feel unsafe travelling at night, compared with 20% of men.³² 64% of women and 57% of men note that safer late-night transportation options would make them feel safer moving around the city at night.³³ Another recent study looking specifically at the experience of night workers identified a lack of safe transport options as a consistent theme.³⁴

Accessing transport can also be a source of risk. Night bus stops are rarely located with nightlife spaces in mind (Figures 13 and 14), exacerbating safety concerns in the gap between leaving the nightlife space and stepping onto a bus or train.

Harassment is also a transport-related issue. While many women describe experiences of gender-based harassment in train stations and buses, others opt for the Tube over taxis and rideshares, out of fear of harassment from, or assault, by drivers.

Accessibility issues compound these issues further. Limited step-free access at stations or insufficient information about accessible routes creates another layer of late-night transport safety issues for anyone with accessibility needs.

Average walking distance from night venue to next night bus station
(per borough)

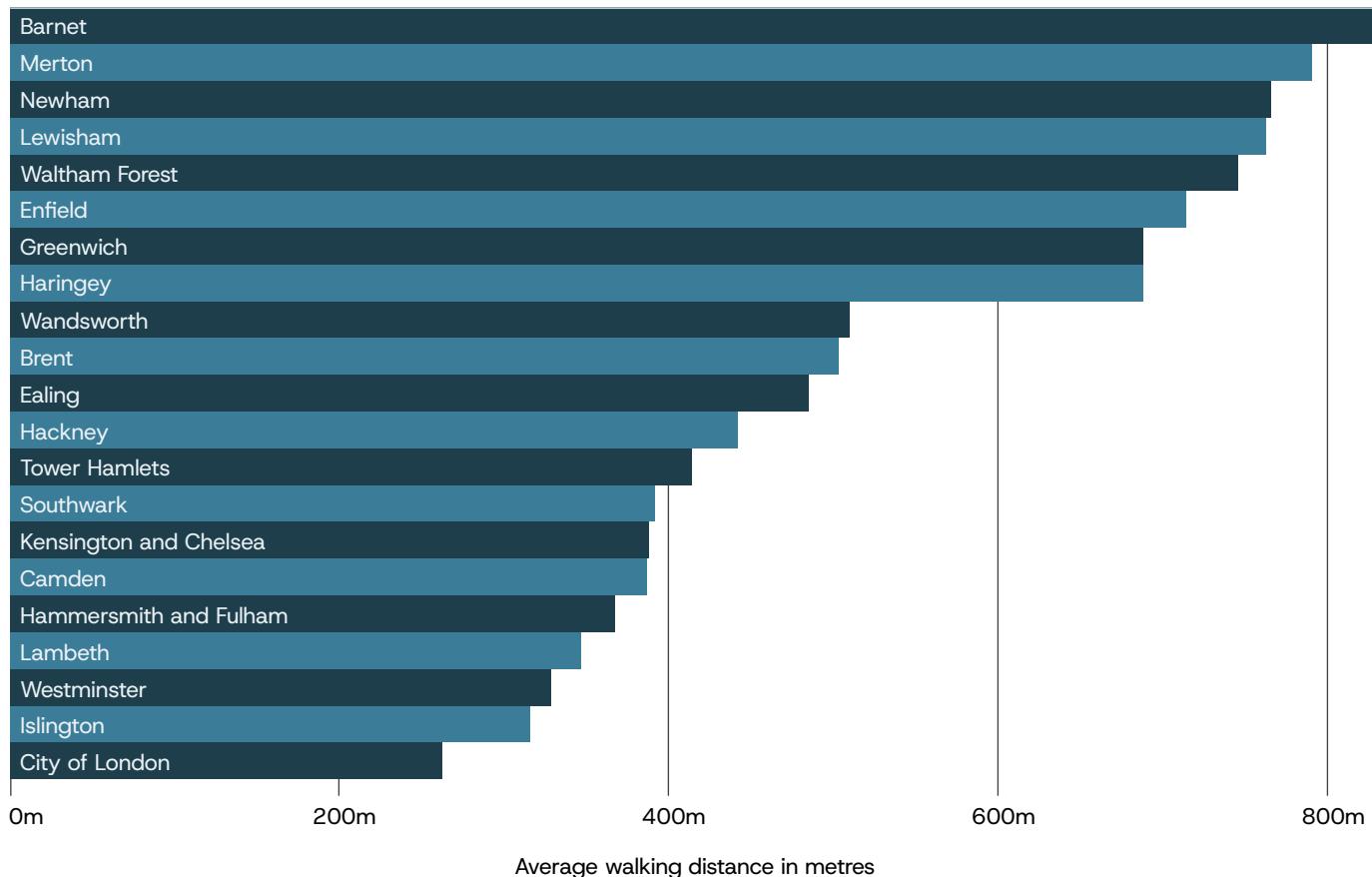


Fig. 13³⁵. (units in metres)

Source: TfL night bus stop locations and HSDS Mastercard Places data, analysed by Autonomy Institute.

35. The metadata confirms that coverage is robust for most inner London boroughs but limited for many outer ones (e.g. Barking & Dagenham, Kingston, Sutton, Richmond, Bromley, etc.), which likely explains the outliers. To address this, boroughs with limited coverage (Barking & Dagenham, Bexley, Harrow, Haringey, Hillingdon, Kingston, Sutton, Richmond, Redbridge, Hounslow, Croydon, Bromley) were excluded from the analysis to reduce distortions. The plot reflects this adjustment.

Londoners see the high cost of transport as an equity issue.

Journeys with more modes of transport cost more. For anyone who has to get a bus and then a Tube, going out – or commuting to work – becomes far more costly than those with more straightforward transport journeys, creating inequities between people based on the specifics of their location.

Night workers receive limited help with transport costs. 44% of night workers receive no support with transport costs, despite travelling at times when public transport options are more limited, or unavailable.³⁶ If night workers use TfL, they may end up paying twice, due to the time of their commute: if they return home after 4:30 am, they'll be charged for travelling on two different days, rather than just one.³⁷

A lack of supporting infrastructure exacerbates the challenges of night-time mobility.

It's not just TfL services that affect Londoners' late-night journeys. Beyond the specifics of transport routes and frequency, surrounding infrastructure and facilities, such as lighting, rest areas, public toilets, food options, and other late-night businesses, significantly influence Londoners' feelings of safety and transport usability.

This also applies to night workers. Priorities ranking highly in the GLA's surveys of London night workers include late-night healthy food options, break rooms for resting or preparing food, better street lighting, and more Police or staff visible in public spaces and on public transport.³⁸

