

MAYOR OF LONDON

London's Esports Opportunity

Insights and next steps for London's esports ecosystem

JUNE 2026

ARENA



London is a city defined by its creativity, innovation, and energy — a global capital that thrives on being at the forefront of change. It's also a city that loves games and sports, with more tickets sold for sporting events than any other city in the world. The first ever ticketed sporting event in the world took place in London.

Over the past decade, we have seen esports grow from grassroots beginnings into a major global industry — fast-growing, and now in some places, firmly established. This transformation has been especially visible in London, which is now a top three global games cluster.

Community organisers, grassroots initiatives, world-leading teams, and international publishers have all played a role in building an ecosystem that now hosts global major esports events. Esports is where digital culture, youth expression, education, media, and enterprise come together. It is a new frontier for creativity and community, as well as for jobs, skills, and investment.

In 2024, London hosted the League of Legends World Championship Final, a sold-out event that drew global attention and showcased our city's potential as a world-class esports destination. That milestone was a launchpad to many more events, with Wembley Arena hosting BLAST Premier London Open in September 2025. This momentum continues in 2026, with London hosting major global events such as the VALORANT Masters tour.

We are committed to growing the capital's position as a premier destination for world-class esports, and this report offers insights and ideas for what comes next. It brings

together commercial leaders, community organisers, educators, and young Londoners – all of whom share a belief in the power of esports to drive social and economic value. It fits with the ambitions of the Mayor's Growth Plan, which prioritises the creative industries as a key driver of inclusive economic growth.

As always, taking this work forward will be a 'Team London' endeavour. It will require leadership from industry, education providers and community organisations. London & Partners will continue to work on attracting major international esports events and our dedicated agency, Games London will support the growth of wider games ecosystem in the capital. At City Hall, through our role as a convenor, promoter and host city partner, we are committed to supporting the opportunities identified in this report.

As the world's most international city, London is a place where cultures, languages, ideas and talent come together. This dynamism drives our success and will help us power the next phase of esports — not just by hosting major moments, but by nurturing the people, places, and ideas that will shape its future.



Justine Simons OBE
Deputy Mayor for Culture and Creative Industries



Howard Dawber OBE
Deputy Mayor for Business and Growth

Section 1: Executive Summary

In November 2024, London reinforced its growing reputation on the global esports stage by hosting the League of Legends World Championship Final at the O2 Arena – a sold-out, globally broadcast spectacle that highlighted the city’s ability to deliver high-impact international tournaments. This landmark moment was not a one-off but part of a sustained period of growth for esports in the capital.

Building on this success, London has continued to attract a strong pipeline of international events and investment, including major global tournaments taking place in 2025 and 2026.

From grassroots initiatives to stadium-filling tournaments, London has proven itself as a city that can host, develop, and celebrate esports at every level. It is home to leading global teams like FNATIC, world-renowned developers and platforms like Faceit, and has welcomed flagship tournaments including the Rocket League Championship and Apex Legends Global Series.

Destinations like Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park demonstrate how place-based esports ecosystems can support the growth of the sector beyond major events. Funded by the Mayor of London and created to drive long-term economic growth and opportunity, the Park brings together many of the components needed for a thriving esports cluster, including major event infrastructure, commercial businesses, universities and research capacity, and community partners.

From the Copper Box Arena and esports businesses based at Here East to the talent pipeline emerging from the College of Esports, the Park illustrates how connected ecosystems can create pathways into skills, education and employment while attracting investment and fostering innovation.

As a fast-moving sector, esports continues to evolve rapidly, and this report reflects a snapshot of a moment of strong growth and opportunity for London.

