



THE GREAT EXHIBITION ROAD FESTIVAL

Evaluation Report

August 2026

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SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATIONS

The Great Exhibition Road Festival 2026 was a great success, building on an already strong format.

Overall satisfaction with the festival experience continued to grow in 2026, with visitors reporting more positive interactions with Festival contributors and an increasing sense that the Festival feels like something special.

The Festival’s welcoming atmosphere also remained a key strength. Visitors continued to respond well to the fusion of arts and sciences and to enjoy the proactive approach of contributors and volunteers. Volunteers were also recognised for enhancing the visitor experience by helping people navigate the expansive festival site.

Visitors widely enjoyed the hands-on and interactive exhibits, recognising their role in maintaining engagement and enhancing learning, particularly for children. Whilst 4 in 5 rated these experiences positively, this area performed comparatively less well than other aspects of the Festival.

Feedback suggests that oversubscription of the most popular exhibits was a key factor in lower ratings around interactivity, alongside perceptions amongst adult-only groups that they needed to step aside to allow children to participate.

KEY STATS

		2026
Overall Festival experience	Excellent	58%
	Net POSITIVE	97%
Interactions with Festival exhibitors, workshop leads and/or speakers	Excellent	61%
	Net POSITIVE	92%
It felt welcoming	Strongly agree	66%
	Net POSITIVE	96%
The Festival felt like something special	Strongly agree	57%
	Net POSITIVE	93%
I/We felt encouraged to ask questions about work / research I/we saw	Strongly agree	45%
	Net POSITIVE	85%
I/We had the chance to get hands-on with science	Strongly agree	44%
	Net POSITIVE	80%

N.B. Net POSITIVE is the proportion of respondents answering, where applicable, [a] good or excellent or [b] agree or strongly agree

The 2026 Festival attracted a diverse audience, made up of more adults and ad hoc visitors than previous years.

The Festival continues to be popular with families, particularly amongst those with children aged 12 and under. However, the trend towards a broader audience profile continued this year, with almost 3 in 5 visiting without children in their group. There has also been a small increase in the proportion of visitors aged 16-25.

2026 saw an increase in the proportion of first-time visitors, with approximately 2 in 3 attendees new to the Festival. Whilst social media remained a key driver of awareness, its influence continued a gradual decline. Awareness generated through partner venues increased this year, although this channel continues to have a limited role within the overall communications mix.

Residents of London make up the majority of visitors, accounting for more than 3 in 4. Encouragingly, the proportion of visitors from the Tri-Borough area increased this year, rising to just under 1 in 4 visitors from London.

Although visitors holding a higher degree remained the largest educational group, their proportion declined compared to 2025. In contrast, the proportion of visitors with A-level qualifications or equivalent increased, with this group now representing 1 in 10 attendees.

KEY STATS

		2026
Visit history	First time visitor	67%
	Repeat visitor	31%
Relationship with Imperial or Festival Partner	No connection with Imperial or other SK university/attraction	62%
Group profile	Family group (with under 18s)	42%
	Adult group (incl. solo visitors)	58%
Educational attainment	Holds higher degree (e.g. PhD, Masters)	47%
Location	London residents	76%
	Tri-Borough residents	18%

The 2026 Festival achieved increased representation amongst visitors from African and/or Caribbean communities. The proportion of neurodiverse visitors and those aged 13 to 25, two other priority audiences, was maintained.

While the proportion of visitors from African and/or Caribbean backgrounds grew, this remains under the 2021 London Census target of 14%.

The proportion of neurodivergent visitors was maintained at a similar level to 2025. However, the longer-term trend remains positive, with representation amongst neurodivergent audiences increasing overall since 2023. The proportion of neurodivergent visitors continues to exceed the UK population average.

The proportion of visitors aged 13-25 remained broadly consistent with the 2025 Festival. Whilst there was a positive increase in attendance amongst 16-25 year olds, this was offset by a decrease amongst 13-15 year olds.

KEY STATS

	2026
% of groups with representation of neurodivergence	19%
% of groups with representation of Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British backgrounds	10%
% of audience aged 13-25	12%

Audiences continue to respond well to zones with an explicit target audience. They like having dedicated spaces and feel it aids navigation and selection.

However, designated zones can also create expectations, with some visitors expressing frustration that younger children were often in the NextGen zone. Feedback also indicates that the Family Fun Zone didn't always meet expectations regarding the age groups it was best suited for, with some visitors feeling there was an imbalance in the amount of content available for different ages.

The new location for the Family Fun Zone received mixed feedback. Whilst some visitors felt the move provided more space and an improved layout, others saw it as disconnected from the main festival.

The Adults Only area was positively received by those visiting without children. Reflecting the growing number of adult-only groups at the Festival, there is interest in seeing more content dedicated to adults at future festivals.

“

A lot of the tents in the family fun zone were quite packed and that put my child off engaging with more of the activities, as he wasn't keen on queuing.

More events that are restricted to adults because there are too many kids in the all-ages area and it feels too hard to really get information easily with so many noisy kids around.

”

GERF continues to deliver positive place impacts for the South Kensington area.

The Festival was the main draw for most visitors, providing a compelling reason to visit an area that is often associated with affluence and museums. Visitors highlighted the Festival’s positive contribution to the atmosphere of the area, describing it as more open and welcoming during the Festival.

Visitors’ experiences at the Festival had a positive influence on future intentions to visit South Kensington, with nearly 3 in 4 saying they were more likely to return.

The Festival enabled visitors to explore new experiences and destinations, with 2 in 5 engaging with organisations they had not previously visited.

KEY STATS	
	2026
% coming especially for the Festival	76%
% more likely to visit South Kensington because of experience at the Festival	74%
% experiencing new places in the area	67%
% coming across new organisations at the Festival	40%

“ I would say most people here, they’ve never been here before, so this was a reason to come to South Kensington. I don't know if I would have much reason, apart from the museums. ”

Contributors found their role at the Festival highly rewarding and motivating, with many reporting that the experience exceeded expectations.

While practising public engagement was a primary reason for taking part, sharing research, contributing to the community and personal enjoyment were all important motivations.

Satisfaction levels were exceptionally high, with almost all contributors rating their overall experience positively. The support provided before and during the Festival was also perceived positively.

The strength of the contributor experience is reflected in both strong intentions to participate in future festivals and the sense of pride it fosters in contributors' association with Imperial.

A minority of contributors felt that training timings and content could be improved, particularly for those joining teams later in the process.

“

Great footfall, great organisation and teams, attendees were really interested and sweet. Great things to do and see (even though I didn't have time to explore much).

”

The 2026 Festival successfully created a meaningful and inspiring volunteer experience, shaped by a strong sense of community and shared purpose.

Feedback indicates that volunteering at GEF 2026 was both rewarding and enjoyable, with the unique atmosphere and sense of occasion created by the Festival highly valued.

Volunteers often developed a strong sense of ownership and investment in their role, with opportunities for two-way engagement, particularly with young people, providing a key source of fulfilment and perceived impact.

The experience delivered personal benefits, most notably enhanced transferrable skills and increased confidence.

The pre-Festival briefing is potentially an area for review, to offer volunteers greater clarity around roles / responsibilities and a more tailored approach regarding information provision.

“

Talking to people and feeling fulfilled after helping them out. I think it made me become more open towards people and also understand how to deal with people with disabilities.

The sheer volume of people I got to interact with, especially younger kids. It made me realize that public engagement is nowhere near as scary as it has seemed!

”

Responding to an evolving audience profile

Who is coming to GEF is changing, with potential implications for programming and positioning of future festivals.

- The 2026 Festival saw a continued growth in the proportion of adult-only visitors. This audience experiences the Festival differently, and can feel that much of the current offer prioritises families.
 - To what extent should future festivals adapt to accommodate this growing audience?
 - Are there opportunities to introduce more adult-focused programming, spaces or experiences without compromising the Festival's family appeal?
- As a priority audience, it is encouraging that the proportion of 16-25s is increasing. But, similar to adult-only groups, this audience does not always find an experience which feels tailored to them.
 - Is there a way to ensure that spaces designed for this age group are primarily used by them?

Easing friction around waiting for hands-on experiences

Hands-on experiences are central to the Festival's appeal but strong demand continues to create pressure points.

- Visitors of all ages like that the Festival is interactive, but long queues frustrate and limit participation in other activities.
 - Would it be possible for contributors to implement an on-the-day booking system, particularly for popular tech based activities?

Maintaining a financially accessible experience

Accessibility is a core strength of the Festival, with visitors highlighting its inclusive, welcoming atmosphere and free entry.

- Nevertheless, some visitors identified food and drink prices, as well as the overall food and drinks offer, as barriers to their enjoyment.
 - Is there a need for a broader range of food and drink options at different prices points?
 - Are free water stations and picnic areas visible enough on the Festival map?



INTRODUCTION & METHODOLOGY

The Great Exhibition Road Festival is a free annual celebration of science and the arts. Led by Imperial College London, in collaboration with institutions on and around Exhibition Road, it offers a diverse and vibrant programme of creative workshops, hands-on demonstrations, live experiments, live music and artistic performances – all with the intention of engaging new audiences, building relationships and inspiring action.

This report outlines the findings from the evaluation of the 2026 Festival, undertaken by Bluegrass Research. The experiences of visitors, contributors and volunteers are considered. Comparisons are made to data collected in previous evaluations when relevant.

2026 is the second time that Bluegrass has been involved in the evaluation of the Festival.

**CORE
FESTIVAL
AIMS:**

- To create a unique Festival that connects some of the world's most iconic institutions in an inspirational fusion of the arts and sciences.
- To deliver a dynamic range of participatory visitor experiences that generate curiosity and a pioneering spirit among audiences and institutions.
- To engage 50,000+ people through events taking place on Exhibition Road and across partner institutions over the Festival weekend.
- To engage communities and audiences who do not usually access our institutions through co-created projects that are part of the Festival weekend.
- To celebrate diversity – the diversity of our communities, and that within art and science.

DATE: Saturday 6th & Sunday 7th June 2026

With Festival visitors: a mixed methodology, comprising of qualitative and quantitative methods, and on- and off-site activity.



QUANTITATIVE METHODS

To profile the Festival audience and to obtain data that can be used to assess the Festival's role in shaping and shifting knowledge, understanding, perceptions and behaviours.

Face-to-Face Survey

- A total of 8 shifts, 4 each day.
- Undertaken by trained market research interviewers.
- Quick-fire questionnaire used – a shorter version of the online survey, to maximise strike rates.
- Additional support offered by Festival volunteers.
- Interviewing conducted in areas of high footfall and within specific Festival zones.
- **486 interviews achieved**

Online Survey

- Promoted during the Festival via posters and QR codes.
- Distributed post-Festival to registered visitors.
- Longer questionnaire used – as per the quick-fire survey, plus additional KPI questions.
- **416 interviews achieved**

Total Sample: 902 interviews

QUALITATIVE METHODS

To deep dive into the Festival experience, exploring response, understanding and reaction.

In-depth Interviews

- Programme of 20 interviews, each lasting approximately 20 minutes.
- Undertaken at the Festival, all with priority audiences:
 - Young people aged 16-25.
 - People from Black / African / Caribbean / Black British ethnicities.
 - People with a disability / long-term health condition or neurodiversity.

Observation and Intercept Depths

- Observation undertaken to consider how visitors naturally experience the Festival.
- Short intercept depth interviews undertaken with a random selection of visitors. All within priority zones.
- 39 intercept depths achieved.

With Festival volunteers and contributors: a dedicated online survey, distributed by Imperial following the event. Supported by two case-studies per audience, to provide additional understanding about the experience of participation and the personal impacts.

VOLUNTEERS

To profile the volunteer audience and to gain insights around the volunteering experience, motivations and impacts.

- Questionnaire based on the 2025 version, to support year-on-year comparison. Included a mix of structured and open questions, to obtain statistical data as well as depth of insight.
- Sample of 34 surveys achieved.
- Two case-studies.

CONTRIBUTORS

To profile the contributor audience and to gain insights around the contributor experience, motivations and impacts.

- Questionnaire based on the 2025 version, to support year-on-year comparison. Included a mix of structured and open questions, to obtain statistical data as well as depth of insight.
- In total, 77 contributors completed the survey.
- Two case-studies.

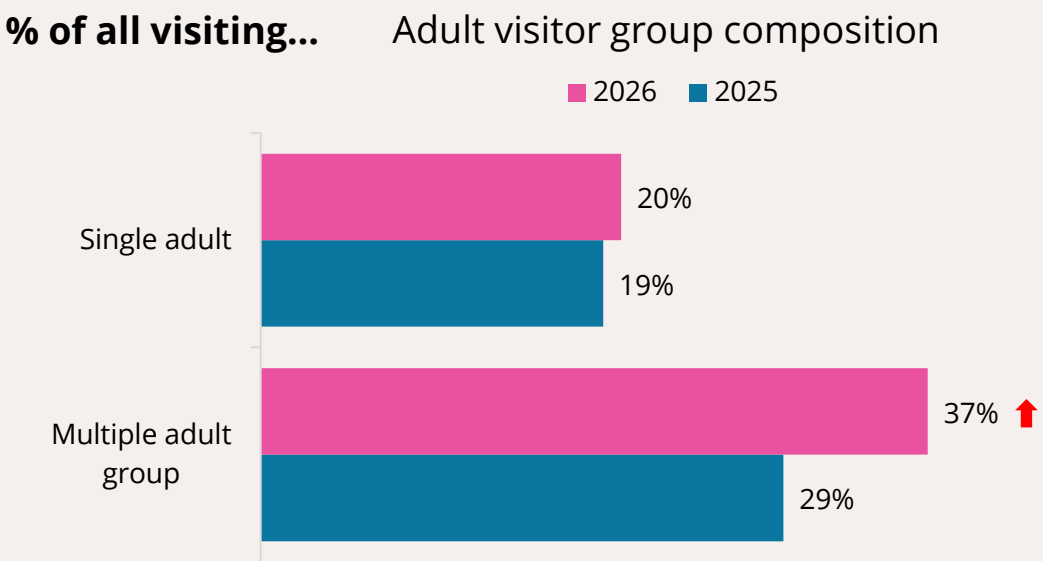
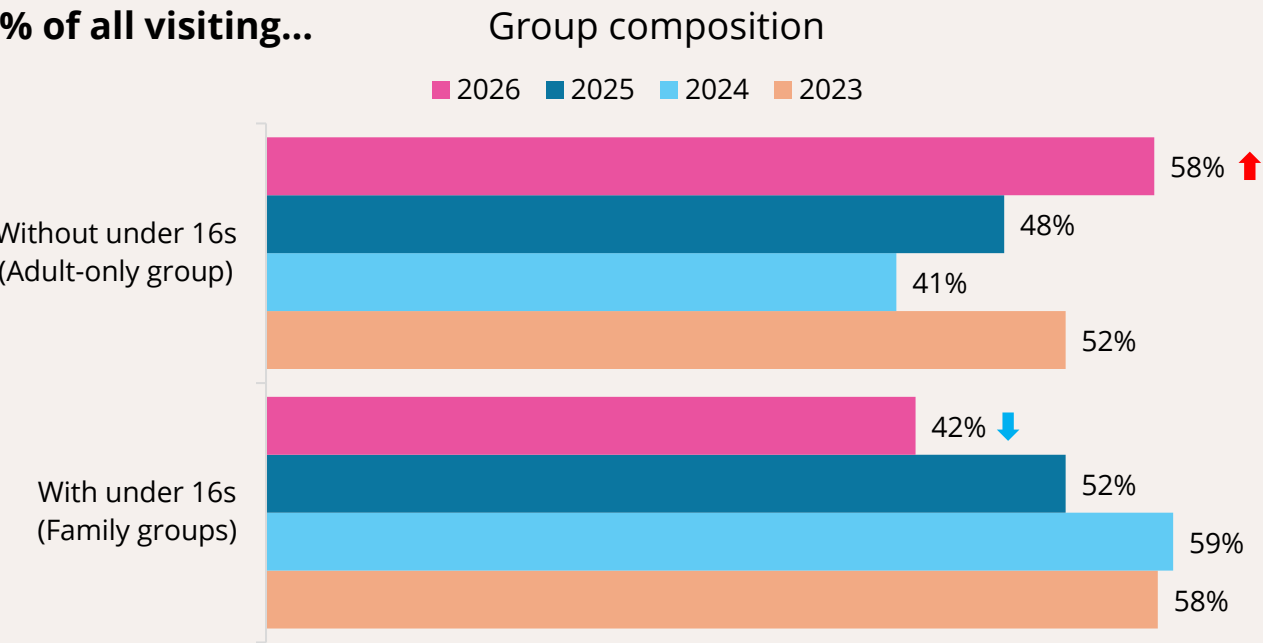
- For both evaluation surveys, analysis is undertaken at an overall level and by audience profiles – relationship with Imperial for example. Caution is needed when considering data by audience profiles, due to smaller base sizes.