**Average walking distance from night venue to next night bus station
(per industry)**

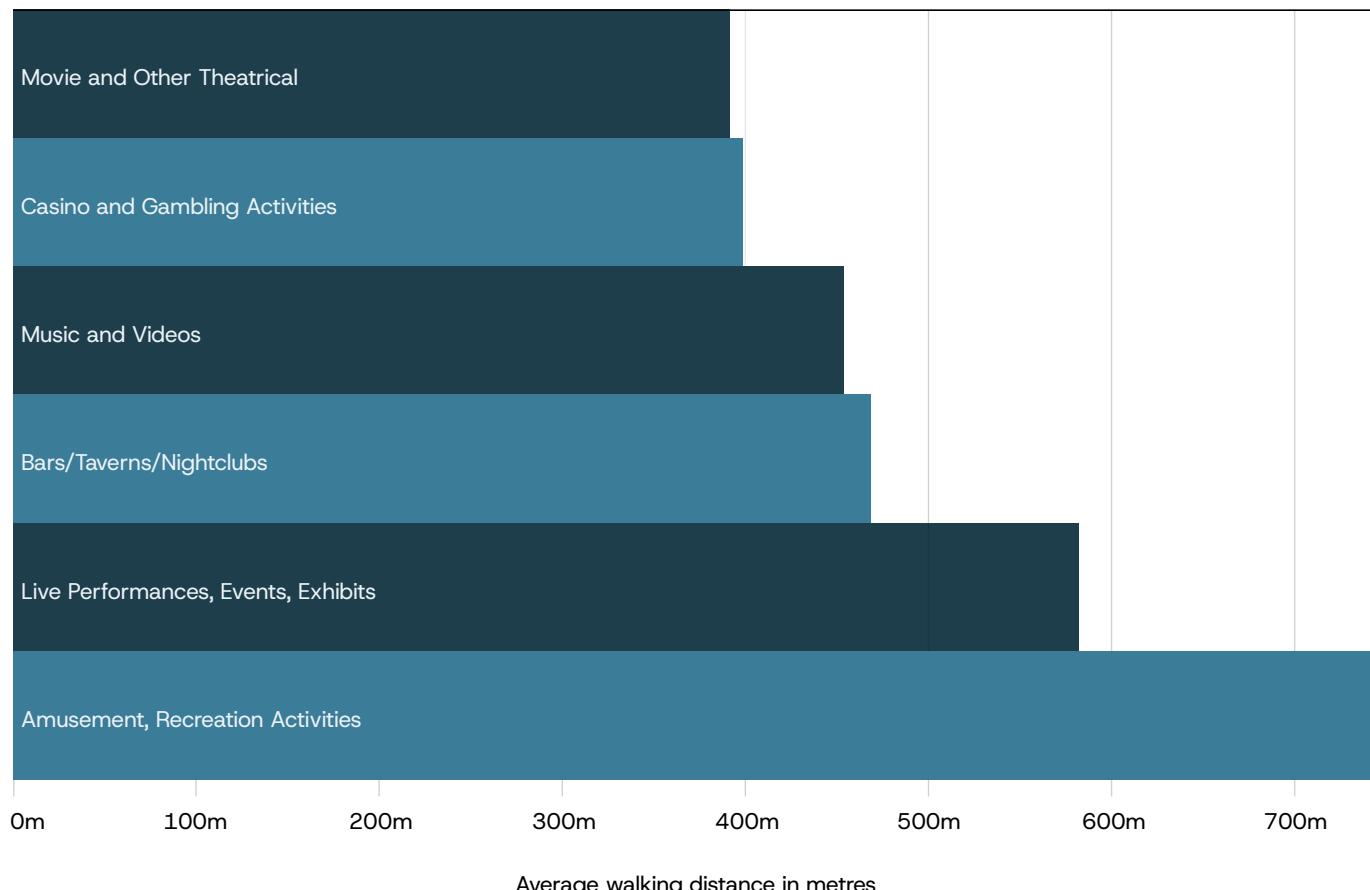


Fig. 14. (units in metres)

Source: TfL night bus stop locations and HSDS Mastercard Places data, analysed by Autonomy Institute.

Licensing, planning and managing sound

At its best, regulation plays a vital role in sustaining London's nightlife ecosystems, mediating between the cultural, commercial and community needs of spaces, audiences, and local residents. However, the Taskforce's research reveals that for many people involved in London's nightlife, licensing, planning, and other regulatory frameworks aren't working as intended.

Nightlife spaces and promoters are frustrated by London's licensing landscape.

More than half of nightlife space operators responding to the Taskforce's survey (52.5%) described London's licensing process as overly complex, lengthy and expensive. Promoters share a similar frustration: 64.2% of them reported facing difficulties with Temporary Event Notices (TEN) or complex requirements for unconventional creative spaces.

Nightlife operators widely see licensing and planning rules as arbitrary and outdated. Responses to the Taskforce's survey and focus groups highlighted disparities between different boroughs' late-night policies, caps on the number of TENs allowed in a given area, and restrictions on opening hours as particular problems. Another common theme was the increasingly interdisciplinary nature of London's nightlife, and the need for more flexibility in the types of licences being granted.

Bureaucratic burdens hit underground scenes the hardest. Smaller businesses and marginalised communities told us that they feel disproportionately affected by regulatory challenges, often lacking the time, resources or relationships required to navigate complex licensing systems. Licensing support is seen as a special privilege, and smaller spaces would like it to be more widely available.

Nightlife operators are also struggling with regulation-related costs.

Operators believe that current licensing and planning processes leave too much room for vexatious complaints. Concerns over the cost of dealing with complaints were prevalent: in one case study, a venue in Hackney claimed that they'd faced over £117,000 in costs and £350,000 in lost income as a result of last-minute objections from a local business.

Gentrification is an ongoing concern. There was concern that new residents in nightlife-heavy areas would continue to use noise complaints to threaten nightlife spaces. This is often exacerbated by the inability of licensing processes to account for cultural value.

Licensing and planning are rarely integrated, forcing applicants to duplicate their efforts at substantial cost. Several spaces expressed concerns about being granted a licence. Still, they denied planning approval, or vice versa, and the amount of time and money required to resolve this: resources that might otherwise be spent more positively within London's night-time economy.

While evidence shows that meanwhile use is gaining popularity, nightlife operators face significant delays in occupying vacant spaces due to lengthy regulations. Temporary use planning applications are burdened with onerous criteria, comparable to those for major developments. This hinders the use and activation of vacant and/or underused spaces for nightlife uses.³⁹

Relationships are suffering as a result of regulatory mistrust.

Nightlife operators don't fully trust local licensing authorities. Responses to the Taskforce's survey and focus groups revealed a widespread perception, amongst venue owners and promoters, that councils don't fully recognise the value of nightlife. They were instead seen to view it as a necessary evil, or a nuisance.

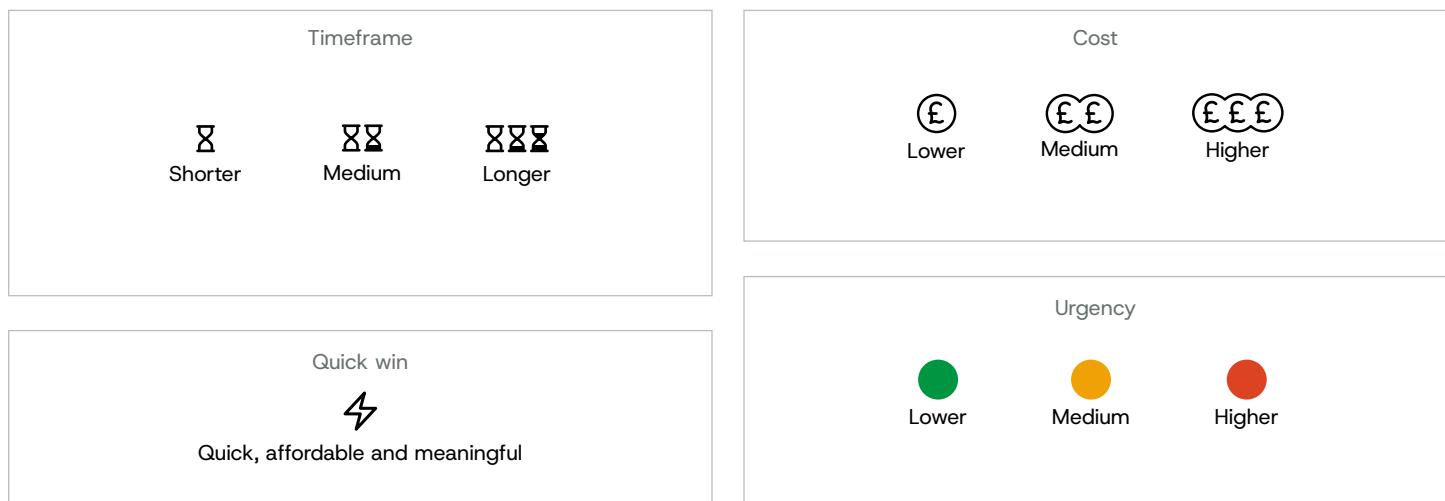
A lack of open communication is hindering safety efforts. Several participants voiced concerns about spaces not including drug safety or harm reduction services in their applications might negatively impact the licensing process, due to fears that this omission could be detrimental.