The numbers tell a powerful story:

- The value of the global esports market was forecast to surpass \$2bn in 2025 and reach nearly \$10bn by 2033.¹
- It reaches an audience of more than 640 million people worldwide, making it one of the fastest-growing forms of entertainment globally.²
- Hosting major esports events can deliver around £30m to London’s economy
- 39,700 people physically attended esports events in London in 2024 (up from 1,200 in 2013).³

¹ GLA Economics The value of the global esports market was forecast to surpass \$2bn in 2025 and reach nearly \$10bn by 2033. [https://www.skyquestt.com/report/esports-market#:~:text=Esports%20Market%20Insights,period%20\(2025%2D2032](https://www.skyquestt.com/report/esports-market#:~:text=Esports%20Market%20Insights,period%20(2025%2D2032)

² Esports now reaches an audience of more than 640 million people worldwide. Esports Tournament Attendance Statistics (2025)

³ The BLAST Premier London Open took place at OVO Arena Wembley 5–7 September, 2025. <https://blast.tv/cs/news/esports-takes-over-london>



London's strengths are clear:

- Excellent infrastructure and connectivity for hosting major events with five international airports and a global hub for commerce
- A rich ecosystem of teams, talent, game developers and educational institutions
- Global appeal to investors, brands, and fans
- A thriving youth culture that connects across sport, tech, and community

The next step is to build on this foundation.

To build London's position as a global leader in esports, the focus must now shift towards strategic coordination, sustained growth, and long-term sustainability. Stakeholders highlighted that the high cost of operating and hosting esports activity in London remains a challenge for parts of the sector, particularly when competing with other national and international destinations.

London has everything it needs to lead the future of esports. Now is the time to scale what works, connect the dots across sectors, and tell a confident story about what comes next. Esports isn't just gaming – it's culture, creativity, and economic opportunity. And London is ready to lead.

Looking ahead: Opportunities for London’s Esports Ecosystem

This report sets out a series of recommendations. They are not aimed at any one organisation, but at the wider system, to support London in meeting its short, medium, and long-term goals.

COMMERCIAL

- 1. **Attraction of Major Events** Collaborations with esports organisations could help to bring large-scale events to London.
- 2. **Expansion of Business Networks** Stronger links between esports companies and local industries may enable sector-wide growth.
- 3. **Development of Talent Pathways** Partnerships between universities, grassroots/ community organisations, esports organisations and employers could support career entry routes.
- 4. **Cost reduction and Sustainable Funding** New approaches to reducing operational costs could improve affordability and competitiveness.
- 5. **Formation of an Esports Association** A self-funded esports body could support London’s development as an esports hub.

COMMUNITY

- 6. **Creation of esports hubs** Creating community gaming spaces could support local engagement with esports.
- 7. **Expanding Access to esports Careers** Workshops, internships, and career-focused events can build pathways into the esports sector.
- 8. **Community Streaming Platforms** Locally managed channels could support grassroots esports development.
- 9. **Cross-Sector Networking** Regular events can foster collaboration across commercial, community, and educational sectors.

EDUCATION

- 10. **Education Partnerships** Collaborative initiatives could strengthen esports education and industry connections.
- 11. **Investment in Esports Facilities** Funding could support cybersecurity upgrades and esports venue development.
- 12. **Promotion of Esports Careers** Career fairs, mentorships, and awareness campaigns could broaden opportunities.
- 13. **Strengthening Media Engagement** Partnerships with PR firms could raise awareness of esports career opportunities.



Section 6: Recommendations & Conclusion

These recommendations have grown from conversations with the industry and are presented as opportunities for London's esports ecosystem as a whole — spanning commercial, educational, and community-based actors. They are not intended as commitments for any individual organisation or authority, and their success will rely on voluntary partnerships, sector-wide coordination, and locally driven leadership. A full list of stakeholders involved in the shaping these recommendations can be found in Appendix 1 of this report. For clarity, each recommendation below indicates the lead organisations who would take it forward, or where it is a wider sector call to action. They are recommendations not commitments, and will be subject to ongoing discussion with partners.

Taken together, they reflect an opportunity for London to build on recent global events and current momentum, strengthening esports as a driver of jobs, skills, and inclusive economic growth across the capital.

COMMERCIAL

1. **Attraction of Major Events** Collaborations with esports organisations could help to bring large scale events to London

London can strengthen its position as a global destination for esports by increasing the volume and scale of major events held in the city. Doing so could enhance London's international visibility and deepen its ties with publishers, developers, and event organisers — helping to unlock commercial investment, job creation, and wider economic impact.