- Statistics for 2026 data marked with a  or  are significantly higher / lower than 2025 data.

VISITORS

Visitor Profile
Festival Experience
Impact on Knowledge and Perceptions

Derived from group age information provided. Methodology used changed in 2025.



The 2026 Festival attracted a higher proportion of adult-only groups than families.

- Year-on-year comparison shows a growth in the proportion of adult-only groups – 58% in 2026, up from 48% in 2025.
- Women were more likely than men to be visiting in a family group (47% vs 37%).
- Aligning with 2025, around 1 in 5 groups consisted of a single adult.
- The average group size of families and adults remained consistent.

Average group size

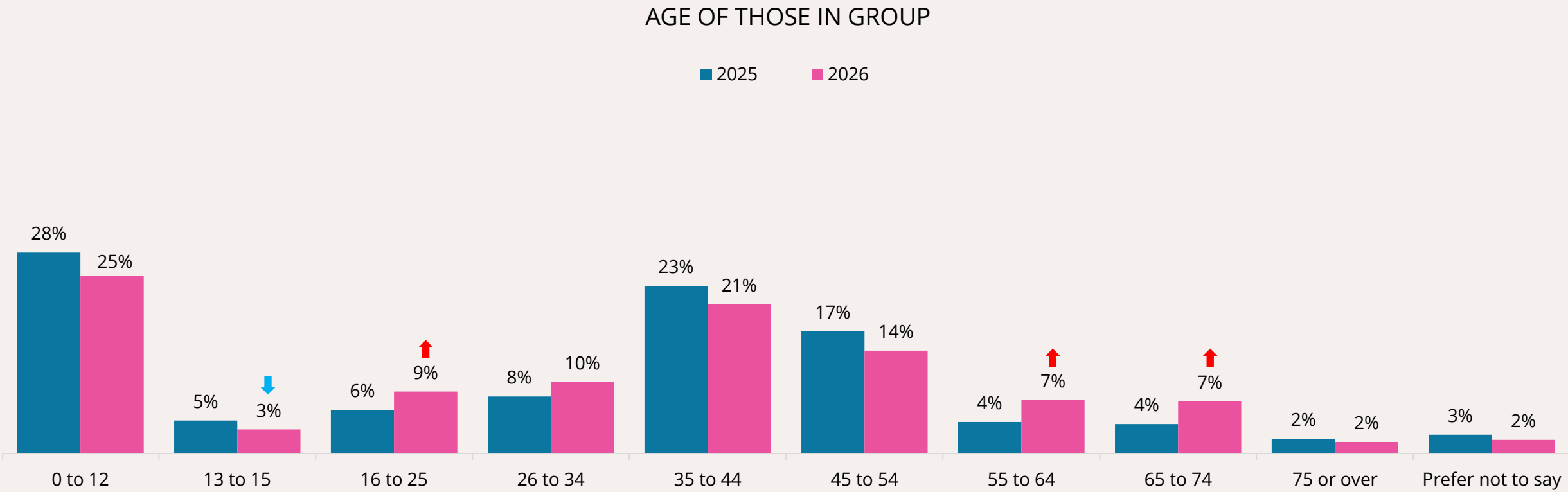
	2025	2026
With under 16s (Family groups)	3.9	4.0
Multiple adult group (excludes single adult visitors)	2.4	2.6

Base: 2026 Total (902), 2025 Total (836), 2024 (591 assumed), 2023 (1013 assumed).

GERP continued to have a broad appeal, with visitors of all ages attending.

- An increased proportion of the audience were aged 55 to 74, when compared to 2025.
- Children were most likely to be aged 12 and under – and represented a quarter of the audience.
- Since 2025, more of the audience were aged 13 to 25.

Derived from group age information provided. Methodology used changed in 2025.



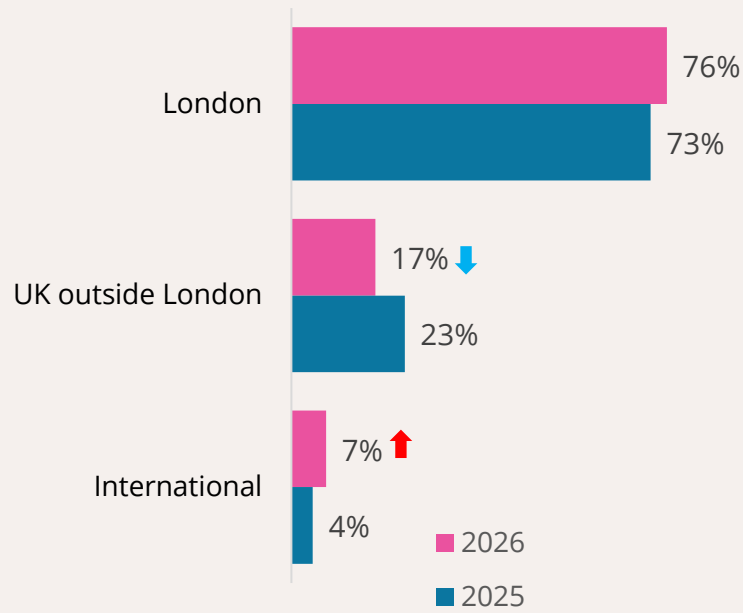
Base: 2026 Total (902), 2025 Total (836), 2024 (591 assumed), 2023 (1013 assumed)

London residents predominate in the Festival audience, making up 76% of visitors.

- Approaching 1 in 5 visitors were from the Tri-Borough: Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea; Westminster; Hammersmith and Fulham.
- Whilst the proportion of London visitors was broadly comparable with 2025, 2026 attracted a higher proportion of international visitors.

Derived from postcode / country of residence information provided.

Place of residence



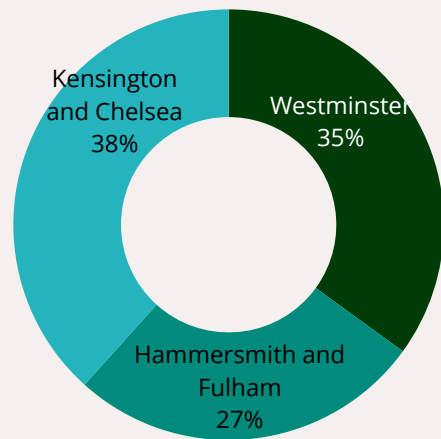
	% from Tri-Borough	
2026	Tri-Borough representation across all visitors	Tri-Borough representation from London
	18% ↑	24% ↑
2025	Tri-Borough representation across all visitors	Tri-Borough representation from London
	14%	19%

In 2026, 18% of all visitors to the Festival were from the London boroughs of Kensington and Chelsea, Westminster, and Hammersmith and Fulham.

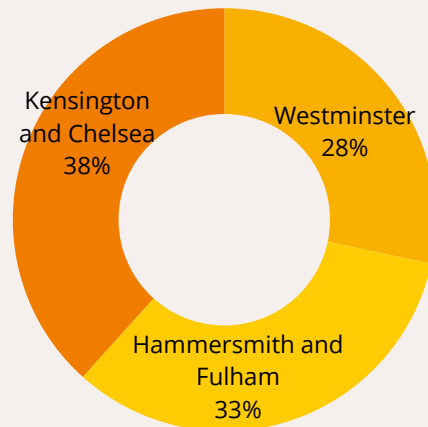
- Within the cohort, comparison to previous years shows a decline in the proportion of visitors from Hammersmith and Fulham in 2026, yet an increase in the proportion from Westminster since 2025.
- The data suggests an increase in the proportion of visitors from Kensington and Chelsea in 2026, but this finding is not statistically significant.

Distribution within Tri-Borough, based on Tri-Borough residents

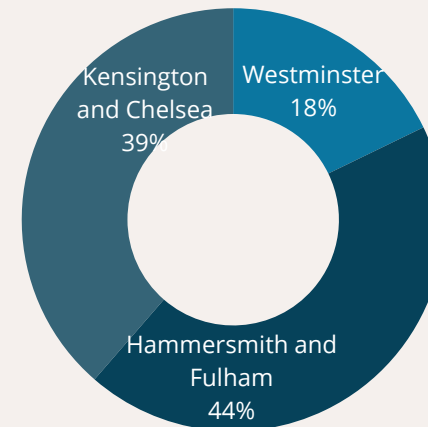
2023



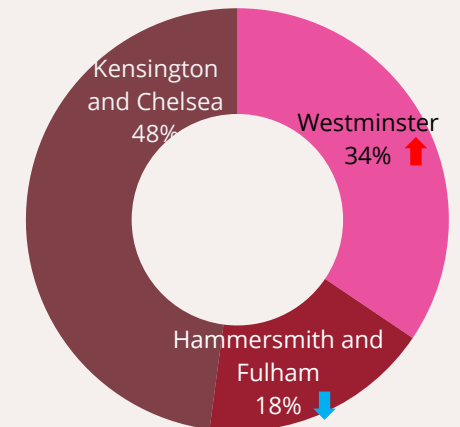
2024



2025



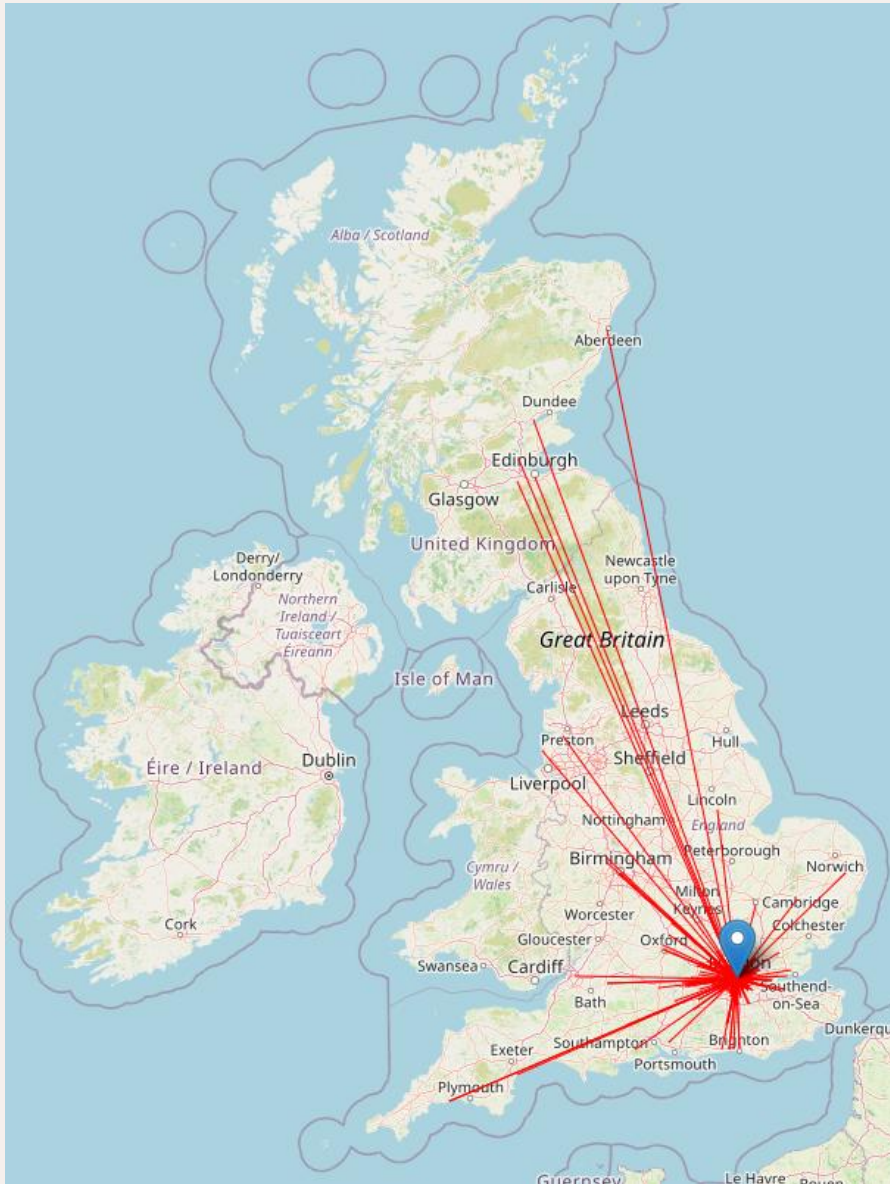
2026



Base: 2026 Total postcodes within Triborough excluding postcodes across multiple boroughs (119), 2025 Total postcodes within Triborough excluding postcodes across multiple boroughs (101), 2024 Total postcodes within Triborough (60), 2023 Total postcodes within Triborough (60)

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION: KEY FACTS

- Furthest UK distance = **Aberdeen, Scotland**
 - Distance as the crow flies: **396.85 miles**
 - Distance by land transport: **542.94 miles**
- Mean distance as the crow flies = **16.97 miles**
 - (2025 = 16.45 miles / 2024 = 13.8 miles / 2023 = 14.5 miles)
- Median distance as the crow flies = **7.12 miles**
 - (2025 = 7.39 miles / 2024 = 7.9 miles / 2023 = 7.3 miles)
- 21 out of 521 full processable postcodes are more than 70 miles away from Imperial
 - (2025 = 25 / 2024 = 13 / 2023 = 11)



Distance from Imperial College London 2026 (SW7 2AZ)

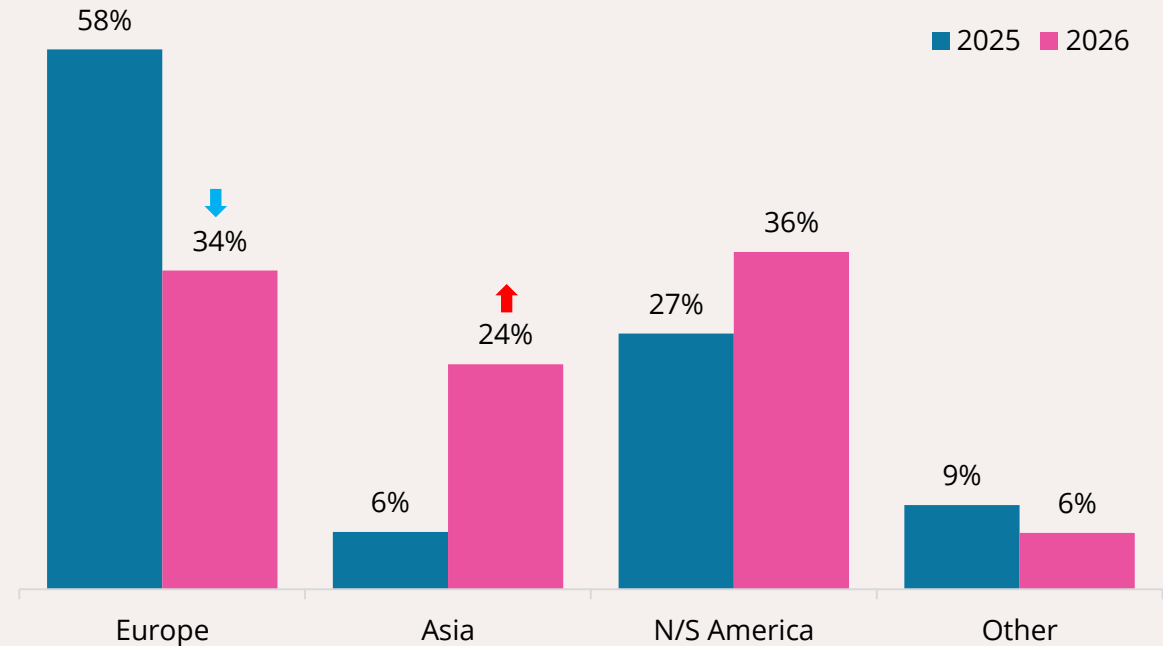
In 2026, 7% of Festival visitors were from outside the UK, higher than the previous year.