Confusion may be deterring investment. Evidence from the Night Time Industries Association suggests that a lack of London-wide nightlife regulations, combined with the potential for local policies to change without warning or wider coordination, runs the risk of making London a less desirable place for investment in the night-time sector.

III. Recommendations

Recommendations

1. Support a new Nightlife Commission
2. Recognise nightlife as culture
3. Support nightlife small businesses: venues and beyond
4. Seed-fund the evolution of nightlife
5. Strengthen access to space for nightlife
6. Plan for a 24-hour city
7. Align night-time transport with nightlife demand
8. Rethink approaches to night-time sound
9. Create safer nights through collaboration and harm reduction
10. Update licensing for nightlife



Recommendation 1: Support a new Nightlife Commission

This new governance structure is specifically designed to advocate for, coordinate, and strategically develop London's nightlife sector through independent, sector-led leadership. It would involve the establishment of a funded, independent Nightlife Commission to provide a unified voice for the industry, set standards, coordinate policy, and support the inclusive development of nightlife across London.⁴⁰

1.1 Support the creation of an independent Nightlife Commission: A new sector-led governance body with representation from nightlife spaces, businesses, promoters, collectives, cultural creators, and workers.

The Commission should report back to the Taskforce after its first year on the progress of delivering the recommendations as outlined in this report.

| Involves | Timeframe | Cost | Urgency |
|--|---|--|--|
| Mayor of London, Greater London Authority, Nightlife operators, Nightlife workers and freelancers | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Shorter |  Medium |  Higher |

Berlin's Club Commission⁴¹ has supported the city's nightlife since 2001, bringing together over 300 venues and public bodies to support and regulate the sector. It has played a key role in establishing nightlife as part of Berlin's cultural identity, convening dialogue with city departments and delivering practical programmes, including awareness training and a soundproofing fund for venues.

Recommendation 2: Recognise nightlife as culture

Nightlife must be acknowledged for its cultural, social and heritage value. Despite its significant contributions to UK culture, nightlife has been underappreciated in traditional arts and culture programmes and formal heritage frameworks, even though it plays a central role in tourism and local economies.

These recommendations establish nightlife as a legitimate cultural asset on par with traditional arts institutions, ensuring it receives recognition, protection, and funding within London's cultural ecosystem. The recommendations, if implemented, would officially recognise nightlife spaces and practices as cultural heritage assets through policy frameworks, heritage protections, and inclusion in cultural funding schemes.

2.1 Adopt this report's definition of nightlife, as published on page nine, across the London Plan, Cultural Strategy for London, and any other relevant policies.

| | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|
|  Quick, affordable and meaningful | Involves Mayor of London, GLA, Local authorities | Timeframe  Medium | Cost  Lower | Urgency  Higher |
|---|--|--|--|--|

2.2 Call on the UK Government to champion nightlife: Use mayoral advocacy to establish nightlife as an officially championed sector by the UK Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), and for nightlife to be integrated into broader cultural initiatives and support programs, such as the Arts Everywhere Fund, Sector Plan, and Growth and Innovation funds. This would also involve a commitment to championing all forms of nightlife, not just a select subsection.

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| Involves Mayor of London, Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), Arts Council England, Historic England, UNESCO, Heritage organisations | Timeframe  Medium | Cost  Lower | Urgency  Higher |
|---|--|--|--|

2.3 Update heritage and community protection schemes to be more inclusive: Advocate to include London nightlife culture in cultural asset protection schemes and policy frameworks, such as National Portfolio and Historic England listings, as equal in cultural importance to traditional cultural spaces and practices; this includes protection measures within the planning system, such as Asset of Community Value powers and Section 106 agreements. Lead a formal campaign to nominate key nightlife spaces and practices from London's nightlife scene for inclusion in UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list, seeking support from cultural bodies and the GLA.

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| Involves London Nightlife Commission, Greater London Authority, Historic England, Heritage organisations, Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), Nightlife spaces, Cultural historians, Cultural archives, UNESCO | Timeframe  Long | Cost  Lower | Urgency  Medium |
|---|--|--|--|

The City of Amsterdam⁴² formally recognises, supports, and funds nightlife culture. Following its 2021 vision, the city implemented 15 new measures under 3 themes (space/regulations, sector representation, and subsidies/support) via its Implementation Agenda. A total of €1 million is allocated from 2023–2026 for these measures, with an additional €1.2 million for a young talent development program.

Recommendation 3: Support nightlife small businesses: venues and beyond

Nightlife businesses, especially small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), are struggling: profit margins in the sector are razor-thin and getting thinner. As costs continue to rise, they need urgent support. The following steps will provide greater operational support to nightlife spaces, particularly SMEs, to address these challenges, from tax and regulation to energy costs and accessibility.

3.1 Advocate for the redefinition of nightlife business rates: Use mayoral advocacy to argue for a nightlife rates relief scheme, including business rates relief and a discretionary relief fund.

| Involves | Timeframe | Cost | Urgency |
|--|--|---|--|
| Mayor of London, HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC), Valuation Office Agency, Greater London Authority |  Long |  Lower |  Higher |

3.2 Lobby for a Night-Time Business Cost Relief Scheme: This package should include a reduced VAT rate for nightlife spaces, scaling National Insurance contributions by turnover to ease the burden on smaller operators, and additional cost burdens such as Performing Rights Society fees. In addition, the Greater London Authority should explore additional relief grants and funds, including energy cost relief.

| Involves | Timeframe | Cost | Urgency |
|--|--|--|--|
| Mayor of London, HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC), Valuation Office Agency, Local Authorities, London Nightlife Commission |  Long |  Medium |  Higher |

Recommendation 4: Seed-fund the evolution of nightlife

London's nightlife is evolving, with a growing demand for a more diverse and inclusive nightlife offer across the city. Londoners are going out less, with many citing financial constraints as a reason for their shift in priorities. A growing number of Londoners, particularly in younger age groups, do not drink alcohol and are seeking social and cultural opportunities less centred on drinking.

The creation of a Nightlife Futures Fund could support new experiments in nightlife formats and events, and enable a more inclusive nightlife culture, as well as providing vital career development opportunities for young Londoners.

4.1 Establish a Nightlife Future Fund: Funded by the GLA and delivered in partnership with the Nightlife Commission. The fund must empower underrepresented groups, drive innovation and progression, and create barrier-free opportunities in the development of nightlife across the capital. The fund should also support experimentation and growth in outer London boroughs where nightlife is underdeveloped.

| Involves | Timeframe | Cost | Urgency |
|--|--------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Mayor of London, Greater London Authority, London Nightlife Commission | ☒ Shorter | £ £ £ Higher | 🟡 Medium |

Berlin's TAG DER CLUBKULTUR⁴³ (Day of Club Culture) launched in 2020 initiated by the Club Commission with support from the Senate awards €500,000 annually for Berlin's nightlife sector. This seed funding model unlocks new creative formats beyond traditional clubbing, diversifies the nightlife economy by supporting both permanent venues and location-independent collectives, and future-proofs nightlife culture by investing in emerging talent and innovative programming that keeps Berlin's club culture globally relevant.

In 2025, New York's Office of Nightlife (ONL) at the Department of Small Business Services (SBS) launched the FY26 Nightlife Grant⁴⁴ programme, offering up to \$50,000 to nonprofit organisations, supporting projects to strengthen nightlife business vitality in the city. Grants are awarded to initiatives with objectives spanning local promotion, industry capacity, promoting safe, inclusive and sustainable nightlife, and preserving nightlife culture.

Recommendation 5: Strengthen access to space for nightlife

Nightlife spaces are vital to London's economy and social life, but face significant pressures from urban development and gentrification. Key grassroots nightlife and cultural spaces, such as The Cause, Club MOT, Grow Tottenham, and Avalon Café, frequently originated as temporary, 'meanwhile use' projects, demonstrating their crucial role in nurturing long-term spaces. These recommendations aim to address these challenges directly, strengthening access to space for nightlife operators, fostering inclusivity, and ensuring its long-term sustainability through expanding access and simplifying meanwhile-use planning and licensing regulation.