Building a consistent pipeline of major events - including those already scheduled in 2026 - will be key to maintaining momentum and reinforcing London's position in an increasingly competitive international market.

To realise this potential, stakeholders across London — including event organisers, game publishers, local businesses, and venue operators — could explore ways to collaborate on attracting large-scale international tournaments. Aligning efforts with local game developers and commercial partners may support the development of a long-term event pipeline, potentially building towards a flagship or legacy event.

Lead organisations: London & Partners, supported by the GLA. Delivery depends on rights holders, organisers, venue operators and sponsors.

"If subsidies cannot be offered, there needs to be a greater understanding across London's ecosystem of the importance of this industry and its potential to significantly contribute to economic growth"

2. Expansion of Business Networks

Stronger links between esports companies and local industries may enable sector-wide growth.

Esports companies in London are often disconnected from other industries that could support their growth, which can make it harder to deliver well-rounded and commercially successful events.

Strengthening cross-sector connections - particularly with hospitality, tourism, and the wider creative industries - could support a more integrated visitor economy offer linked to esports activity. These links would offer value on both sides and make it easier to coordinate efforts across sectors.

By building these relationships, the city could make commercial arrangements easier and esports events easier to plan. A more connected ecosystem would also help teams and organisers deliver events that are more financially sustainable, better run, and more attractive to attendees.

Lead organisations: Industry partners such as esports organisations, industry bodies, and business networks, with London & Partners supporting where appropriate.

3. Development of Talent Pathways

Partnerships between education, esports organisations and employers could support career entry routes.

Many students interested in esports careers struggle to find clear entry points into the industry. There are not enough structured links between education and employers, which limits

access to real-world experience and job opportunities.

Strengthening talent pathways between universities, esports organisations, and employers could lead to mentorship schemes, internships, and more direct connections between students and industry leaders. This would support the development of a skilled workforce aligned with industry needs, ensuring Londoners can access emerging roles across esports, digital production, and the wider creative economy.

London's esports ecosystem includes teams, tournament operators, publishers, education providers, and content creators, reflecting the city's role as a hub for competitive gaming and esports-related activity.

Supporting workforce development around such organisations is vital. Without more focus on these pathways, there's a risk that opportunities for young people — including work experience, career progression, and community involvement — may fall short.

Lead organisations: universities, employers and esports organisations.

4. Cost reduction and Sustainable Funding

New approaches to reducing operational costs could improve affordability and competitiveness.

Operational costs for esports events in London tend to be higher than in other cities, which can limit the duration and frequency of events. Addressing these challenges will be important to ensuring London remains competitive as other

global cities actively invest in attracting esports activity.

Lower rents for event spaces and facilities, negotiated between relevant parties such as venue owners, event organisers, and local stakeholders, have the potential to improve London's competitiveness and attract longer-term investment.

Stakeholders also highlighted the relative lack of support available to esports compared with some other sectors and activities. Where additional funding or investment opportunities can be identified, they could support talent development programmes, grassroots competitions, and leagues.

Such investments have the potential to strengthen the esports ecosystem and create opportunities for future professionals in the city.

Lead organisations: venue operators, event organisers, publishers/rights holders and commercial partners.

5. Formation of an Esports Association

A self-funded esports body could support London's development as an esports hub.

London lacks a central organisation that represents the interests of its esports community across commercial, grassroots, and educational sectors. This can make it harder to coordinate efforts, attract major events, or secure long-term investment.

The formation of a self-funded esports association, supported by commercial

partners and reflective of community and educational interests — could help address this gap. It could lead efforts to promote London to publishers, tournament organisers, and investors, strengthening the city's position as a global esports hub. A coordinated industry voice could also help position London internationally, supporting engagement with global publishers, investors, and event organisers.

The association could also help coordinate large-scale events, work with partners across sectors, and boost media visibility. Similar models in other countries, such as Iceland, have contributed to talent development, grassroots engagement, and job creation in esports — outcomes that could be replicated in London.