- Unlike 2025, in which the majority of international visitors were from Europe, international visitors in 2026 were more geographically diverse, with representation across Europe, Asia and North/South America.

Place of international residence

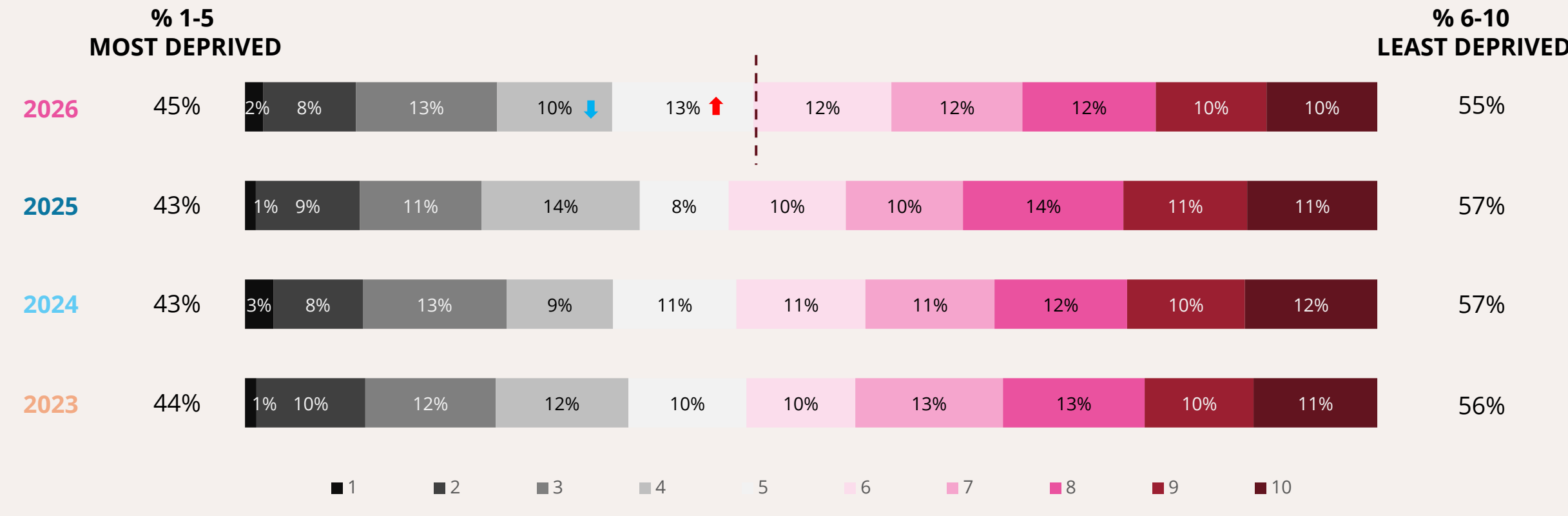


Distribution amongst international visitors



Base: 2026: Total locations given outside of UK (50), 2025: (33)* small base

INDICES OF MULTIPLE DEPRIVATION BASED ON POSTCODE



It was more common for visitors to live in the least deprived postcodes – 10% live within the 10th least deprived decile and 55% within the top 5.

More deprived areas, however, are also represented, with over 2 in 5 living in the lower 5 IMD deciles.

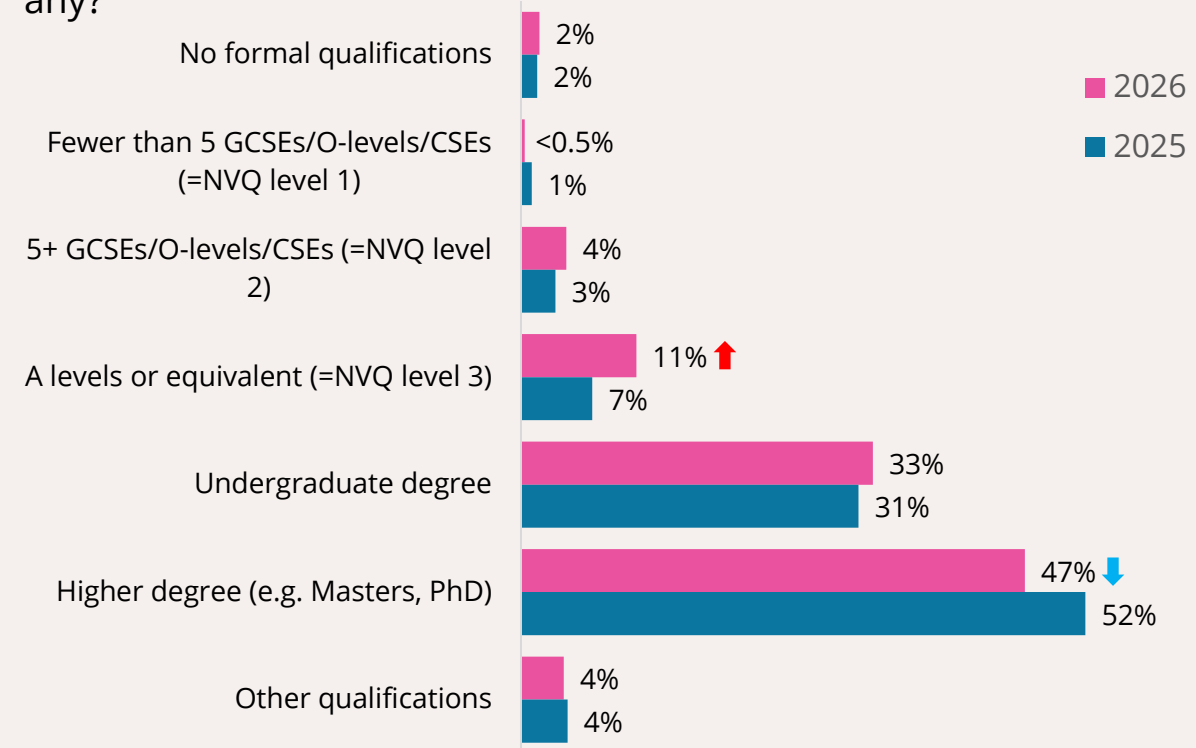
- This deprivation profile is highly consistent with previous Festivals.

Base: 2026 Total who provided a full correct postcode (502), 2025 (522), 2024 (394), 2023 (384)

The 2026 Festival continued to attract a highly educated audience, with 4 in 5 qualified to at least an undergraduate level.

- Year-on-year comparison, however, shows a decrease in the proportion of those with a Masters or PhD, and an increase of those reporting A-levels or equivalent.
 - The increased proportion of 16-25s within the Festival audience is a factor in this shift.
- Holding a higher degree was more prevalent in family groups (56%)

What is the highest educational or professional qualification that you have obtained to date, if any?



NB. 2% prefer not to say – removed from data to support comparison against Census

% Reporting a higher educational level qualification [Level 4 or above]

2023	2024	2025	2026	London 2021 Census
77%	86%	83%	79% ↓	47%

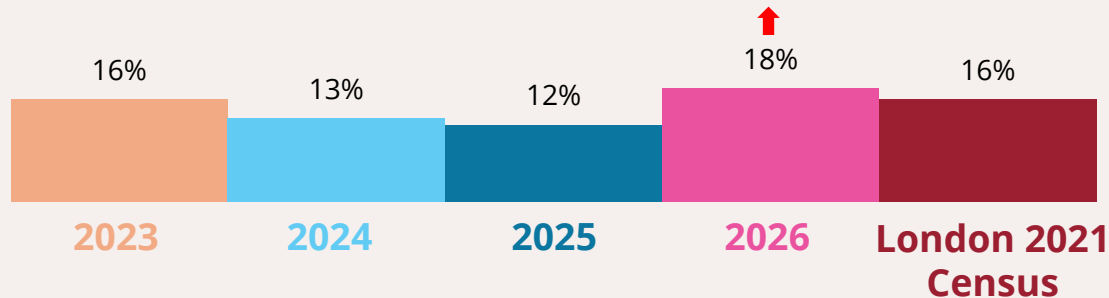
In 2026, approaching 1 in 5 groups included someone with a disability or long-term health condition. A similar proportion of groups included someone with neurodiversity.

- The proportion of groups with at least one person with a disability was higher in 2026 than in 2025.
- Incidence of neurodiversity is higher amongst families (26%).
- Incidence of a disability / long-term health condition is higher amongst visitors identifying as LGBTQIA+ (28%) and those identifying as neurodivergent (42%).

For you or those you came to the Festival with, to the best of your knowledge, are day-to-day activities limited because of a health condition or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?

% YES

NB. 5% prefer not to say – removed from data to support comparison against Census

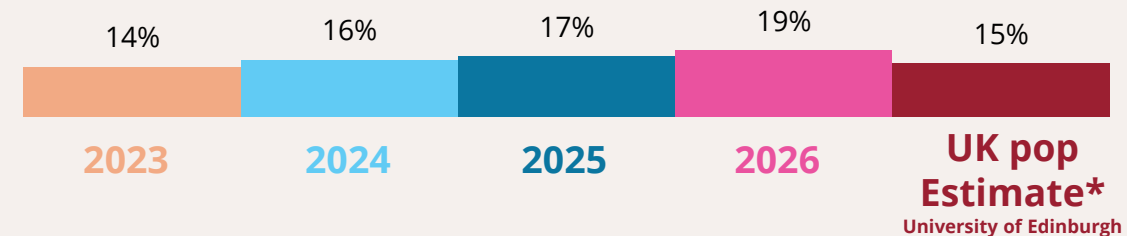


Base: 2026 Total excluding 'prefer not to say' A) (859) B) (866), 2025 A) (784), B) (797), 2024 (591 assumed), 2023 (1013 assumed)

To the best of your knowledge, is anyone in the group you came to the Festival with neurodivergent?

% YES

NB. 4% prefer not to say – removed from data to support comparison against Census



UK pop Estimate*
University of Edinburgh

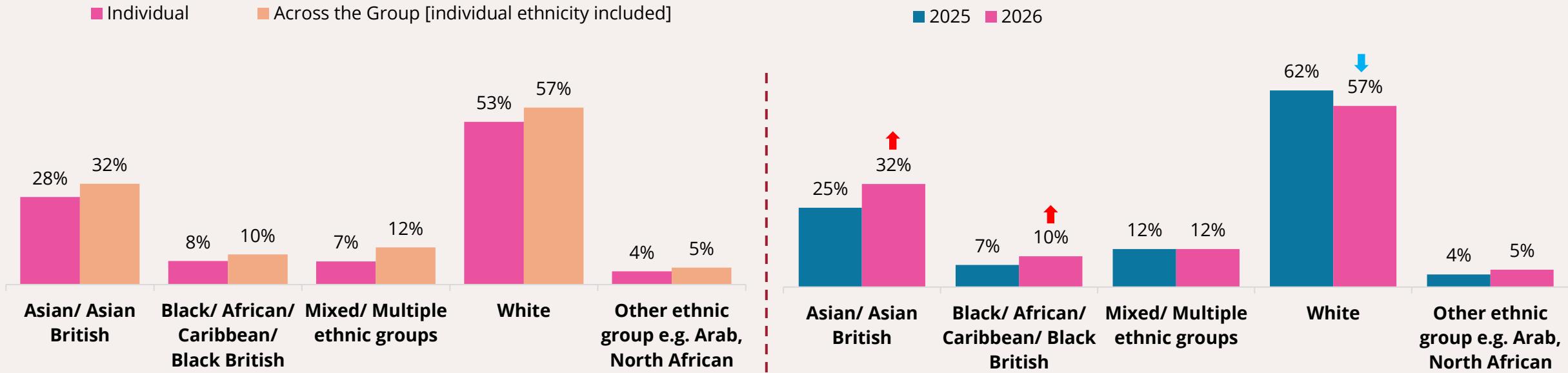
Indication of a shift in ethnicity profile in 2026, with improved representation of visitors from Asian / Asian British and Black / African / Caribbean / Black British ethnicities.

- 18% of visitors were in a group with representation of multiple ethnicities.

Which ethnic group best describes you? Which other ethnic groups were represented in your group?

Multiple response possible, to capture full ethnicity profile of groups.

Question format changed slightly in 2026 to obtain a more accurate measure – year-on-year comparison should be treated with caution



Base: 2026 Total, excluding 'prefer not to say' A. 2026 (819): B. 2026 (825), 2025 (758),

NB. 9% prefer not to say removed from 2026 and 2025 (9%) data to support comparison against Census

Although lower than previous years, women are more prevalent within the overall evaluation sample.

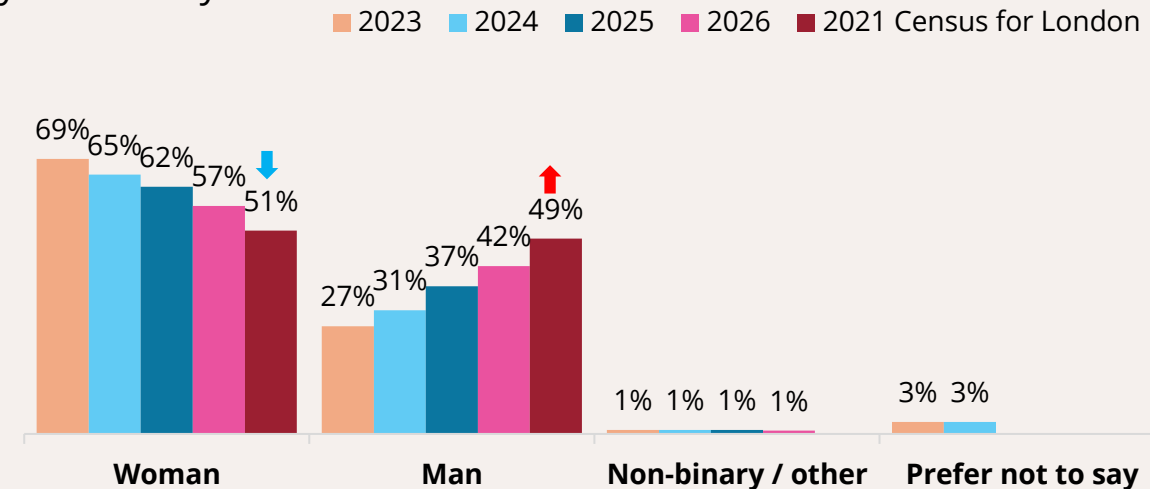
- However, on-site fieldwork suggests a more balanced gender profile was present - 50% of those surveyed face-to-face identified as female and 49% identified as male.

In 2026, 9% of the audience were a member of the LGBTQIA+ community.

- Higher than 2025 levels, yet in line with 2023.
- 2026 level higher than London population profile.
- Proportion of LGBTQIA+ members higher in adult-only groups (13%) and those identifying as neurodivergent (15%).

Base: 2026 Total excluding 'prefer not to say' A (877), 2025 (811); 2026 B (860), 2025 (775); 2024 (591 assumed), 2023 (1013 assumed)

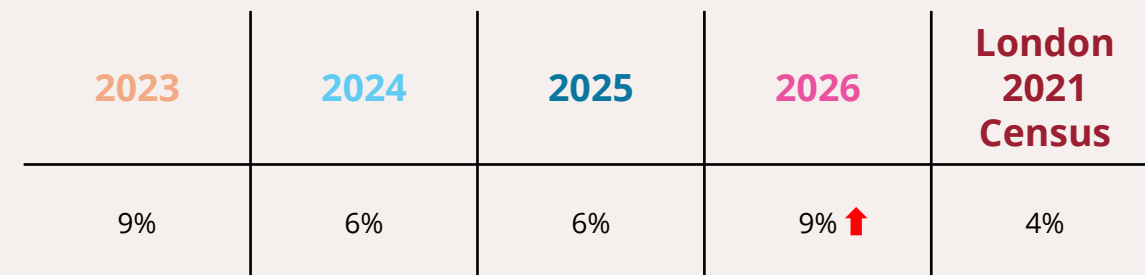
Please select the gender which best aligns with your identity:



NB. 3% prefer not to say - removed from data to support comparison against Census

Do you consider yourself a member of the LGBTQIA+ Community?