5.1 Simplify meanwhile use nightlife space regulation: Create a simplified fast-track process for temporary nightlife uses within planning and licensing. Develop temporary planning use classification for nightlife use to ensure that meanwhile and vacant spaces suitable for nightlife uses are not undermined by lengthy delays and processes.

| Involves | Timeframe | Cost | Urgency |
|---|--|---|--|
| Greater London Authority, Local Authorities, Planning authorities, Nightlife operators |  Medium |  Lower |  Higher |

5.2 Publicly owned space for inclusive nightlife: Establish a central database of vacant and underutilised properties with potential for change of use or temporary activation as nightlife spaces. This would give promoters, operators, and cultural organisations controlled access to information on suitable sites, including size, location, and licensing or planning feasibility, while also engaging landlords, local authorities, and BIDs to support flexible use. By connecting available properties with businesses and promoters, the scheme would reduce vacancy, stimulate local economies, drive regeneration of high streets, and expand affordable cultural opportunities.

| Quick, affordable and meaningful | Involves | Timeframe | Cost | Urgency |
|---|--|---|---|--|
|  | Greater London Authority, Transport for London, Licensing authorities, Planning authorities |  Shorter |  Lower |  Medium |

Recommendation 6: Plan for a 24-hour city

With one in four members of London's workforce working at night, and in line with the Mayor's strategic vision for a 24-hour city, policies, infrastructure, and cultural initiatives must better support all that takes place at night and support the workers who make it happen. This includes support for nightlife spaces, transport provision, and policy coordination that encourages day-and-night operations.

6.1 Advance London as a 24-hour city: Create and support 24-hour infrastructure across London by funding initiatives that strengthen nightlife spaces and transport outside traditional hours, expanding opportunities for round-the-clock cultural, social and economic activity on high streets. At the same time, embed the 24-Hour City Test across all GLA policies and programmes, ensuring every initiative aligns with the Mayor's vision for a sustainable, inclusive, and thriving 24-hour city.

|  Quick, affordable and meaningful | Involves Greater London Authority, Mayor of London, Transport for London, Nightlife operators, Economic Development & Regeneration | Timeframe  Medium | Cost  Medium | Urgency  Medium |
|--|---|--|---|--|
|--|---|--|---|--|

Over 100 cities across the world have been rethinking the city as a 24-hour city, developing city-wide strategies to coordinate round-the-clock planning across transport, services, culture, and safety to better foster more inclusive, resilient, and safer cities across the 24-hour cycle.

Recommendation 7: Align night-time transport with nightlife demand

A thriving nightlife for London starts with infrastructure and services that encourage late-night travel and ensure safe routes to, from, and between nightlife events. How and where we gather at night is changing: London could benefit from transit routes that better reflect its nightlife, aligning provision more closely with off-peak late-night demand, and infrastructure that makes the entire journey feel safe and comfortable.

Comprehensive transport infrastructure and services should be research-led and agile, allowing them to better support safe, accessible, and efficient mobility at night. Extending and adjusting night transport services, creating dedicated nightlife transport links, and establishing stakeholder groups could allow transport planning to better align with nightlife needs.

7.1 Re-establish the Late Night Transport Working Group: Convene key stakeholders, with the London Nightlife Commission and Transport for London serving as co-chairs, to enhance night-time transport by ensuring services are safe, reliable, and well-connected. The group will review bus routes and links to nightlife hubs, assess targeted Night Tube improvements for peak periods and major events, and integrate real-time information to simplify journeys. It will also explore fare innovations to better support night-time travellers and workers. This coordinated, evidence-based approach will provide a practical platform for actionable measures that strengthen accessibility, efficiency, and London's night-time economy.

| Quick, affordable and meaningful | Involves London Nightlife Commission , Nightlife operators, Nightlife-goers, Transport for London, National Rail, Third-party private hire providers | Timeframe ☒ Shorter | Cost £ Lower | Urgency Higher |
|----------------------------------|---|---------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
|----------------------------------|---|---------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|

Recommendation 8: Rethink approaches to night-time sound

Noise complaints are still a significant point of conflict between nightlife spaces and their neighbouring residents. Cities can be noisy, but sound management technologies and community engagement can help spaces and residents coexist harmoniously through transparent complaint and mediation processes to address disputes. Citywide soundscaping technology and an expansion of Agent of Change principles can create data-driven solutions for noise management and community relations, reforming our approach to night-time vibrancy.

8.1 Pilot a new approach to sound management: Introduce a borough-level pilot scheme where noise monitoring technology supplements subjective complaints with transparent, real-time data. This shared evidence base would set clearer thresholds for disputes and guide fair mediation. Borough-led Data-Informed Noise Mediation Complaint Groups would be established, drawing on soundscape data for community-led conflict resolution. These groups would consider both the negative impacts of noise and the positive acoustic contributions that animate urban life.

| Involves | Timeframe | Cost | Urgency |
|--|--|--|--|
| Greater London Authority, Local Authorities, Nightlife Commission, Nightlife operators, Local residents |  Medium |  Medium |  Medium |

8.2 Strengthen Agent of Change principles: Extend protections on a statutory footing across Licensing, Environmental Protection, and Planning, to safeguard nightlife spaces from residential encroachment.

| Quick, affordable and meaningful | Involves | Timeframe | Cost | Urgency |
|---|--|---|---|--|
|  | Greater London Authority, Mayor's Planning Team, Local authorities, Planning authorities, Licensing authorities, Environmental Protection |  Shorter |  Lower |  Higher |

8.3 Environmental Act Reform: Lobby for reform to the Environmental Act 1990, drawing from existing international case studies, ensuring enforcement reflects genuine neighbourhood impact rather than individual or vexatious complaints. The reform should require a minimum of ten unrelated household complaints before Environmental Health investigations into licensed spaces are triggered. This would protect the vibrancy of London's cultural areas by ensuring residents and spaces can coexist fairly. It should be embedded across licensing and planning frameworks, with the Nightlife Commission tasked with monitoring effectiveness and adapting thresholds as needed.

| Involves | Timeframe | Cost | Urgency |
|---|--|---|--|
| Greater London Authority, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Nightlife Commission, Local Authorities, Community organisations, Nightlife operators, Local residents |  Long |  Lower |  Higher |

New York's MEND (Mediating Establishment and Neighborhood Disputes) NYC⁴⁵ launched in September 2020, offering free mediation between residents and hospitality venues experiencing quality-of-life disputes. Administered by the Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings (OATH) in partnership with the Office of Nightlife, MEND provides an alternative to formal enforcement and summonses. The programme serves hundreds of New York residents and businesses annually, using professional mediators and conflict resolution trainers to resolve disputes before they escalate, avoiding financial hardship for small businesses.

New South Wales Government's Vibrancy Reforms⁴⁶ restructured sound management by increasing disturbance complaint thresholds from 3 to 5 complaints from different households and requiring complainants to attempt resolution with licensees first. The reforms consider "order of occupancy"—preventing newcomers from shutting down established venues. Special Entertainment Precincts introduced binding "eyes wide open" clauses requiring property buyers to acknowledge they're moving into late-night entertainment zones. This shows that combining mediation, soundproofing support, and shared-responsibility frameworks can protect residents while enabling vibrant, sustainable nightlife to flourish.

Recommendation 9: Create safer nights through collaboration and harm reduction

Our research indicates that late-night crime is associated not with nightlife spaces, but with busy areas and increased footfall. But empty streets can often feel less safe, underlining the need for more “eyes on the street” through night-time activations and later business operations, particularly for those at increased risk of gender-based violence.

These recommendations aim to promote collaborative approaches among nightlife operators, police, and communities that prioritise harm reduction over zero-tolerance, punitive measures, while ensuring public safety through evidence-based resource deployment. Implementing data-driven policing, local partnership, and public health approaches can create safer nightlife environments through collaboration rather than enforcement alone.