Lead organisations: industry stakeholder such as esports organisations, supported by commercial partners.

A NOTE ON MEDIA AWARENESS

Outside of commercial responsibilities, there was also a clear sense of a lack of support and awareness for esports in the mainstream media across the capital.

There is a strong connection between public awareness of esports and its potential for economic development, yet media coverage of esports in the UK remains limited. For example, the world's largest esports tournament, Riot Games' Worlds 2023, was held in London in November 2024, yet it received minimal mainstream media attention.

While awareness has grown following high-profile events such as the 2024 Worlds Final, a lack of understanding

among non-gamers continues to hinder the industry's full integration into mainstream culture.

Increasing visibility will be important to fully realising the sector's economic and cultural potential in the years ahead.

Taken together, these opportunities could contribute to economic growth, stronger community engagement, and greater long-term sustainability for London's esports ecosystem.

COMMUNITY

The research for this report underscores the importance of community events as a platform for skills development, training, and competition. Additionally, community activities have been shown to enhance understanding of esports, foster collaboration, and encourage social interaction.

- 6. Creation of esports hubs**
Creating community gaming spaces could support local engagement with esports.

Many communities in London lack dedicated spaces where people can take part in esports or gaming-related activities. This limits local participation, makes it harder to run events, and reduces visibility of the wider esports sector at the grassroots level.

The creation of community gaming hubs could give people access to spaces for workshops, competitions, and events. These hubs could also support local skills development and act as entry points into creative and digital careers.

These hubs could be developed through partnerships between local councils, community groups, and other stakeholders, helping to build stronger local networks and increase engagement.

Borough-level forums or FE colleges could be used to share ideas, coordinate activities, and develop templates for local delivery. Youth-focused esports organisations may also be well placed to support councils and communities in setting up and running these initiatives.

Lead organisations: boroughs/local partners, community organisations and grassroots esports groups.

"The social and educational benefits of esports for children and amateur clubs are immense but often overlooked in discussions with high-level decision-makers."

Dr. Rory Sumerly, LBSU

- 7. Expanding Access to esports Careers**
Workshops, internships, and career-focused events can build pathways into the esports sector.

Many young people interested in esports lack clear routes into the industry, particularly if they are not already part of established networks. This can make it harder for them to access careers in areas like production, event management, and content creation.

London's esports ecosystem is well placed to help close this gap by delivering training, mentoring, and other learning opportunities that connect the industry with local communities. These activities

can offer visible, practical routes into employment and help build stronger links between education providers, grassroots talent, and employers.

Esports teams, studios, and tournament organisers could also support these efforts by running volunteering schemes, internships, open studio days, and collaborative content projects with schools or youth organisations.

Guest speaker sessions, friendly competitions, scouting activities, and careers guidance events already provide young people with valuable exposure to the sector and help them build confidence navigating esports career paths. Organisers and teams increasingly offer community partners exclusive access to events - such as behind-the-scenes experiences or ticket allocations - as part of broader outreach efforts.

Improving access to these opportunities will be key to ensuring that the benefits of sector growth are felt across London's diverse communities.

Lead organisations: employers, esports teams, event organisers, education and youth partners.

8. Community Streaming Platforms

Locally managed channels could support grassroots esports development.

Local teams, students, and emerging talent have access to a range of streaming and content-sharing platforms, but building sustained audiences and engagement can be difficult. As a result, grassroots

participants may find it harder to attract sponsorship, partnerships, or other forms of support.

Community-run streaming channels — similar to community radio — could help fill this gap by showcasing local competitions, new talent, and a wide mix of voices and content formats. These channels could be set up and managed through partnerships between community groups and sector organisations.

Tournament organisers, publishers, and sponsors could also get involved by advertising on or supporting these channels. This could create new income streams and make grassroots projects less dependent on short-term funding.

Lead organisations: community groups and sector organisations such as grassroots esports groups, and content creators.

9. Cross-Sector Networking

Regular events can foster collaboration across commercial, community, and educational sectors.