% YES



NB. 5% prefer not to say - removed from data to support comparison against Census

In 2026, approximately 7 in 10 visitors were attending for the first time.

- The proportion of repeat visitors is broadly consistent with 2025.
- Incidence of repeat visits higher amongst those aged 45+ (36%)

In keeping with last year, the majority of Festival visitors – approximately 3 in 5 – did not have a connection with Imperial or with a South Kensington based partner.

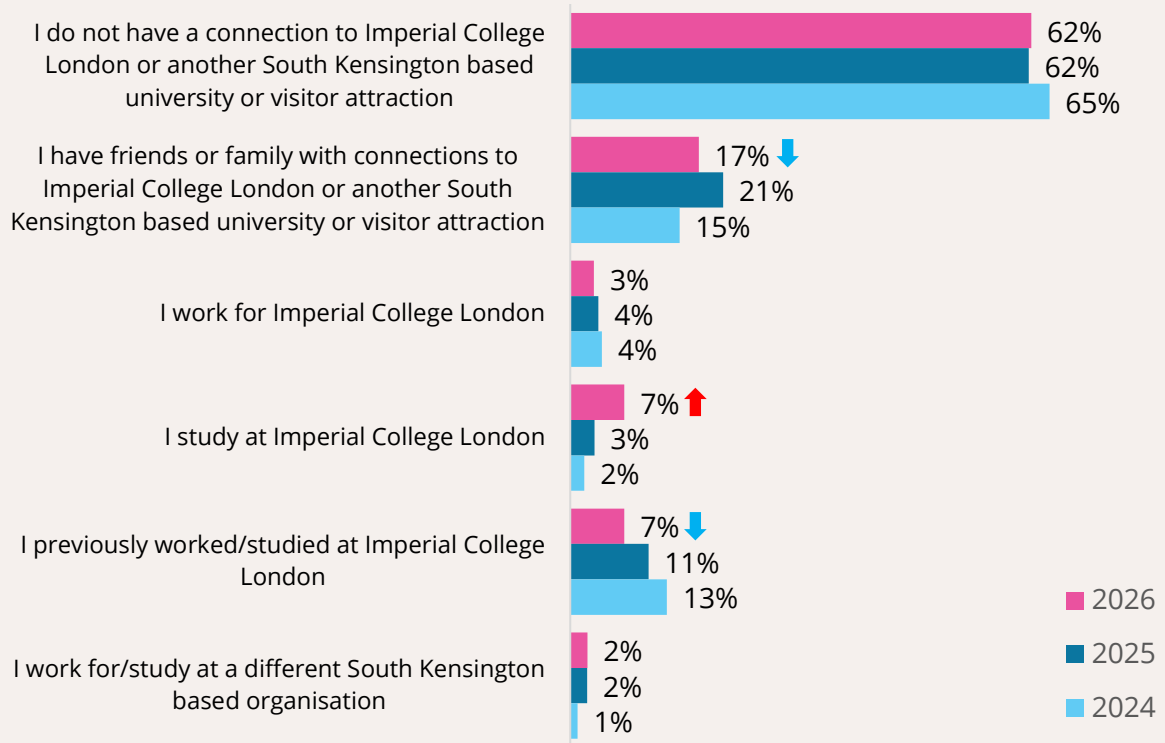
- No connection with Imperial or a partner was more prevalent amongst families (71%) than adult-only groups (56%).
- 43% of visitors aged 16-25 were Imperial students.



% Attending GEF previously

2023	2024	2025	2026
24%	29%	34%	31%

Which one of the following best describes you?

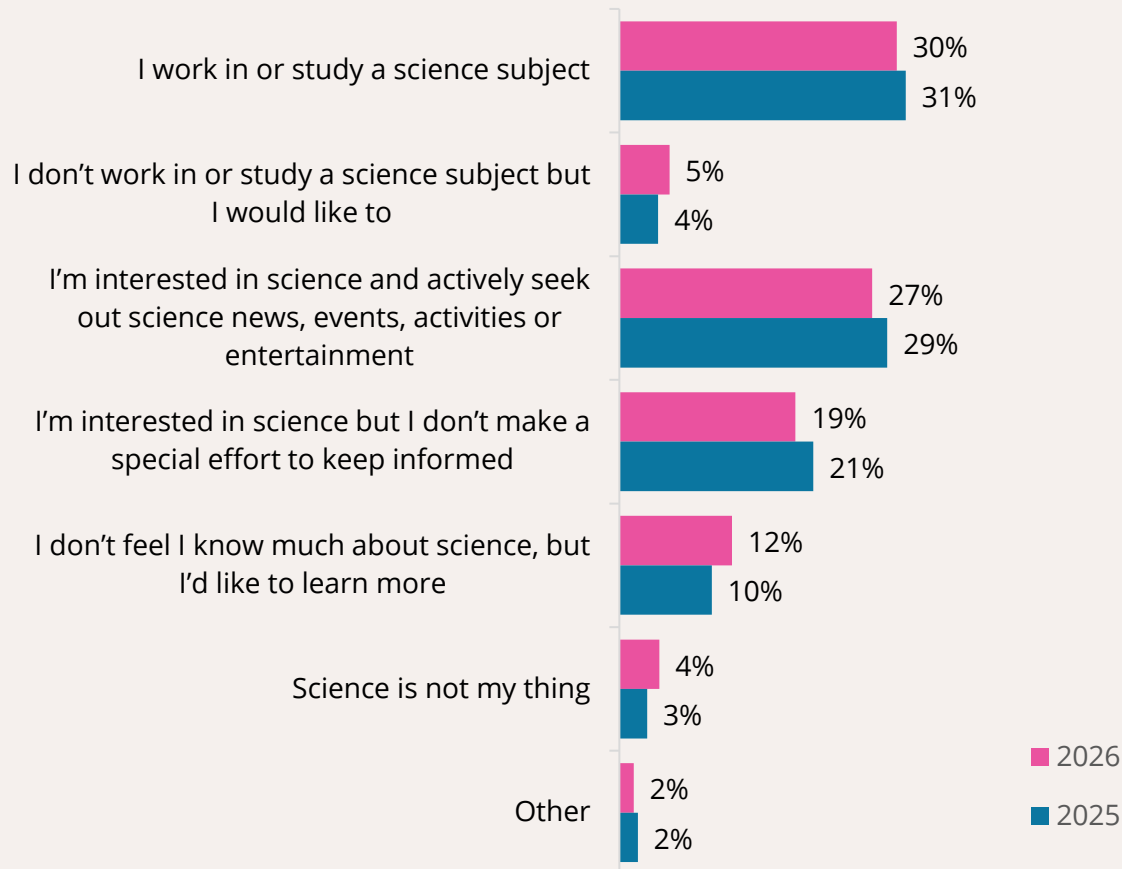


Base: 2026 Total (902), 2025 (836), 2024 (591 assumed)

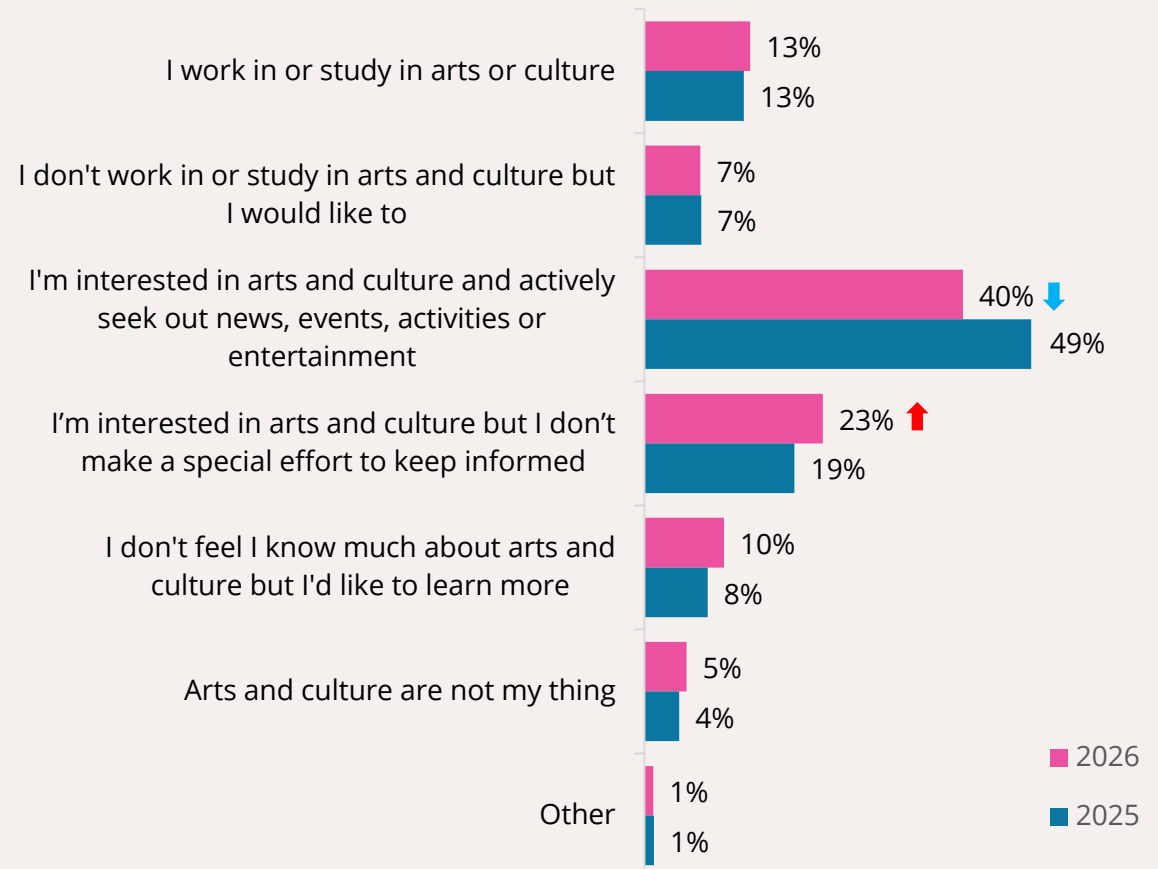
In 2026, the majority of visitors had a professional or personal interest in science, arts and culture.

- Both generally align with the 2025 visitor profile, although there was a decrease in the proportion of visitors interested and actively seeking out information around arts and culture.

Which of these statements best describes your relationship with science?



Which of these statements best describes your relationship with art and culture?



Overall, 75% of those aware of the Festival registered online, a decrease since 2025.

- This equates to 64% of the total sample, although pre-registration was significantly lower amongst those surveyed face-to-face – 48% vs 83% surveyed online*.
- Based on the total sample, incidence of pre-registration was higher amongst:
 - Families (73%) vs adult-only groups (57%)
 - Repeat visitors (74%) vs first-time visitors (60%)

**The survey methodology, which involved distributing the online survey to the database of registered visitors will be a factor here.*

% Aware of Festival and registered online

2023	2024	2025	2026
88%	85%	83%	75% ↓

% Aware of Festival and registered online – F2F interviewed

2023	2024	2025	2026
63%	61%	68%	58% ↓

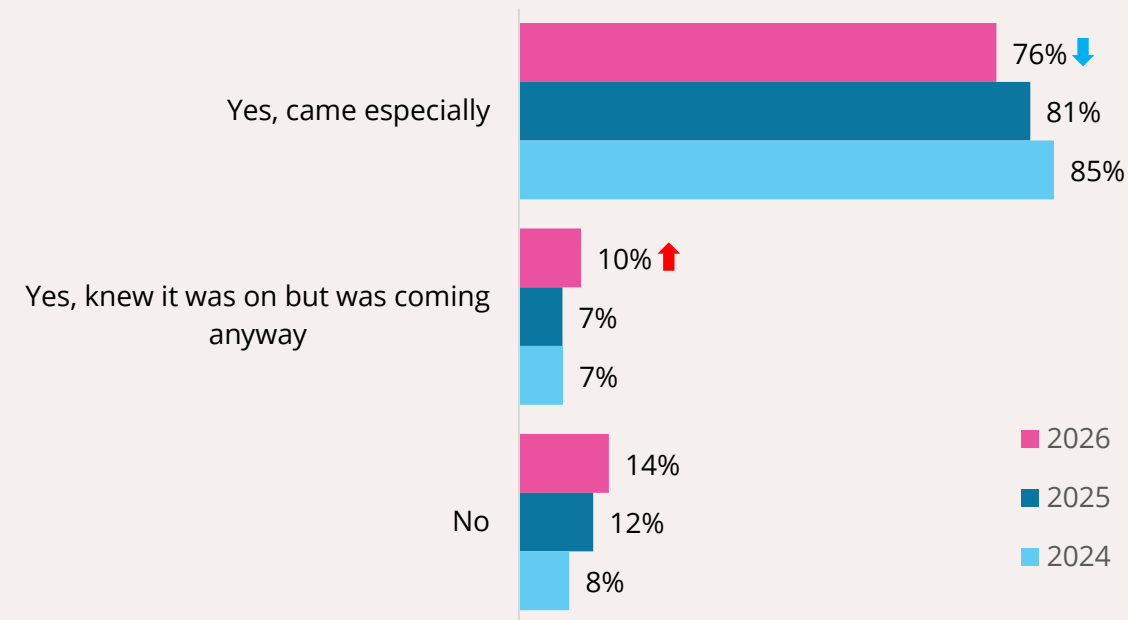
“I went to the website a couple days before because I realised in the link it said, oh, you should plan your day. And I was like, oh, there's a lot going on.”

Depth: disability

In 2026, 3 in 4 visitors made a purposeful visit to the Festival, a decline from previous years.

- Year-on-year comparison indicates a rise in the proportion of speculative visitors – 14% were unaware that the Festival was happening before their visit, up from 8% in 2024.
- Pre-planned visits were most likely amongst:
 - Families (83% vs 71% for adult-only groups)
 - White ethnicities (81% vs 71% minority ethnicities)

Before your visit, were you aware that the Festival was happening?



QUALITATIVE INSIGHT

- Motivations came primarily from positive previous visits.
- First-time visitors were driven by interest in the galleries/museums involved, as well as their links to Imperial College London.

"I saw an ad and I was interested. I'm a science person; I work in STEM."

Intercept

"We were here last year as well. We loved it, so we came back. We actually came from Germany for that."

Intercept

Social media activity and word of mouth lead promotional channels for the 2026 Festival.