9.1 Independent Review of Police Licensing through Casey 2: We recommend that Police Licensing in London be independently reviewed as part of the Casey 2 Review of the Metropolitan Police, with the London Nightlife Commission embedded as a core stakeholder. This is essential to rebuild trust, improve consistency, and address long-standing partnership issues affecting the safety and sustainability of London’s nightlife.

The Review should examine the impact of policing and licensing practices on venues, communities, and the cultural sector, particularly in areas identified by the first Casey Review as suffering organisational and cultural failings. Engagement must include the London Nightlife Commission, responsible authorities, community groups, stakeholders, and enforcement bodies to ensure fairness, transparency, evidence-based recommendations, and accountability.

Embedding licensing within Casey 2 will enable the London Nightlife Commission to deliver on recommendation 10.3 and create a stronger, accountable partnership culture to reduce vulnerability, prevent violence and crime, and ensure London’s nightlife can thrive safely and sustainably.

| Involves | Timeframe | Cost | Urgency |
|---|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| Metropolitan Police Service, Mayor’s Office for Policing and Crime, Greater London Authority, Mayor of London, External review bodies | ☒ Medium | ££ Medium | ● Higher |

9.2 Police deployment on footfall: Ensure police resources are deployed strategically, proportionately, and consistently across nightlife areas, using an evidence-based approach that is responsive to real-time crime patterns and footfall data. Ensure the British Transport Police have the necessary resources to provide coverage across the night-time transport network. Police should also ensure that shift patterns vary, as these are widely known by criminals, and evening work is rarely undertaken by local neighbourhood teams.

The commission should work with MOPAC and the Metropolitan Police to regularly analyse crime and footfall patterns.

| Involves | Timeframe | Cost | Urgency |
|--|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| Metropolitan Police, Met Licensing, Mayor’s Office for Policing and Crime, High Streets Data Service (HSDS), GLA | ☒ Shorter | ££ Medium | ● Higher |

9.3 Harm reduction approach to public health and welfare first: Adopt a harm reduction approach in place of zero tolerance, prioritising de-escalation, early intervention, education and support over punitive measures to improve safety, wellbeing, and trust within nightlife.

| Involves | Timeframe | Cost | Urgency |
|--|--|---|--|
| Metropolitan Police, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime, Local Authorities, Nightlife Commission, Nightlife operators, Public health authorities |  Medium |  Lower |  Higher |

Programmes like Hackney Nights⁴⁷ and Bristol Nights⁴⁸ in the UK have seen positive results from collaborative and preventative approaches in place of rigid enforcement. Through dedicated nightlife resource, these councils have led the way in putting welfare first and providing comprehensive support and training packages for the nightlife sector.

Recommendation 10: Update planning and licensing for nightlife

Licensing has become a burden on nightlife businesses. While the Licensing Act of 2003 had the goal of supporting growth, its outdated licensing and planning frameworks must be updated to recognise the economic, cultural, and social value of nightlife. These recommendations call for the Mayor to support the report published by the National Sprint Taskforce, and to move towards a clear, single standard, used London-wide.

10.1 London Strategic Licensing Policy: Implement National Sprint Taskforce recommendations as part of a new London-level licensing policy.

| Involves | Timeframe | Cost | Urgency |
|---|--------------|------------|-------------|
| Greater London Authority, Licensing authorities, Planning authorities | ☒ Shorter | £ Lower | ● Higher |

10.2 London Plan over CIAs and core hour policies: Remove Cumulative Impact Assessments and core hours policies for nightlife spaces, aligning with London Plan classifications of areas suitable for nightlife use – currently, the two can conflict in local planning and licensing practice.

| Quick, affordable and meaningful | Involves | Timeframe | Cost | Urgency |
|----------------------------------|---|--------------|------------|-------------|
| | Greater London Authority, Licensing authorities, Planning authorities | ☒ Shorter | £ Lower | ● Higher |

10.3 Develop a London Licensing Operating Standard: Follow a collaborative process to set out standards for all stakeholders in licensing (operations and safety, evidence thresholds, decision-making guidance). This London framework can inform national reform and deliver better consistency across boroughs.

| Involves | Timeframe | Cost | Urgency |
|---|--------------|------------|-------------|
| Metropolitan Police, Greater London Authority, Nightlife Commission | ☒☒ Medium | £ Lower | ● Higher |

IV. London Nightlife Commission

Introduction

Across the world, over 100 cities have some form of night governance – ranging from individual roles and small government teams to independent industry-led night councils. As part of our research, the Taskforce reviewed night governance models from Amsterdam, Berlin, Bogota, Melbourne, New York City, Sydney, Vienna and Zurich.

Taking inspiration from each of these examples, we've considered what a more effective model of night governance might look like for London: one designed to meet the city's complex and evolving needs, as well as those of its vital nightlife sector, both now and into the future.

Those discussions have led us to recommend the creation of a new night governance model for London: **an independent Nightlife Commission**, in which a wider range of industry representatives would work closely with local government to advocate for, coordinate and develop nightlife across the city.

Why a Commission?

The creation of a Nightlife Commission would mean moving away from London's previous governance model, in which many of the relevant responsibilities were contained within an individual Night Czar role. We believe that London's unique challenges would benefit from a more expansive and inclusive approach, building on the cumulative work of the Night Czar, the Taskforce, and the previous Night Time Commission established in 2017.

More representative of London's varied nightlife

Throughout our research, the Taskforce has been repeatedly reminded of the diversity and individuality at the heart of London's nightlife. We believe that creating more opportunities for those working in nightlife and enabling them to get directly involved in governance would be a vital and positive step. Creating space for a broader range of perspectives would help the Nightlife Commission be more representative of after-dark London; more embedded in its scenes, spaces and cultural communities; and a more effective partner to the nightlife sector as a whole. A new commission should consider establishing a series of grassroots working groups, similar to those found in international models in cities such as Berlin.

Better equipped to confront challenges

The Taskforce is also aware of the scale and variety of challenges facing London's nightlife. We aim to foster more collaborative action, with a more equitable distribution of power and increased participatory decision-making. We envisage multiple targeted interventions from a range of different people, each empowered to drive change in their respective areas of expertise. By broadening the scope and scale of London's night governance, we aim to share the weight of these responsibilities more evenly and harness the immense talent and energy of the nightlife sector more effectively.

Both independent and effective

As an independent body, the Taskforce believes that any new Nightlife Commission should be built on similar principles: free to follow the evidence wherever it leads, working on the principles of transparency, effectiveness, and open debate. Our design for the Nightlife Commission strikes a balance between these independent principles and the need for close collaboration with local government. This ensures that its work leads to tangible change. We believe that this approach will enable the Nightlife Commission to be both credible (whether within the policymaking world or with the broader public) and effective.

What would the Commission be mandated to do?

Advocacy and a representative voice of the sector to drive change

The Commission will bring together the entire nightlife sector within the scope of the new nightlife commission. The Commission will be independent and therefore be able to comment on ongoing and live issues impacting nightlife. The Commission will also provide regular briefings to the Mayor on the sector's current state.

The commission must have a bottom-up governance structure with key working groups that anyone in the sector can join. Board roles should be fixed-term and operate on a rotating basis. We recommend that five existing Taskforce members stay on for continuity reasons and to serve as the interim board ahead of a full open call process.

Representation

The Commission must be given a role, with representation on key groups across the GLA and local authorities. These include the Cultural Leadership Board; the newly formed Late-night Transport working group; licensing groups; the 24 Hour Leadership Group; any relevant groups associated with the Metropolitan Police; and future groups.

A complete support package for nightlife workers, businesses and freelancers

The Commission can design a comprehensive and accessible support package for all those working in nightlife, covering mental health and wellbeing; professional development; training; and more. The creation of an online hub – similar to Bristol Nights and Hackney Nights – can also unlock access to crucial data; and provide better access to industry statistics on crime, footfall, and spending patterns, using this research as a baseline.