Organised networking opportunities can bring together community groups, commercial entities, and educational stakeholders across London. These events could provide a platform for participants to share updates, exchange ideas, and identify potential collaborations. Increasing cross-sector engagement may drive innovation and contribute to a stronger esports ecosystem in the city.

Over time, this could support a more coordinated London-wide ecosystem,

improving collaboration and unlocking new opportunities for growth and innovation.

Lead organisations: Industry bodies, esports organisations, education providers, with London & Partners supporting where feasible.

EDUCATION

The education sector plays a critical role in shaping the future of esports by equipping students with the skills and knowledge needed to thrive in the industry.

10. Education Partnerships

Collaborative initiatives could strengthen esports education and industry connections.

Esports education is already an established part of the further education landscape, with around 18,500 learners aged 16–18 having studied esports BTEC qualifications in recent years. Building on this foundation, education providers can continue to equip learners with a broad range of skills relevant to the sector, including event management, broadcasting, content production, digital marketing, and community engagement, alongside game-specific knowledge.

Universities, colleges, and industry partners already deliver a range of esports-related educational and career development opportunities, including guest lectures, industry engagement, practical projects, mentorship, internships, and work-based learning.

There may be opportunities to strengthen coordination between these

initiatives and improve awareness of progression routes, helping learners better understand both careers within esports and the wider transferable skills that can support employment across the digital and creative economy.

Strengthening these links can help ensure that London's education system keeps pace with a fast-evolving industry and supports future workforce needs.

Lead organisations: universities/colleges and esports employers.

11. Investment in Esports Facilities

Funding could support cybersecurity upgrades and esports venue development.

Concerns around cybersecurity and the demand for dedicated esports event spaces and production studios could be addressed by providing grants aimed at upgrading university IT systems and building specialised esports arenas.

Collaboration with national student esports organisations and university esports networks could help identify, inform, and support London's universities and colleges in this area. They may also serve as vehicles to connect students with employers such as Nintendo, Riot Games, Ubisoft, and HoYoverse.

Investment in facilities could also support London's ability to host training, production, and smaller-scale competitive events, complementing major international tournaments.

Lead organisations: universities/colleges, investors and educational networks.

12. Promotion of Esports Careers

Career fairs, mentorships, and awareness campaigns could broaden opportunities.

Career fairs, mentorships, awareness activities, and industry engagement initiatives already take place across schools, colleges, and universities, helping to raise awareness of the wide range of roles within esports beyond competitive play. These activities can play an important role in developing understanding of career pathways across production, marketing, event management, and content creation, as well as supporting a stronger talent pipeline.

Collaboration between education providers and commercial stakeholders could also help ensure that course content aligns with real-world career opportunities across the sector.

This will help ensure that young Londoners are aware of and able to access opportunities within a growing global industry.

Lead organisations: schools/colleges, employers and industry bodies.

13. Strengthening Media Engagement

Partnerships with PR firms could raise awareness of esports career opportunities.

Although media and public relations are not primary stakeholders, they play a vital role in the success of esports activities. Opportunities in this area could include collaboration with media and PR professionals to increase the visibility of esports initiatives, events, and career pathways.

Organisations such as British Esports already develop educational content highlighting the wide range of roles within the esports industry for students and young people. Building on this existing work, further partnerships between education providers and industry stakeholders could help expand reach and ensure consistent access to high-quality careers information.

Additionally, working with London boroughs and educational institutions to identify and secure city-wide and on-campus media opportunities — such as billboards, websites, society magazines, and community periodicals — may help raise awareness and engagement within local communities.

Improving visibility of these opportunities can support both talent development and wider public understanding of esports as part of London's creative economy.

Lead organisations: Media organisations, public relations partners, education providers, and London & Partners.

Taken together, these opportunities position London to build on recent successes and establish a more coordinated, sustainable, and inclusive esports ecosystem. As global competition for esports investment and events intensifies, a clear, joined-up approach across sectors will be critical.

With the right partnerships and continued momentum, London is well placed to strengthen its role as a global hub for esports - supporting innovation, creating new opportunities for Londoners, and contributing to long-term economic growth.





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