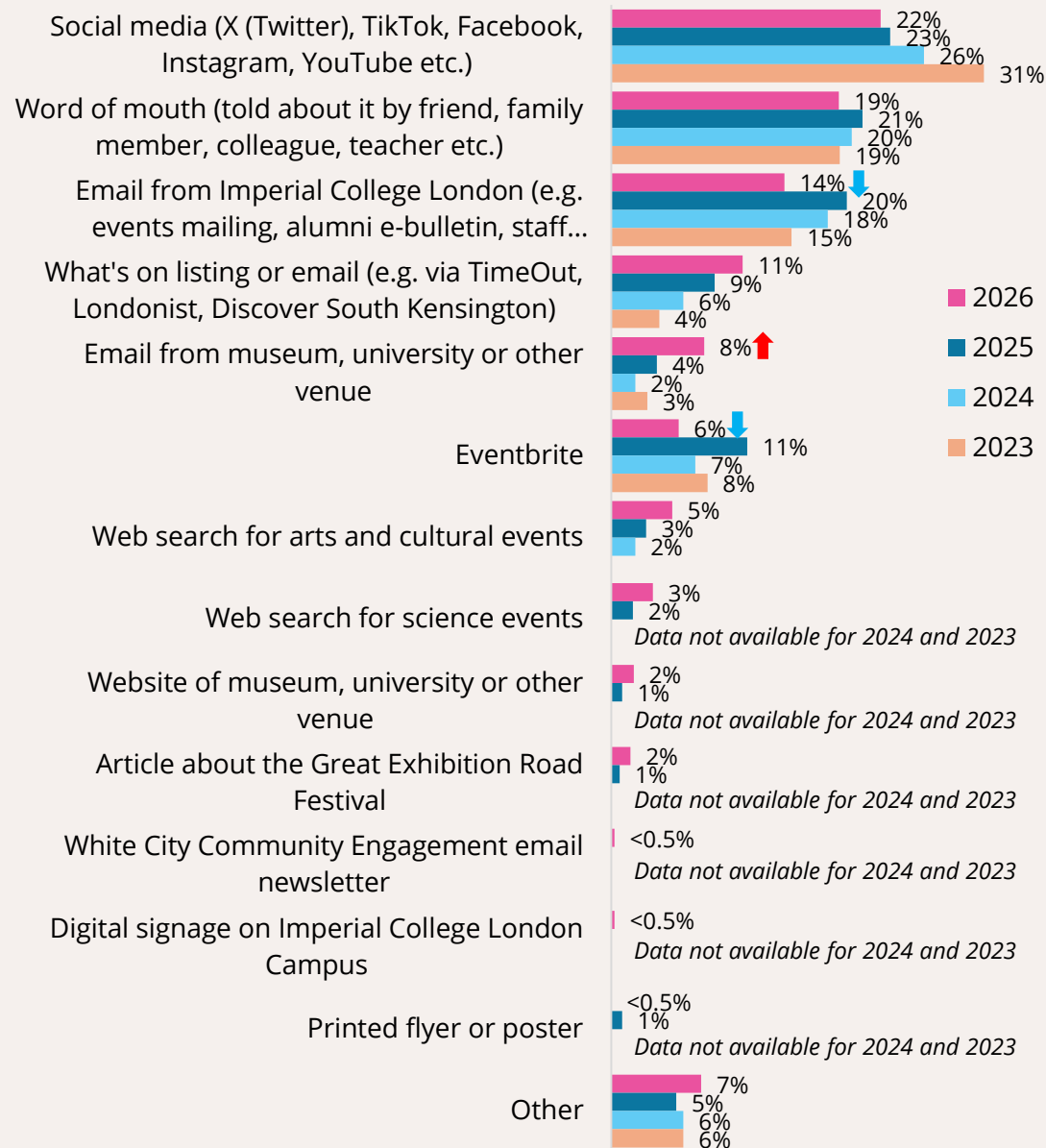
- Findings broadly consistent with 2025, although a small increase in the proportion finding out about the Festival via emails from other venues in 2025.
- Some variation by visit history:
 - Direct emails from Imperial was the most effective channel amongst repeat visitors (24% vs 9% for first-time visitors)
- Social media activity key to reaching families (34% vs 13% for adults-only groups).

"Saw a Facebook ad pop up and thought, ooh, let's go have a look."

Intercept

Base: 2026 Online Survey – All aware of Festival before visit (375), 2025 (444), 2024 (543 assumed)

How did you first hear about the Festival?



QUALITATIVE INSIGHT

- The majority of visitors viewed the Festival as a science-based event, focused around learning and making science more accessible.

"Basically, it's like a really big lesson, and I like it because it gives you an introduction to things you probably wouldn't learn in school, in like a fun way."

Depth: Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British, family group

"How you can make science more accessible to the general public, and kind of communicate these amazing ideas."

Intercept

- The mix of arts and science was enjoyed by visitors, despite not initially realising this would be the case.

"I thought there'd be a lot of emphasis on science. But coming to the Festival, I've seen there's been an integration with arts and creativity, which I thought was quite pleasant."

Depth: 16 to 25, adult-only group

- Some visitors came with an expectation that the Festival would be more geared towards children but were happy to find it offered activities for all ages.

"I like that it's quite intergenerational, like all the activities are still fun as an adult."

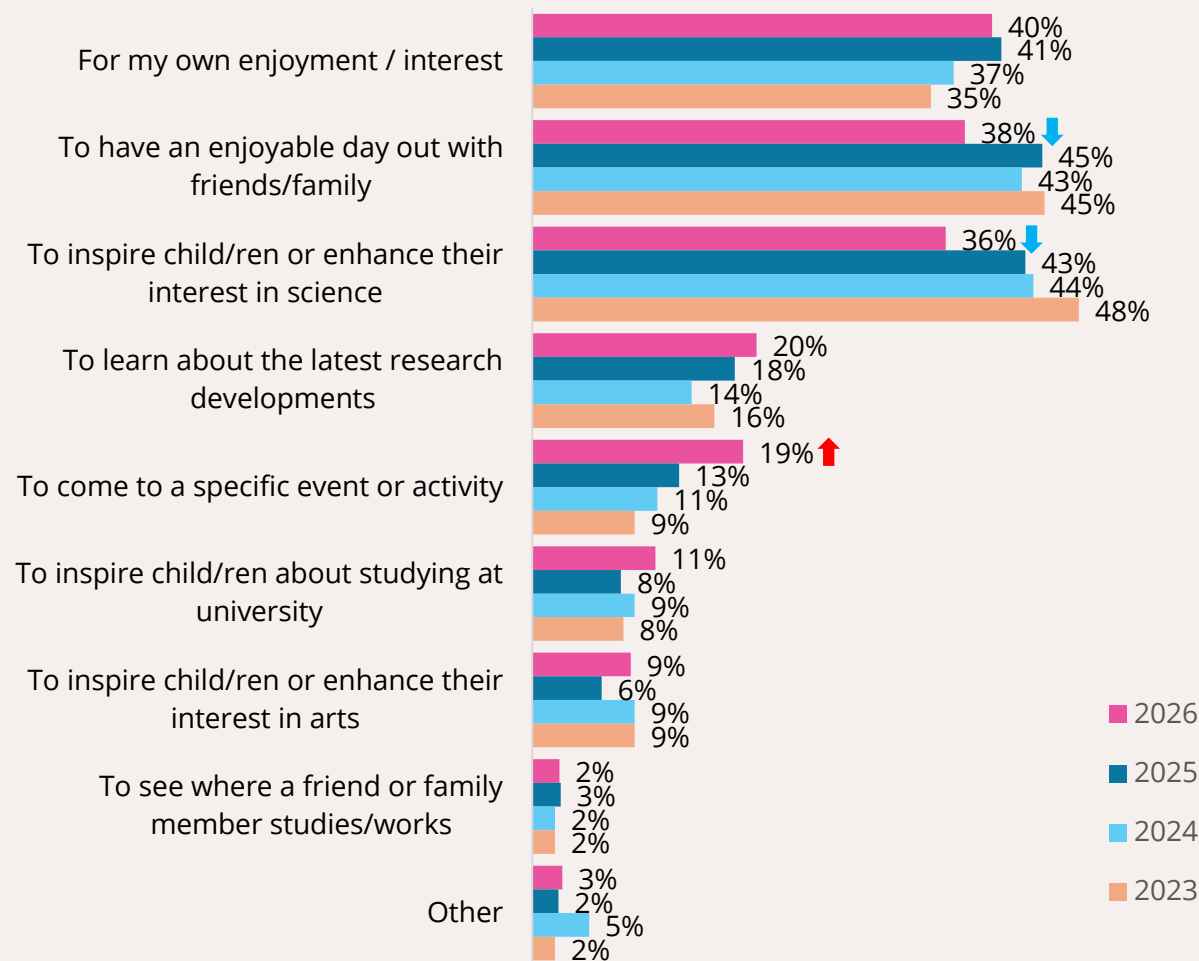
Depth: 16 to 25, adult-only group

"The variety of activities were amazing and catered for all ages and interests."

Online Survey Comment

Visitors came to the Festival primarily for enjoyment / fun.

What were your main reasons for visiting? (choose up to 2)



- The primary motivation for attending was own enjoyment/interest.
- There was an increase in respondents who came for a specific event/activity.

Group profile influences motivations:

- To inspire children or enhance their interest in science was the primary motivation of those visiting in a family group (75%).
- Adult-only groups were more likely to be motivated to attend for their own enjoyment (63%), to learn about the latest research developments (31%) and to come to a specific event or activity (28%).

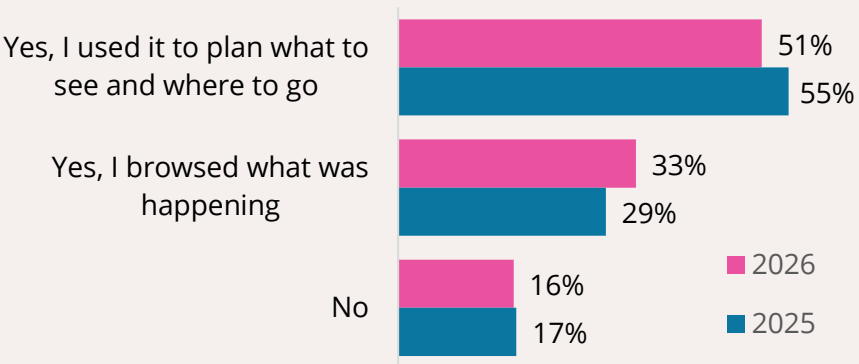
"We come every year, my daughter's interested in science. They go to an independent school, and I just feel like girls are, they're less pushed towards sciences, so that's why we like to encourage."

Intercept

In 2026, 84% of visitors used the Festival website, either for specific planning or more general browsing.

- In line with 2025, up from 79% in 2024.
- Usage for planning higher amongst family groups (57% vs 45% for adults-only groups).

Did you look at the Festival website before you visited?



	2023	2024	2025	2026
LOOKED AT THE FESTIVAL WEBSITE	86%	79%	84%	84%

Base: 2026 Online Survey Total (416), 2025 (473)

QUALITATIVE INSIGHT

- Most who used the website had no issues, feeling it was ‘very well organised’ and ‘excellent for planning’.
- A minority of users identified the website’s favourites feature as an issue, reporting that it was difficult to use. A lack of clear videos or pictures of the events was also mentioned.
- Suggested improvements include:
 - Making the maps more detailed to show each specific activity.
 - Having more ticketed events available.
 - Clearer visuals to show what the Festival will entail.

“The map and directions were not very clear, and it was a rainy day, so a bit harder to navigate to anything specific.”

“I feel some of the activities were not mentioned on the website e.g. like Tech Zone, Next Gen Zone.”

“Improve the mapping, directly map out each and every stall rather than splitting into zones. Also, the favourites system on the website literally didn't work.”

Online Survey Comments

The large majority of visitors were positive about their Festival experience.

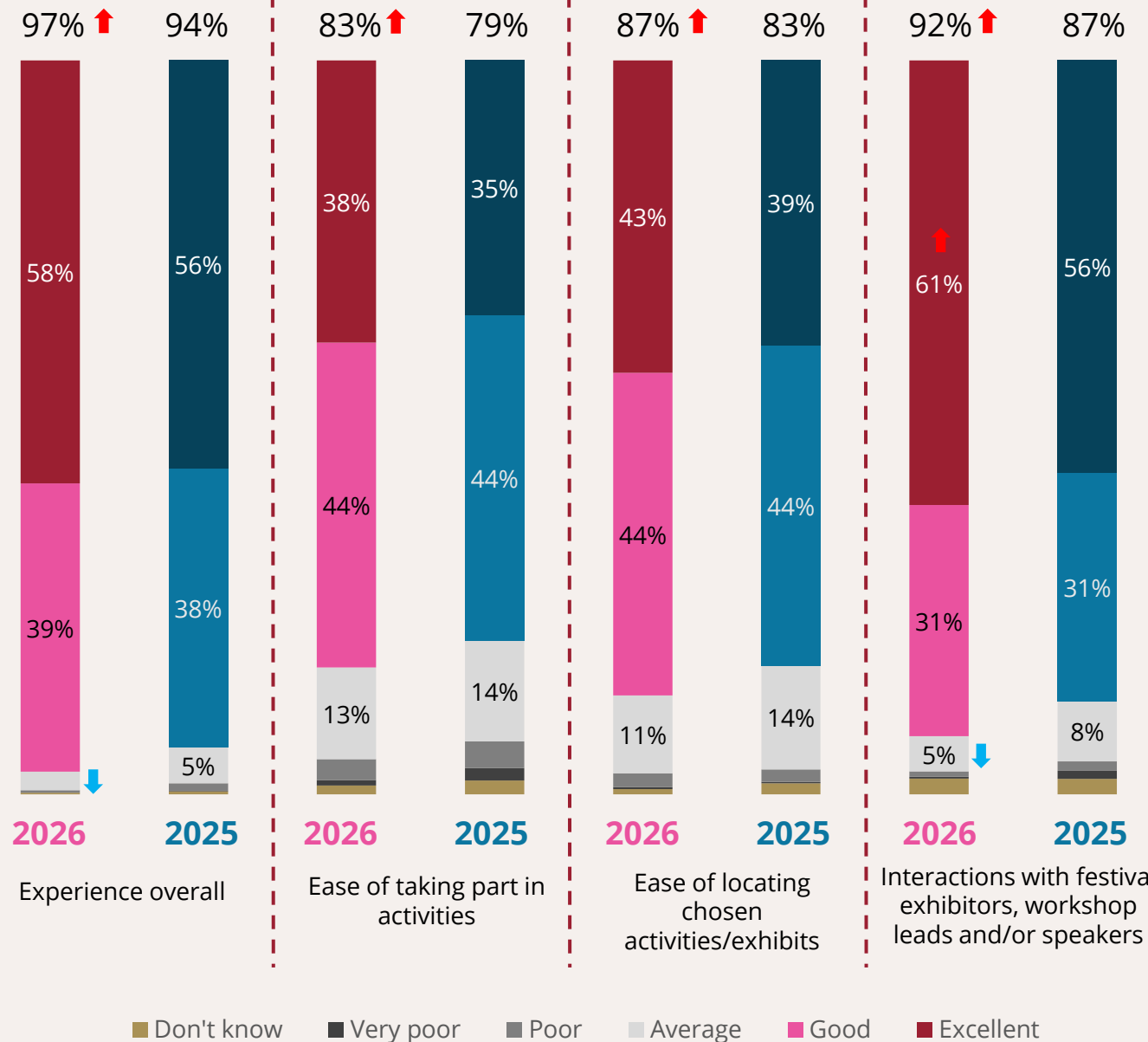
- Personal interactions are where the Festival shines, with 3 in 5 saying these were excellent.
- Ratings for finding activities show no cause for concern – most are positive.
- As in 2025, ease of taking part remains the lowest rated aspect.
 - Those identifying as neurodivergent stand out as the least satisfied in this regard, with a 27% 'excellent' rating.

Over 9 in 10 visitors rated their overall experience at the Festival positively, with a majority opting to rate it as 'excellent'.

- Family groups were more likely to rate their experience as 'excellent' – 62% vs 55% for adult-only groups.

How would you rate the following aspects of the Festival?

% POSITIVE



How would you rate the following aspects of the Festival?

Experience Overall

	2023	2024	2025	2026
EXCELLENT / GOOD	89%	90%	94%	97% ↑

Ease of taking part in activities

	2023	2024	2025	2026
EXCELLENT / GOOD	77%	77%	79%	83% ↑

Interactions with festival exhibitors, workshop leads and/or speakers

	2023	2024	2025	2026
EXCELLENT / GOOD	86%	91%	87%	92% ↑

- The Festival is continuing to build on a strong format.

- Since the 2023 baseline, ratings for ease of taking part in activities has increased, with 2026 recording the highest rating to date.

- Ratings for interactions have increased since last year.