Spaces for nightlife

Working with the GLA, the Commission can pilot a pioneering “matchmaking” service, connecting nightlife operators with vacant property owners. This will expand nightlife opportunities by making it easier to access suitable temporary or long-term spaces.

Resolving conflicts

The Commission can play a role in helping resolve conflicts between different authorities and the sector. By mediating between nightlife operators, local authorities, the police and community groups, the Commission could proactively address tensions and build stronger relationships across London's varying neighbourhoods. This would ensure that nightlife development is supported by and engages with communities.

Nightlife Future Fund

The Nightlife Future Fund will seed-fund London's nightlife evolution. The fund should empower underrepresented groups; drive innovation; create opportunities for emerging nightlife operators; support growth in outer London; and promote sustainability, wellbeing and safety.

V. Conclusion

Conclusion

Everyone involved in this report – from Taskforce members and focus group participants to GLA staff and researchers, and indeed you, reading it right now – has been brought together by one thing: a profound connection to London's nightlife, and an understanding of its cultural, social and economic importance.

We've all felt it, at some point: the weight and sound of moving bodies in a dimly-lit room; the thrill of experiencing (or creating) moments that reshape our everyday lives; the new careers and connections we discover after dark, enabling us to reimagine who we are or might become, regardless of whether we're clubbers, carers or cab drivers; the feeling of riding (or indeed driving) a night bus over the Thames as the sun comes up and the city shimmers. These aren't ephemeral or disposable experiences, but ones that continue to shape and inspire us as Londoners every night of the week.

Nightlife embodies so much of what makes London great: its creativity and diversity, its continued ability to reinvent itself, and the countless opportunities it offers us to build incredible things. However, nightlife is also intertwined with conflicts that cut to the heart of what we want our city to be, and how we manage the myriad demands on its shared spaces, resources, and communities. For all its power and potential, nightlife faces immense and growing challenges.

Few of these questions have easy answers. This report establishes a few clear themes, though. Treating night-time culture as culture – something that's valuable and meaningful in its own right, not just for its contributions to London's economy – protecting and supporting nightlife businesses of all kinds, and keeping the people who work in or visit them safe. Creating more consistent and supportive regulatory frameworks for people and organisations to operate within. Designing more of the city's surrounding infrastructure, from transport to food options, with nightlife and night workers in mind.

Our research and recommendations are not a magic bullet: supporting and empowering London's nightlife is an ongoing, complex and demanding process. But we hope that every single Londoner – whatever your background, identity, neighbourhood, political persuasions or musical tastes – will come away from this report with something to inspire or excite you, and tangible reasons to be optimistic about the future.

Glossary

Accessibility: The quality of being able to be reached or entered; the quality of being easy to obtain or use. In the context of nightlife, it often refers to physical access for disabled people and inclusive environments.

Agent of change: A planning principle that places the responsibility for noise mitigation on new developments (e.g., residential buildings) that are introduced into existing noisy environments (e.g., near music venues).

Audience: The assembled spectators or listeners at a public event, such as a play, film, concert, or meeting.

Board: A group of people constituted to administer or manage the affairs of a company, organisation, or institution.

Borough: A town or district which is an administrative unit; in this context, a district of London with its own local government.

Collective: A group of individuals who share or are motivated by a common interest, often working together for a shared purpose.

Community: A group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common; a feeling of fellowship with others as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests, and goals.

Crime: An action or omission that constitutes an offence that may be prosecuted by the state and is punishable by law.

DIY (Do It Yourself): Creative or organisational activities undertaken by individuals or groups without professional help or commercial backing.

Diversity: The practice or quality of including or involving people from a range of different social and ethnic backgrounds and of different genders, sexual orientations, and so on.

Equity: Fair and just treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people, while at the same time striving to identify and remove barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups.

Footfall: The number of people entering a shop or moving through a particular area.

Gentrification: The process whereby the character of a poorer urban area is changed by wealthier people moving in, improving housing, and attracting new businesses, typically displacing existing inhabitants in the process.

Global majority: A term referring to people who are Black, Asian, Brown, dual-heritage, indigenous to the global south, and/or have been racialised as ethnic minorities. They are often considered subordinate to the imagined, but never defined, 'majority' within British society.⁴⁹

Governance: The system by which a place or an organisation is controlled.

Grassroots: Activities or movements that originate from, or are supported by, ordinary people, rather than by a centralised authority.

Harm reduction: Measures and strategies aimed at reducing the negative consequences associated with specific activities, such as drug use, rather than eliminating the activity itself.

Licensing: The granting of a licence, especially to permit the use of something or to allow an activity to take place.

Meanwhile space: A "meanwhile use" describes a situation where a space, either empty or between uses, is utilised for a duration of time before it is turned into a more permanent end state, taking advantage of a short window of opportunity. Meanwhile interventions are tactical and slot into wider strategies of planned change. They can help in shaping positive urban transformation.⁵⁰

Nightlife: Cultural and social activity primarily occurring between 6 pm and 6 am, including activities, events, and venues that encourage social and cultural interaction and provide spaces for various communities and the creative sector.

Nightlife Commission: A proposed independent, sector-led entity intended to serve as the new nightlife advisory body for London, promoting collaboration between industry and government.

Nightlife worker: An individual employed explicitly within the nightlife sector, such as artists, DJs, performers, technicians, security, and bar staff.

Nightlife economy: The range of culture and leisure activities that take place after typical daytime working hours.

Night-time economy: The range of economic activities that take place after typical daytime working hours, including cultural and leisure activities; activities which support night time cultural and leisure activities; 24-hour health and personal social services; and activities which support wider social and economic activities.

Night governance: The management and regulation of a city's night-time activities and economy, often involving collaboration between government, industry, and community stakeholders.

Night worker: An individual who primarily works during evening or night hours, across various sectors, including, but not limited to, nightlife.

Planning: The process of making plans for something; the systematic arrangement of land use.

Policy: A set of principles or rules that guide decisions and achieve rational outcomes.

Programming: The activities, events, or performances scheduled or presented by a venue or organisation.

Promoter: An individual or organisation responsible for organising, advertising, and often financing events, especially in the music or entertainment industry.

Public health: The science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life, and promoting health through organised community efforts and informed choices of society, organisations, public and private communities, and individuals.

Risk: The possibility that something unwelcome or unpleasant will happen.

Safety: The condition of being protected from or unlikely to cause danger, risk, or injury.

Scene: A particular area or community of people, especially in the arts or entertainment, who share common interests, styles, or activities.

Space: A physical location or venue where nightlife events and activities occur.

Sustainability: The ability to be maintained at a specific rate or level; avoidance of the depletion of natural resources to maintain an ecological balance. In a broader sense, it also refers to the long-term viability of industries or communities.

Temporary Event Notice (TEN): A legal notification required in the UK for certain temporary events involving licensable activities, such as serving alcohol or playing live music.

Underground: Cultural or artistic movements that operate outside the mainstream, often characterised by alternative, independent, or non-commercial approaches.

Venue operator: An individual or entity responsible for managing and running a physical space where nightlife activities, events, or performances take place.

Working group: A small group of people within a larger organisation or committee who are appointed to study a particular issue and recommend action.

References

Amsterdam City Government (no date) Night-time Economy Policy 'Night-Vision' 2023–2027. Available at: <https://www.amsterdam.nl/en/leisure/night-vision/>

Arup (2020) Meanwhile Use London A Research Report For The Greater London Authority. Available at: https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/meanwhile_use_for_london_final.pdf

Beep Studio (2025) Working at the Margins: Designing for Cultural Resilience in London GLA – London Plan Evidence Submission – Grassroots Cultural Spaces.