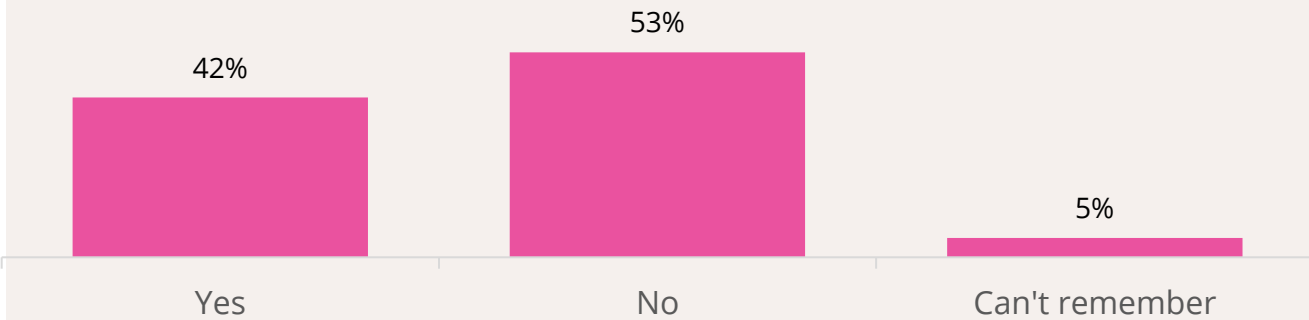
Approximately 2 in 5 of online respondents visited the Family Fun Zone, 95% of which found the zone easy to find.

- Visits to the Family Fun Zone were highest amongst family groups (66%) and visitors of minority ethnicity (47%).
 - 22% of adult-only groups visited.
- Ease of locating the zone broadly consistent by visitor profile.

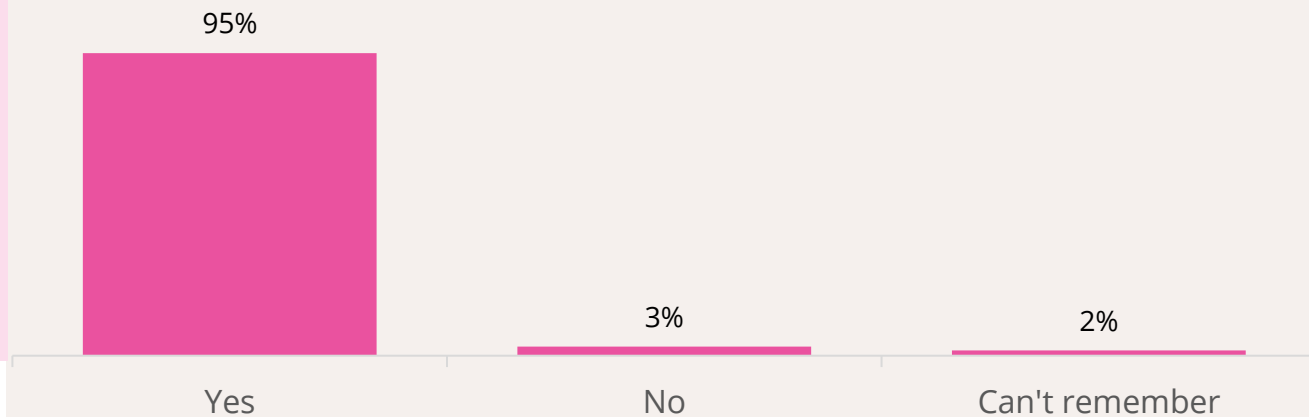
"It was great that it was a little further out as it meant that you could take a breather from other sections. Once you got your bearings, it was good to get there and find some other activities."

Online Survey Comments

Did you visit the Family Fun Zone?



Was the Family Fun Zone easy to locate/find?



QUALITATIVE INSIGHT

- Visitors appreciated the wide range of activities available in the Family Fun Zone and praised the staff for their engagement with children.
- Some found the zone too busy and too noisy, which acted as a deterrent to engagement.
- Perceptions around whether the zone was best for older or younger children varied. Some would have liked more content for pre-school aged children.
- There was a feeling of disconnect from the rest of the Festival, with the distance to get to the zone further than many expected.
- Suggested improvements include:
 - Specifying the walk-time to reach the zone from the main Festival area
 - Having healthier food options available
 - Creating a clearer queue system to prevent crowding around tents

"Activities had a good range, to meet the interest and challenge for a variety of age groups. Loved how interactive each location was. Clearer signage at each activity to show the queue process would have made it even better."

"A lot of the tents in the Family Fun Zone were quite packed and that put my child off engaging with more of the activities, as he wasn't keen on queuing."

"People we met were very friendly and engaging. It was a bit hard to get access to the activities and actually learn about things given the noise and the crowd, it felt a bit cramped in the tents, but it was fun!"

"I much prefer its previous location at Princes Gardens. The Family Fun Zone at Kensington Gardens seems too far away from the main action. Difficult to manage when there are various ages of children to accommodate."

Open Survey Comments

QUALITATIVE INSIGHT

- Science content was accessible to a wide audience, with visitors praising speakers for their ability to explain complex topics in an engaging and age-appropriate way.

"They made the point across well for somebody who's a layperson that doesn't quite understand different intricacies of science and technology and things like that. So that was quite interesting to hear them talk about it."

Depth: Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British, adult-only group

"They're professionals, they're well-educated people, and they're teaching the young people and people of my age about that part of life."

Depth: Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British, adult-only group

"I think the communication was the best thing, especially for me, who has no idea about any of this stuff. So, yeah, it was really good"

Intercept

- Some felt that having more activities specifically for adults would improve the experience, allowing a better chance of involvement.
- Setting and adhering to more age group limitations within zones was also suggested, giving all ages time to take part.

"Next Gen Zone was said to be limited to age 13 to 25. But mainly small children taking a very long time. My teenagers couldn't take part, and it was their appropriate age zone."

Online Survey Comments

"More events that are restricted to adults because there are too many kids in the all-ages area and it feels too hard to really get information easily with so many noisy kids around."

Online Survey Comments

"Have pre-booking activities more aimed at teenagers in secondary school. I felt the festival caters well to children but there is a gap in 14+ years."

Online Survey Comments

QUALITATIVE INSIGHT



- Response to the Festival layout and signage was positive overall, although maps were usually felt to be necessary.
- The number, visibility and proactiveness of volunteers across the Festival site supported ease of navigation.
- Crowd sizes on Exhibition Road made wayfinding more difficult. But, for most, locating specific zones and activities was found to be easy.
- Splitting the Festival into zones offered structure for visitors to plan and target specific activities based on their group's interest.

"I think it's improved this year. It just seems a little bit more well laid out, better signposted."

Intercept

"Very accessible, you can get in and out very easily, everything's open, and you have people here, the staff members are telling you where to go and what to do."

Depth: Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British, adult-only group

"The volunteers are very visible, which is nice. And they're offering maps, and they're being sort of proactive, which is always good because sometimes they just stand around. And I think the way the zones make it easier for people."

Intercept

QUALITATIVE INSIGHT

- As seen in 2025, the Adults Only Zone was a welcomed area for visitors without children.
- Perceived strengths included:
 - Offered a more relaxed atmosphere compared to the rest of the Festival.
 - Offered a chance to be hands-on with activities
 - Addressed a perceived lack of adult-focused participation elsewhere at the Festival.

"It's quite nice to have something (the Adult Only Zone) that you think you know we can go to and is a little bit different. And you don't always want to be surrounded with little kids either."

Intercept

"The Adult Zone was much needed to relax after a long afternoon."

Online Survey Comments

"Make it clear that it is not just for kids/families - there was a lot to make it a great day out for us as adults. Most of our adult friends to whom we mentioned it had not heard about it."

Online Survey Comments

- More areas/activities for adults across the Festival would be a welcome addition.

"More adult focussed creative workshops. It seemed like everything was aimed at children, apart from the Adult Only Zone."

Online Survey Comments

"Perhaps a few more adult events? It's great that there are many events for children but finding appealing adult events to attend was a bit of a challenge."

Online Survey Comments

QUALITATIVE INSIGHT

- Although most visitors felt they could get involved in the Festival, for some families with younger children and those identifying as neurodivergent, there were two stand-out barriers to the experience:
 - Crowds were felt to be overstimulating, preventing engagement in activities and causing problems for those who struggled around lots of people.
 - The noise level in the main street of the Festival was felt to be 'too loud', prompting use of headphones and, in some cases, entirely avoiding those areas.

"It felt like there was a big barrier in the middle of the site with noise. And I don't remember it being that noisy before."

"It was a lot harder for him [his son] because he doesn't respond well to crowds. He's ADHD and autistic and he just doesn't like waiting."

Depth: disability

"She likes the experience [her daughter], but there's a lot of people for her. So, we try to come as early as possible. We plan for breaks and then it's also very noisy."

"If you put yourself in the shoes of a neurodivergent person, having such loud music, it really makes the experience very difficult because it's extra stimulation that is hard to take away."

Depth: disability

QUALITATIVE INSIGHT

- Comments highlight the importance of amenities to visitors, many of whom aim to spend a full day at the Festival.
- Some limitations around the offer were identified:
 - Food options were perceived as lacking variety, with prices considered too high, particularly for families.
 - A lack of water stations and general water availability.
 - Not enough seating / places to rest – or information about where these areas were.

“More food options at a much more accessible price. One hotdog for a small child was £10!!! And it was the only option.”

“The food stalls prices were too high especially for families. Add free water stations - I was not able to find stalls selling water.”

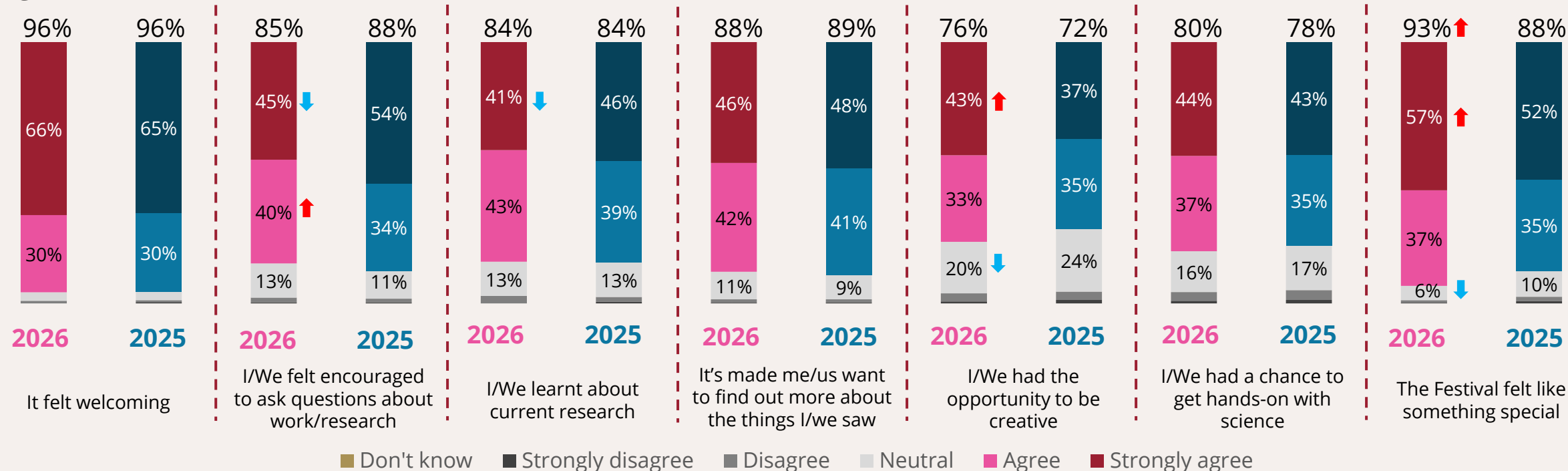
“I felt food options were limited and very sugar heavy for a children's area i.e. Churros Not many healthy choices, even sandwiches, jacket potatoes etc.”

“GLUTEN FREE FOOD!!! There wasn't any! More spaces (or more clearly marked?) to sit and eat lunch.”

The Festival stands out as having a unique and engaging atmosphere. Well over 9 in 10 visitors felt welcome and a similar – and increased – proportion of visitors felt it offered a special experience.

- A majority positive response is evident across all evaluation areas, although opinion is most variable on the extent to which the Festival offered an opportunity to be creative:
 - Families stand out as more likely to have had a creative experience (90% vs 65% adult-only groups).
- The opportunity to get hands-on with science also received a comparatively lower score, although was still rated positively by over 4 in 5.
- Whilst ratings were broadly inline with those in 2025, fewer visitors in 2026 strongly agreed that they felt encouraged to ask questions and that they learnt about current research.

% AGREE



Base: 2026 Total (902), 2025 (836) *Percentages less than or equal to 5% have been removed from this graph

QUALITATIVE INSIGHT

- The interactive exhibits at the Festival played an important role in the visitor experience, particularly among families.

"I think the hands-on experiment experience was quite good. I mean, he was building up the pinball thing outside, which he really enjoyed. He was putting all his effort in it."

Intercept

"When you're getting involved in the activities, that's when you feel like you're really having a broad experience rather than just reading a poster."

Depth: 16 to 25, adult-only group

- Mixing learning with games was felt to be very successful in keeping children engaged with the Festival content.

"Just getting kids involved with the making process. I think it's really key. Understanding what they're doing, get their little brains working rather than looking in a phone. Hands-on stuff."

Intercept

- The popularity of hands-on activities meant, for many, there were long queues and waiting times to get involved. This limited what visitors were able to do during their time at the Festival.

- Opportunities to pre-book busy exhibits suggested as a way of managing overcrowding.

"More pre-bookable things - my kids really wanted to do the VR which meant we were waiting around for that for a long time."

"Some of the most popular activities had long queues because many people wanted to take part. It might be helpful to provide more spaces or extra sessions for those activities, or to have a clearer queue management system. This would make it easier for families with children to join in and enjoy more activities without waiting for too long."

Online Survey Comments

QUALITATIVE INSIGHT

Visitors felt the Festival offered a varied and diverse programme.

“

I think it was just so varied and different ways to engage that it was hard to not find something you would like or could approach in some way that made sense for you. You could be full on, like the dance, and you could be quite the opposite and everything in between. There was so much range in terms of ages, people of different cultural backgrounds. Some people were tourists, they just wandered in. I think it was quite embracing, but also in terms of the variety. It's so good for neurodiverse people.

Depth: disability

”

QUALITATIVE INSIGHT

- Visitors showed appreciation for the Festival and its role in inspiring younger people to get involved in science.
- Many anticipated following up on research or looking for future events at Imperial as a result of attending.
- Having longer days to get the most out of the Festival experience was suggested.

"It's a lot of young people getting them involved because they're the next generation, they're going to be the scientists, doctors in the future, and that's what I mainly see, and it's a fantastic thing, it's really good."

Depth: Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British, adult-only group

"Probably not a huge amount of impact in my day-to-day, but I mean hearing stuff about vaccines and keeping track of viruses and stuff like that, it sort of does make you apply it to real life."

Depth: 16 to 25, adult-only group

"We wish that it would be longer in the day, maybe starting early in the morning, from 10am running till 6pm, because the time goes extremely fast."

Intercept

“

We had a student; the reason he came to Imperial Maths School was because he'd been to the Great Exhibition Road Festival for every year of his life. He was inspired by the Festival.

Intercept

”

Visitors had strong intention to return – only 1 in 20 didn’t agree, and most were sure they will.

- Overall agreement was in line with 2025, although fewer would ‘strongly agree’.
- Intention to return greater amongst:
 - Families (70% strongly agree)
 - Repeat visitors (71% strongly agree)

"It's extremely stimulating for both adults and children, it's totally amazing. We love it, and we plan to come every year, hopefully."

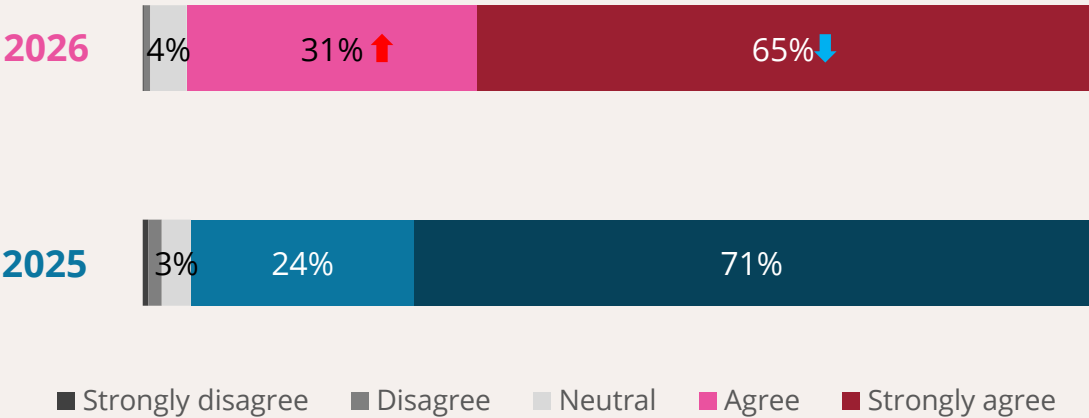
Intercept

"I've actually been telling lots and lots of people about it."

Depth: Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British, family group



I would visit again



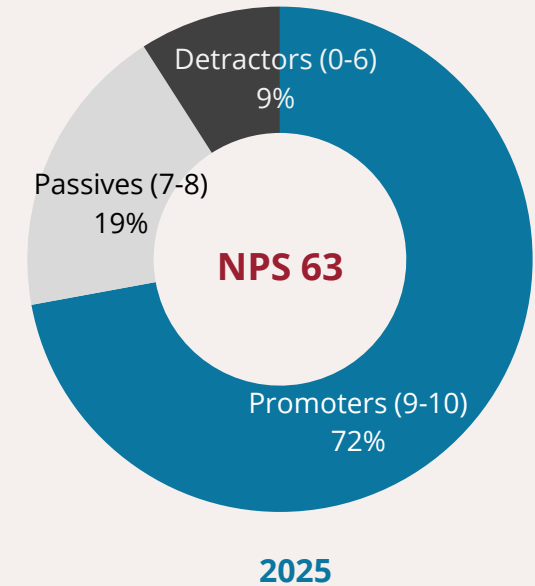
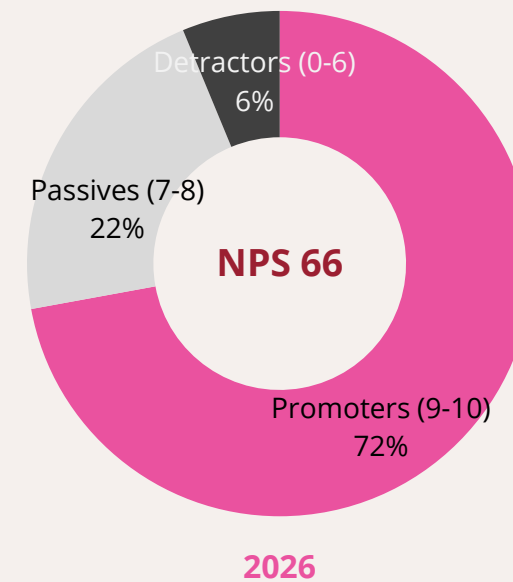
	2023	2024	2025	2026
AGREE	88%	91%	95%	95%

Base: 2026 Total (902), 2025 (836), 2024 (591 assumed), 2023 (1013 assumed) *Percentages less than or equal to 1% have been removed from this graph

In keeping with high satisfaction with the event experience, most visitors would recommend the Festival to others, with a net promotor score of 66.

- Adult-only groups were less likely than families to select 10, the top rating (54% vs 64%). This was influenced by lower scores amongst the 16-34 age group (42% selected 10).

On a scale of 0-10 where 0 is not at all and 10 is extremely, how likely would you be to recommend the Great Exhibition Road Festival to friends or family?



Net Promoter Score is calculated by subtracting the percentage of Detractors (those who provided a score of 0-6) from the percentage of Promoters (those who scored 9-10). Scores can range from -100 to 100. A high, positive score is considered to represent a loyal and advocating audience.

“

I would tell more people to bring their children and bring themselves along here too.

Intercept

”

Two in five visitors encountered new organisations while at the Festival.

- Following an increase between 2024 and 2025, the proportion was broadly in line with 2025.

A third mention the Royal Commission and the Goethe-Institut, and a fifth, Imperial itself.

- Incidence of exposure to new organisations broadly consistent by visitor profile.

**Discover South Kensington has since rebranded as 'South Ken Culture Quarter'.*

"Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851 - we had a long chat with a current PhD student working in the 1851 Great Exhibition tent. It was fascinating to hear about his research."

"I attended the 'Britain's First Black Musical Superstar' Event in the V&A, by the Royal College of Music and it was excellent."

"Spent a lot of time with the Royal College of Art and commission team, had a lot of fun and learnt new things."

Online Survey Comments

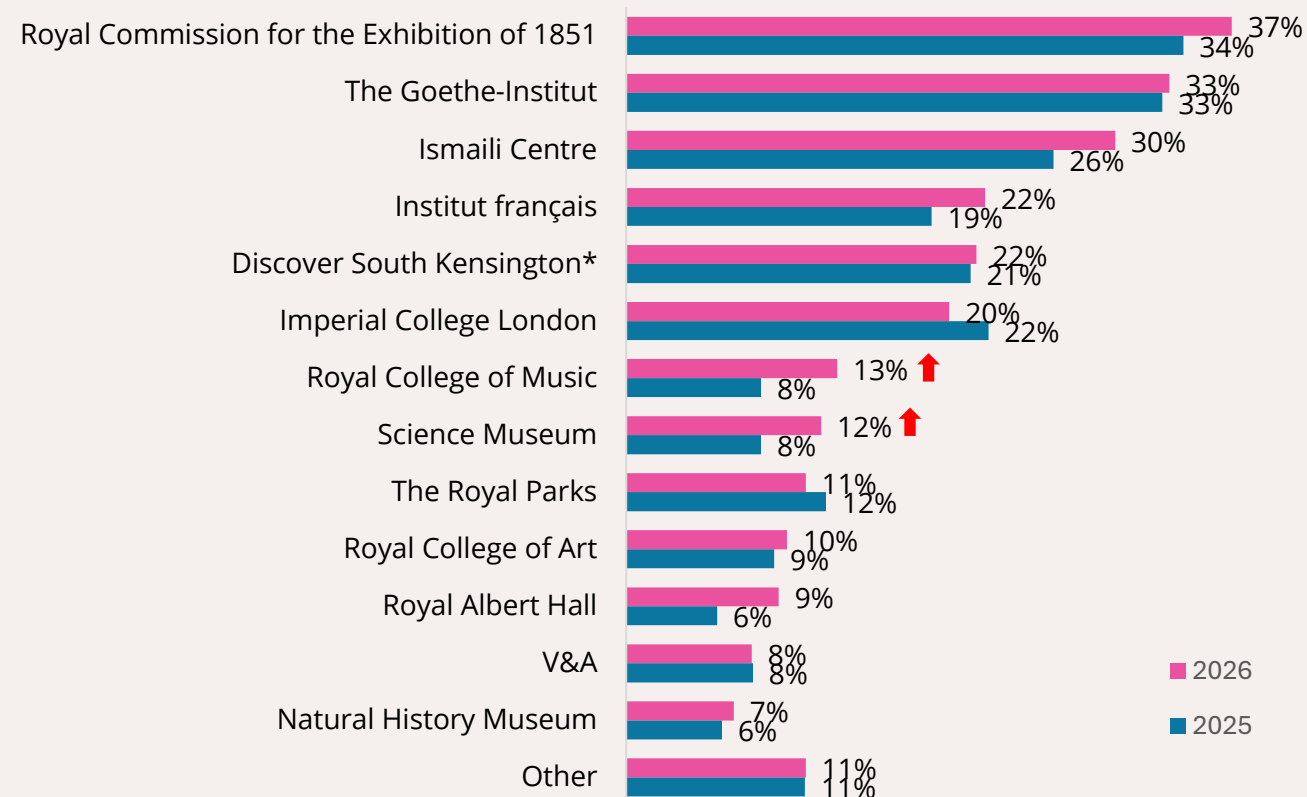
Did you come across any organisations that were new to you whilst at the Festival?



% YES

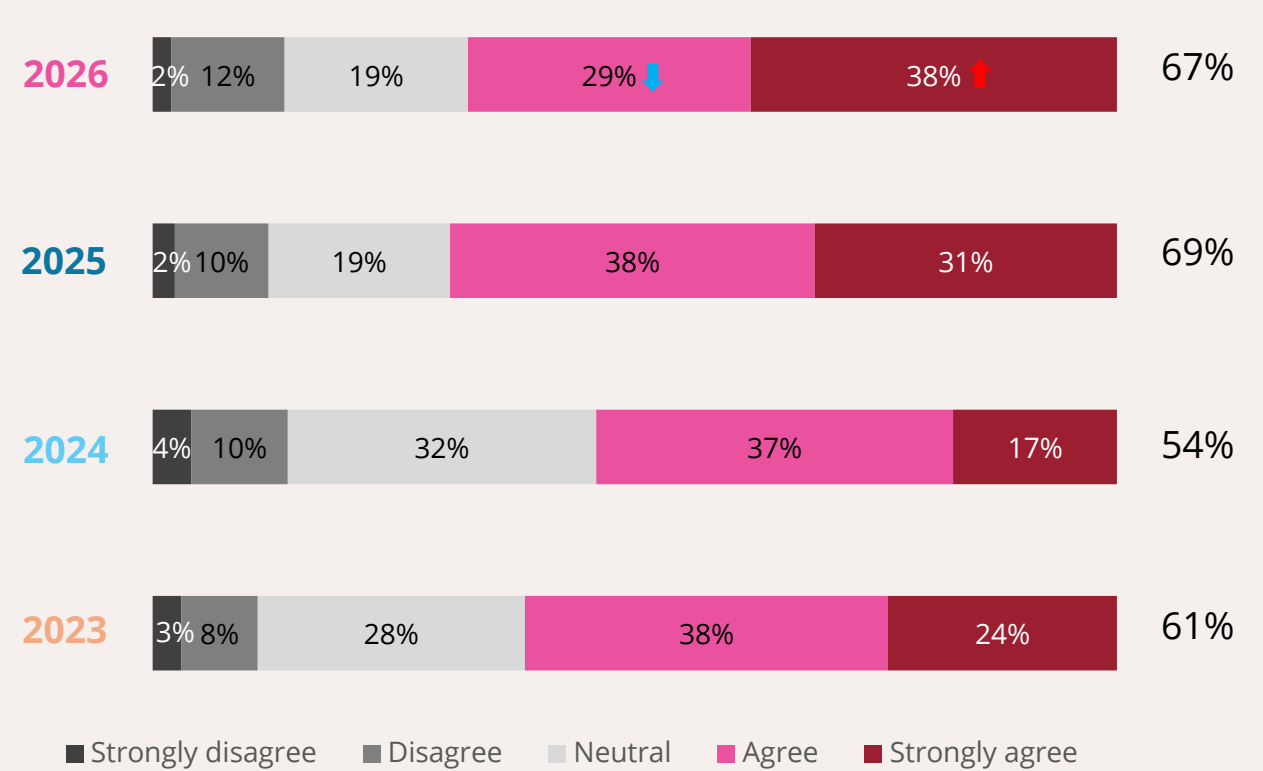


Which one(s)?



Base: 2026 Total (902), 2025 (836), Those who said yes 2026 (362), 2025 (373)

Visiting the Festival did make me experience/visit places I had not visited before % AGREE



My / our experience at the Festival has made me / us more likely to visit South Kensington again in future

	2023	2024	2025	2026
AGREE	65%	63%	71%	74%

The majority of visitors – 67% - felt that they had encountered new places because of the Festival.

Additionally, 74% attributed an increased likeliness of visiting South Kensington again to their experience at GEF.

- Year-on-year comparison shows an increase in those strongly agreeing they visited new places as a result of attending the Festival.
- Whilst levels of intended return to South Kensington were broadly consistent by visitor profile:
 - First-time visitors (71%) and those of minority ethnicity (79%) were more likely to feel that they were experiencing new places as a result of attending the Festival.
 - 83% of people of minority ethnicity agreed that they will return to South Kensington because of their experience at the Festival.

QUALITATIVE INSIGHT

- Most visitors have been to South Kensington before, primarily for the museums. Many would require a reason for travelling there.

"I don't know if I would have much reason, apart from the museums."

Depth: Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British, adult-only group

"We do come to South Kensington, maybe not often, but you know there are a lot of museums here. It's probably the best place for a university to be. You know, there's so much stuff around here."

Intercept

- There was an association of 'affluence' with the area, but many thought positively, describing South Kensington as 'clean' and 'safe.'

"Yes, it's posh, but it doesn't matter to me. I want to be posh too."

Depth: Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British, family group

"It's great with all the places to go, and you've got all the museums, like all the nice shops, restaurants, and the parks over there. It's great."

Depth: neurodiverse

- The Festival has had a positive impact on people's feelings towards South Kensington, with many wanting to return to the area.

"Just the general feeling of the vibe, with the Festival, feels a lot more accessible, a lot more open to everyone, regardless of who you are or how much money you have in your bank account."

Depth: Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British, adult-only group

"For me, it's a positive, because I've always come here all my life, you know, going to the museums."

Depth: Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British, adult-only group

QUALITATIVE INSIGHT

- Visitors found the Festival to have a diverse and inclusive atmosphere.

"London is a global city. It's important to recognise diversity. It's important to make people feel included. So, I think festivals like these or events like these are a good way to, I guess, welcome people, bring people out."

Intercept

"I think it feels a bit more, now I'm seeing it all like this, more communal. Like everyone. There's all sorts of people coming, all different backgrounds and stuff."

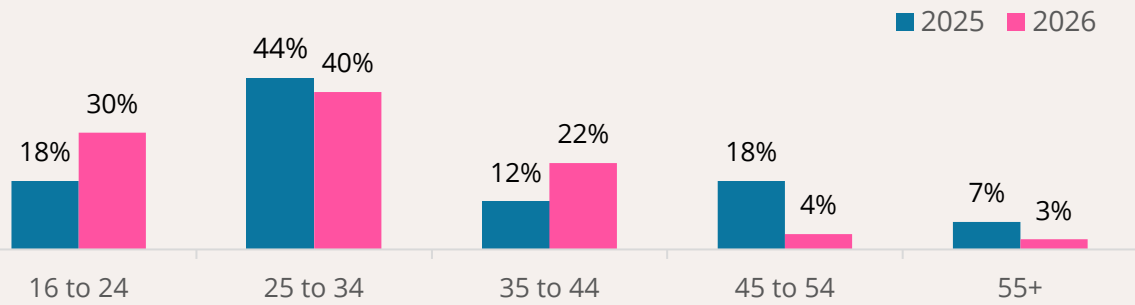
Depth: Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British, adult-only group

CONTRIBUTORS

**Profile
Experience
Impacts**

Given the smaller sample sizes among contributors, year-on-year differences within the commentary are reflective of a 5% or greater difference between 2025 and 2026 percentages.

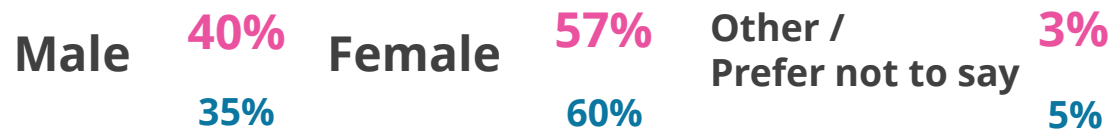
What is your age?



Indication that contributors were typically aged 16-45, with the largest proportion aged 25-34 (40%).