Ben Campkin and Alessio Kolioulis (2025) Voices of Nightworkers: Evidence from Lived Experience; Data After Dark, UCL. Available at: <https://www.dataafterdark.org/reports/UCL-Voices-of-Night-Workers-Report.pdf>

Bristol Nights (no date) Bristol Nights. Available at: <https://www.bristolnights.co.uk/>

Campbell-Stephens, R. (2020) Global Majority: Decolonising the language and reframing the conversation about race.

Clubcommission Berlin e.V. (no date) Clubcommission Berlin. Available at: <https://www.clubcommission.de/>

Clubcommission Berlin e.V. (no date) About Tag der Clubkultur. Available at: <https://tagderclubkultur.berlin/en/about/>

GLA (2022) Night-time poll, March 2022.

Hackney Nights (no date) Hackney Nights: Helping Hackney's venues become safer spaces. Available at: <https://www.hackneynghts.co.uk/>

HSDS (2024) Footfall data, 2024.

Living Wage Foundation (2024) London after dark: The reality of working at night in the capital. Available at: <https://www.livingwage.org.uk/sites/default/files/2024-11/London%20after%20dark%20-%20The%20reality%20of%20working%20at%20night%20in%20the%20capital.pdf>

London Nightlife Survey (2025) Analysed by Autonomy.

New York City Department of Small Business Services (SBS) (2025) SBS Announces Recipients of First-Ever NYC Nightlife Grants. Available at: <https://www.nyc.gov/site/sbs/about/pr20251124-nightlifegrants.page>

NYC Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings (OATH) (no date) MEND-Establishment & Neighborhood Disputes. Available at: <https://www.nyc.gov/site/oath/conflict-resolution/mend-establishment-neighborhood-disputes.page>

Obsrvant (2025a) Night time consumer research for NTIA, February 2025. Available at: <https://democracy.luton.gov.uk/cmis5public/>

— (2025b) Research for UCL/VibeLab, July 2025.

Office for National Statistics (ONS) (2019) Consumer Price Index: Autonomy calculations 2019=100.

— (2023a) Annual Business Survey, calculated by Autonomy.

— (2023b) The industrial analyses: United Kingdom National Accounts, the Blue Book 2023. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/grossdomesticproductgdp/compendium/unitedkingdomnationalaccountsthebluebook/2023/theindustrialanalyses>

— (2023c) The night-time economy, UK, 2022. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/business/activity-sizeandlocation/articles/thenighttimeconomyuk/2022>

Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner, NSW Government (no date) Vibrancy Reforms. Available at: <https://www.nsw.gov.au/business-and-economy/office-of-24-hour-economy-commissioner/vibrancy-reforms>

Safestats (2024) Crime offences data, Dec 2023–Nov 2024.

Talk to Frank (no date) Synthetic opioids. Available at: <https://talktofrank.com/drug/synthetic-opioids>

YouGov (2024) Survey for the Porter Group, March 2024.

Endnotes

- Condensed and lightly adapted responses from venue operators and promoters when asked: "Describe what scenes, communities, and/or audiences your venue(s) or events cater to," and "Describe what programming activities take place in your venue(s)."
- Obsrvant research for UCLC/VibeLab, July 2025.
- Due to small sample sizes, this analysis excludes non-binary respondents and those who preferred not to state their gender.
- London Nightlife Taskforce Survey, 2025. Analysis by Autonomy Institute.
- This section of the report was developed by UCLC.
- This figure is reported in Gross Value Added (GVA). The economic analysis draws on datasets from the Office for National Statistics (ONS), the Greater London Authority (GLA). The methodology combines 2022 ONS two-digit SIC GVA figures with London-specific three-digit business share data. Following the GLA's classification of night-time industries into four broad groupings – cultural and leisure, support services, 24-hour health and social care, and wider economic activities – our focus here is on the night-time cultural and leisure activities grouping only. This includes hotels and similar accommodation (SIC07: 551), restaurants and mobile food service activities (SIC07: 561), event catering and other food service activities (SIC07: 562), beverage serving activities (SIC07: 563), private security activities (SIC07: 801), creative, arts and entertainment activities (SIC07: 900), gambling and betting activities (SIC07: 920), sports activities (SIC07: 931), and amusement and recreation activities (SIC07: 932). The final figure is adjusted for 2024 taking into account London's compound annual economic growth. Please see Annex E for further information.
- While the calculations and methodology followed the GLA's classification of night-time industries into four broad groupings, we recognise the need to develop new ways of measuring night-time economy data. For example, the final figure does not include cooperatives or social enterprise models, which are not yet fully captured by SIC codes or existing datasets, but are playing a growing role in sustaining nightlife, with a focus on community and social value rather than purely commercial growth.
- This figure is in Gross Value Added (GVA). Economic analysis draws upon datasets from the Office of National Statistics (ONS), Greater London Authority (GLA), and 2025 polling data from Obsrvant. Please see Annex A3 for further information.
- Office for National Statistics (ONS). The industrial analyses: United Kingdom National Accounts, the Blue Book 2023.
- Obsrvant research for UCLC/VibeLab, July 2025, adjusted with 2021 London Census data.
- Obsrvant research for UCLC/VibeLab, July 2025.
- Obsrvant Night Time Consumer Research for NTIA, February 2025
- YouGov survey for the Porter Group, March 2024
- Ben Campkin and Alessio Kolioulis, 'Voices of Nightworkers: Evidence from Lived Experience'; Data After Dark, UCL, 2025: Data After Dark: New Evidence on Night Work in London.
- Rosemary Campbell-Stephens 'Global Majority; Decolonising the language and Reframing the Conversation about Race', 2020.
- Ben Campkin and Alessio Kolioulis, 'Voices of Nightworkers: Evidence from Lived Experience'; Data After Dark, UCL, 2025: Data After Dark: New Evidence on Night Work in London.
- ONS, 2023: The night-time economy, UK, 2022.
- Living Wage Foundation, 2024: London After Dark
- Ben Campkin and Alessio Kolioulis, 'Voices of Nightworkers: Evidence from Lived Experience'; Data After Dark, UCL, 2025: Data After Dark: New Evidence on Night Work in London.
- Ben Campkin and Alessio Kolioulis, 'Voices of Nightworkers: Evidence from Lived Experience'; Data After Dark, UCL, 2025: Data After Dark: New Evidence on Night Work in London.
- London Nightlife Taskforce survey, 2025. Analysed by Autonomy.
- London Nightlife Taskforce survey, 2025. Analysed by Autonomy.
- Ben Campkin and Alessio Kolioulis, 'Voices of Nightworkers: Evidence from Lived Experience'; Data After Dark, UCL, 2025: Data After Dark: New Evidence on Night Work in London.
- ONS: Consumer Price Index. Autonomy calculations 2019=100.
- Safestats Crime Offenses data for 2023-12 to 2024-11 combined with 2024 HSDS footfall data. Autonomy Institute calculations.
- Safestats Crime Offenses data for 2023-12 to 2024-11 combined with 2024 HSDS footfall data. Autonomy Institute calculations.
- Talk to Frank, Synthetic Opioids
- Obsrvant research for UCLC/VibeLab, July 2025.
- London Nightlife Survey, 2025. Analysed by Autonomy Institute.
- GLA nighttime poll, March 2022.
- See Annex B for further information.
- GLA nighttime poll, March 2022.
- GLA nighttime poll, March 2022.
- Obsrvant research for UCLC/VibeLab, July 2025.
- Ben Campkin and Alessio Kolioulis, 'Voices of Nightworkers: Evidence from Lived Experience'; Data After Dark, UCL, 2025: Data After Dark: New Evidence on Night Work in London.
- The metadata confirms that coverage is robust for most inner London boroughs but limited for many outer ones (e.g. Barking & Dagenham, Kingston, Sutton, Richmond, Bromley, etc.), which likely explains the outliers. To address this, boroughs with limited coverage (Barking & Dagenham, Bexley, Harrow, Havering, Hillingdon, Kingston, Sutton, Richmond, Redbridge, Hounslow, Croydon, Bromley) were excluded from the analysis to reduce distortions. The plot reflects this adjustment.
- GLA nighttime poll, March 2022.
- Ben Campkin and Alessio Kolioulis, 'Voices of Nightworkers: Evidence from Lived Experience'; Data After Dark, UCL, 2025: Data After Dark: New Evidence on Night Work in London.
- GLA nighttime poll, March 2022.
- Working at the Margins: Designing for Cultural Resilience in London GLA – London Plan Evidence Submission – Grassroots Cultural Spaces Prepared by Beep Studio Ltd, June 2025.
- See: Section IV: Nightlife Commission.
- <https://www.clubcommission.de/>
- <https://www.amsterdam.nl/en/leisure/night-vision/>
- <https://tagderclubkultur.berlin/en/about/>
- <https://www.nyc.gov/site/sbs/about/pr20251124-nightlifegrants.page>
- <https://www.nyc.gov/site/oath/conflict-resolution/mend-establishment-neighborhood-disputes.page>
- <https://www.nsw.gov.au/business-and-economy/office-of-24-hour-economy-commissioner/vibrancy-reforms>
- <https://www.hackneyights.co.uk/>
- <https://www.bristolnights.co.uk/>
- Rosemary Campbell-Stephens 'Global Majority; Decolonising the language and Reframing the Conversation about Race', 2020
- Arup 'Meanwhile Use London A Research Report For The Greater London Authority', 2020

London Nightlife Taskforce

Taskforce Chair: Cameron Leslie (fabric)

Taskforce Members: Alice Hoffmann-Fuller (Consultant), Georgina Wald (Fuller Smith & Turner), Kate Nicholls (UKHospitality), Lily London (Freelance), Michael Kill (Night Time Industries Association), Nadine Noor (Pxssy Palace), Nathanael Williams (Colour Factory and Jumbi), Provhat Rahman (Daytimers Collective and Digital Funfair), Sam Spencer (Broadwick Live), Sophie Brownlee (Whitehouse Communications)

Nightlife Taskforce Advisory Board: Alex Doel (Uber), Alex Williams (Transport for London), Charisse Beaumont (Black Lives in Music), Claire Walker (Society of London Theatres), Cllr Anthony Okereke (London Councils), Cllr Jonathan Simpson MBE (London Borough of Camden), Dan Beaumont (Dalston Superstore), Ed Holloway (BEEP Studios), Emma Strain (Transport for London), Emma Warren, Fiona Measham (The Loop), Gareth Hughes (Keystone Law), Gianluca Rizzo (Brixton Bid), Glen Pavelin (The Metropolitan Police Service), Hannah Essex (Society of London Theatres), Hannah Sharman-Cox (London Cocktail Week), Hannah Wadey (Safer Business Network), Jan Hart (Environmental Health), Jon Collins (LIVE), Kevin Fenton (Office for Health Improvement and Disparities), Laurence Taylor (The Metropolitan Police Service), Liam O'Hare (City Halo), Mark Williams (Heart of London Business Alliance), Matt Twist (The Metropolitan Police Service), Mike Levett (Ormside Project), Naomi Pohl (Musicians Union), Paddy Whurr (Licensing), Patrick Hinton (MixMag), Paul Flemming (Equity), Philip Kolvin KC (11KBW), Philippe Chiarella (Fire), Robin Merritt (Mayor's Office for Policing), Rose Wangen-Jones (London and Partners), Sarah Clover KC (Kings Chambers), Scott Green (The Metropolitan Police Service), Sharon Bamborough (London Licensing Managers), Steve Garelick (GMB).

Project team and partners



Greater London Authority: 24 Hour London The 24-Hour London team is responsible for delivering on the Mayor's vision to make London a safer, fairer, more prosperous and sustainable city around the clock. Current work includes strategic licensing reform, data-led research into night workers, helping boroughs to create effective night time strategies, prioritising women's safety through the Women's Night Safety Charter, cutting red tape for businesses via business-friendly licensing, increasing al-fresco dining opportunities with the Summer Streets Fund, addressing racial inequalities in music event licensing through the REMEL project, and delivering London's first Nightlife Taskforce of frontline industry experts to address the challenges facing London's nightlife.

Sam Mathys
Project Lead

Francesca Gluščević
Project Officer

Julieta Cuneo
Research Lead

london.gov.uk/programmes-strategies/arts-and-culture/24-hour-london



VibeLab is a data-driven research, consultancy and advocacy agency dedicated to supporting creatives and preserving night-time culture. With over ten years of experience, VibeLab works with local institutions and governments to develop effective strategies that support and navigate the nightlife industry. We specialise in making complex data clear. VibeLab's research and consultancy help identify growth opportunities and connect individuals, businesses, governments, and institutions to boost creativity and local economies. We are passionate about the transformative power that nightlife culture and creative communities have in urban areas. Our strength lies in our connections: we bridge the gap between government authorities, nightlife creatives and local communities. VibeLab creates change with sustainable solutions, backed by data to make cities thrive at night.

Lutz Leichsenring
Lead Consultant

Mirik Milan
Project Consultant

Amir Salem
Project Lead and Manager

Michael Fichman (PennPraxis, University of Pennsylvania)
Project Advisor

Diana Raiselis
Research Design and Report Lead

Jack Waghorn
Graphic Designer

Ed Gillett, Diana Raiselis, Amir Salem, Kerronia Thomas
Report Writers

Thamar Luthart
Creative Direction

Jane Slingo
Report Development

vibe-lab.org

This project recruited London-based specialists to lead in-person research engagements.

Nate Agbetu (Free Form)
Kelsea Delatango (Bare Radicals)
Ali Wagner (Dancefloor Intimacy)
Research Engagement Leads



The Autonomy Institute is an independent organisation specialising in data-driven research, policy design, and consultancy to reimagine work, welfare, and sustainable economies. Founded in 2017, we translate complex challenges—such as the four-day working week, economic transitions, and environmental justice—into practical, actionable policies for governments, organisations, and communities. Our Autonomy Data Unit (ADU) crafts bespoke digital tools to power initiatives from governments and forward-thinking institutions. By bridging advocacy, research, and digital innovation, we deliver strategic insights to reduce working time, support fair transitions, and strengthen local economies. We believe actionable data empowers a fairer—and more sustainable—future for all.

Julian Siravo
Lead Researcher and Data Analyst

autonomy.work

Luiz Garcia
Lead Researcher and Data Analyst



UCL Consultants: UCLC researchers Professor Ben Campkin and Dr Alessio Kolioulis are leading researchers of night-time urbanism. They are based in The Bartlett Faculty of the Built Environment, ranked number 1 in the world for architecture and the built environment (QS World Rankings, 2025). In collaboration with Dr Lo Marshall, they undertake transdisciplinary research in partnership with city authorities, grassroots organisations and other partners to shape policy, public and academic debates on cities after dark. Recent collaborative projects have brought the voices of night workers, LGBTQ+ communities and migrant populations into policy, professional and public discussions.

Professor Ben Campkin
Lead Consultant and Advisor
Dr Alessio Kolioulis (Night-time economic analysis)
Senior Consultant and Report Writer

ucl.ac.uk/bartlett/research-projects/2025/aug/night-time-urbanism

Allie Lester
Policy Research and Data Analysis



Obsurvant is a dynamic insights agency dedicated to making the latest research technologies accessible to everyone, regardless of budget or experience. Specialising in tailored polling solutions, Obsurvant places data quality and representative audiences at the core of each survey. Delivering targeted consumer and B2B respondents globally within tighter timeframes, empowering our clients to make confident, data-driven decisions. Obsurvant is an accredited MRS company partner and a member of the British Polling Council.

Theo Dominian, Alex Morrison
Consumer Research Support

observant.com

Special thanks

We extend our deepest gratitude to all those who contributed to the London Nightlife Taskforce survey, participated in focus groups, town halls, and interviews, as well as to all those who contributed to the development of this report and its recommendations. Without your invaluable knowledge and insights on London's nightlife, this project would not have been possible. Thank you.

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
MAYOR OF LONDON