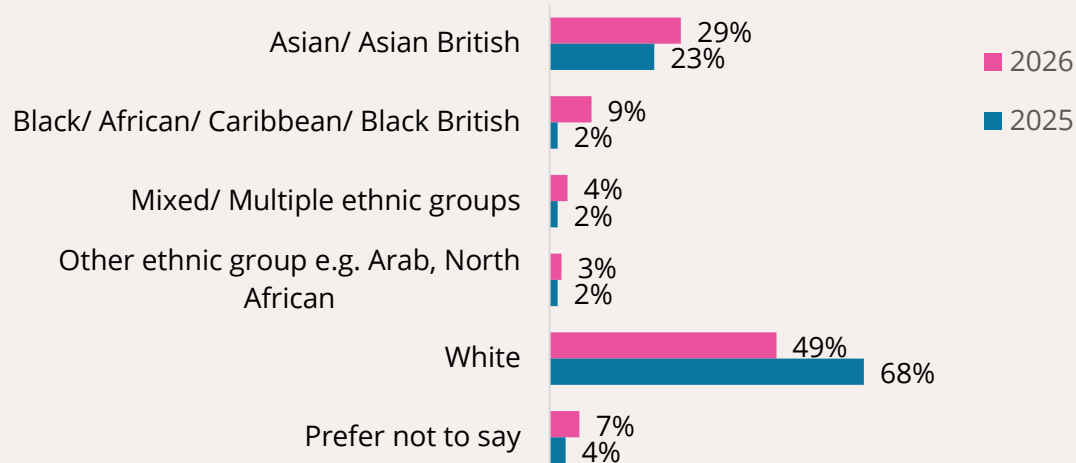
- This is a younger age profile than seen in 2025, driven by an increase in the proportion age 16-24 and 35-44.

Please select the gender which best aligns with your identity



Consistent with 2025, women contributors were the majority.

Which ethnic group best describes you?



Approaching half were from a White ethnic group. Asian/Asian British was the second largest ethnic group, accounting for 29% of respondents.

- Year-on-year comparison suggests that, in 2026, a more inclusive ethnic profile was achieved amongst contributors.

	2026	2025
Do you consider yourself a member of the LGBTQIA+ community?	13%	25%
Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health condition or disability?	10%	18%
Are you neurodivergent?	18%	21%

Data indicates that within the 2026 contributor cohort:

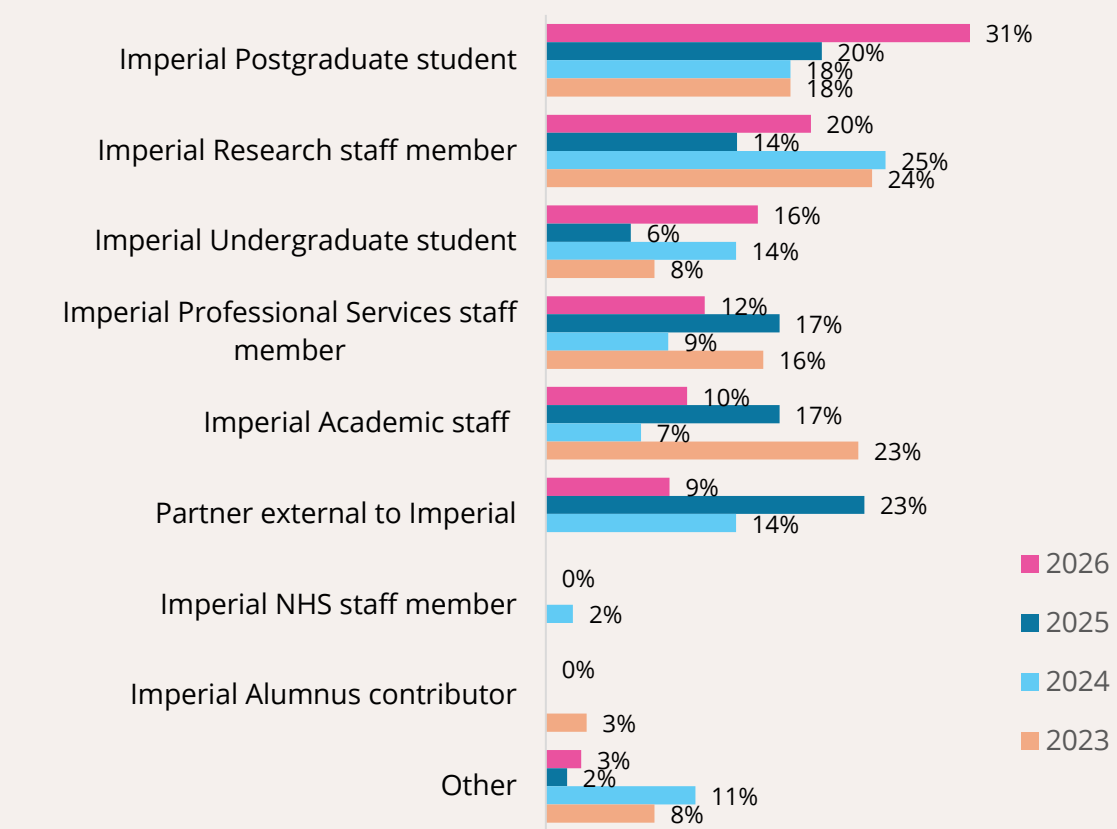
- **1 in 8 identified as LGBTQIA+.**
- **1 in 10 had a disability or health condition that limits day-to-day activities.**
- **1 in 6 identified as neurodivergent.**
- Compared with 2025, the proportion of contributors identifying as LGBTQIA+ or reporting a disability was lower in 2026.

A spread of profiles were represented within the contributor sample, with Imperial Postgraduate students the largest (31%). This was followed by Imperial Research Staff (20%) and Imperial Undergraduate Students (16%).

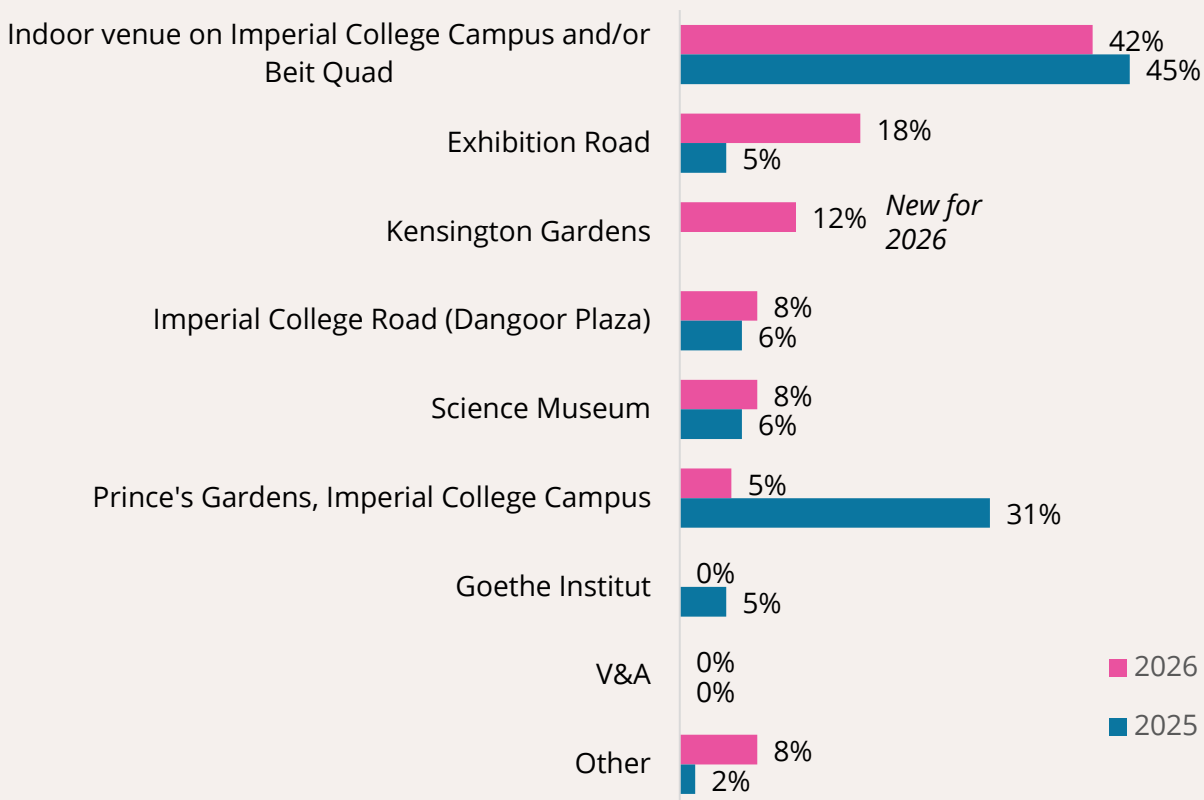


- Comparison with 2025 data suggests a changing contributor profile. Participation amongst Imperial students increased, whilst it is lower amongst Imperial Professional Services and Academic staff. The proportion responding from external partners was also down this year.

Which of the following best describes you?



Where were you based for the majority of your time at the Festival?



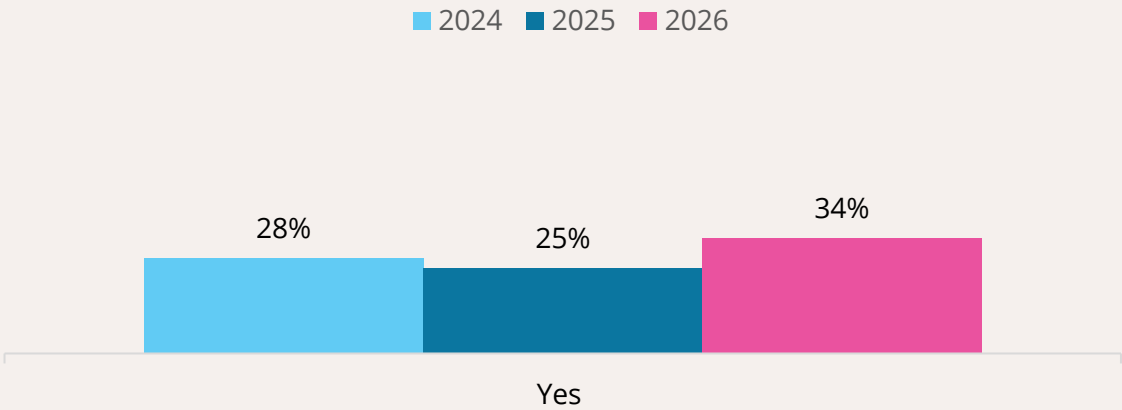
Base: 2026 Total (77), 2025 (64), 2024 (68 assumed), 2023 (66 assumed)

Whilst past participation in public / community / outreach events was high, most contributors were taking part in GERF for the first time (66%).

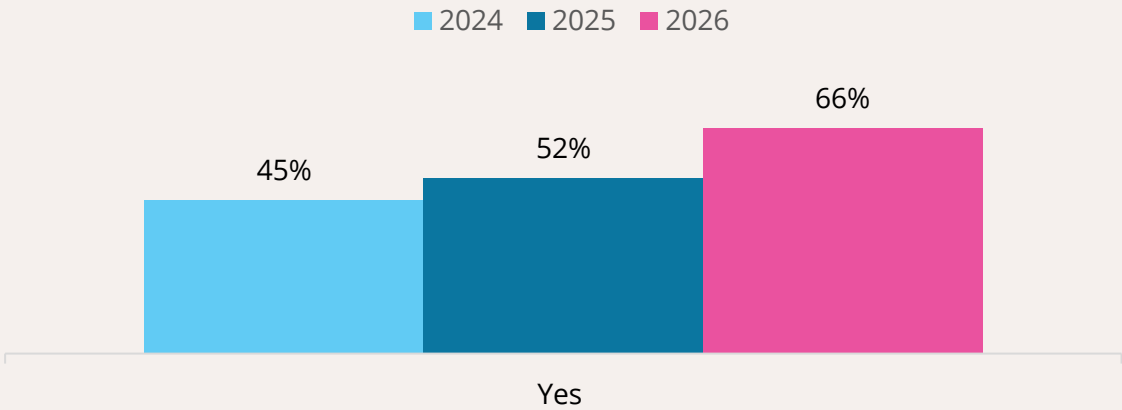
- Year-on-year data suggests that the Festival is increasingly engaging first-time contributors.



Was this your first time participating in a public, community engagement or outreach event (such as Imperial Lates, a public talk, community engagement event or school workshop)



Was this your first time participating in the Festival?



Base: 2026 Total (77), 2025 (64), 2024 (68 assumed),

Contributors offered a range of motivations for participating:

- Sharing research with the public
- Engaging with the general public – and often children / families
- Developing interpersonal skills
- Giving back / contributing to the community
- Learning from the public and gaining feedback
- Enjoyment, volunteering and positive past experiences

“Communicating science, having conversations with the public, making science available to everyone, I've done it in the past and it was so much fun and rewarding.”

Imperial Research staff member, first-time contributor

“I enjoy taking part in outreach programmes and bringing science to the general public.”

Imperial Research staff member, repeat contributor

“I wanted to interact with some of the younger target audience that Imperial was targeting and help play a part in inspiring them for the future.”

Imperial Undergraduate student, first-time contributor

The Festival experience exceeded expectations for the majority of contributors, with around 2 in 3 reporting an experience that was better than anticipated.

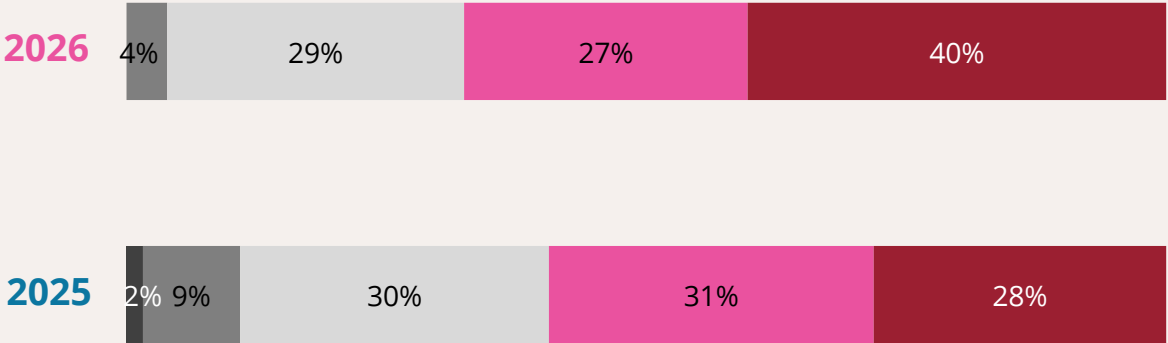
Notably, most of these contributors felt that the Festival experience delivered ‘a lot more than expected’ (40%), highlighting the strength of experience provided.

- Year-on-year data showed a positive increase in the proportion of contributors with exceeded expectations in 2026, although levels remained behind those recorded in 2023 and 2024.

“Expectations were already high - hence the just as expected but this is a good expected!”
Imperial Research Staff Member, repeat contributor



Did the Festival meet your expectations (versus their reasons for taking part)?



■ A lot less than expected ■ A little less than expected ■ As expected
■ A little more than expected ■ A lot more than expected

	2023	2024	2025	2026
EXCEEDED A LITTLE / LOT	72%	74%	59%	68%

Base: 2026 Total (77), 2025 (64), 2024 (68 assumed), 2023 (66 assumed)

Developing public engagement skills was a strong driver of participation.

4 in 5 contributors agreed that they got involved to practice their public engagement skills.

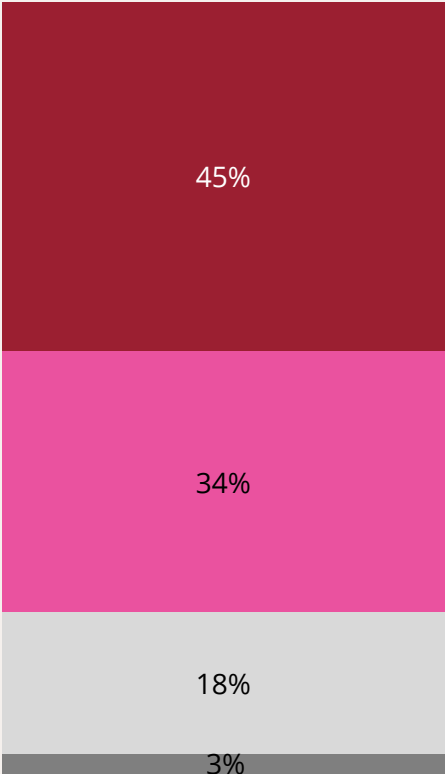
Levels of agreement were similar amongst staff and students.

“GERF provided a unique opportunity to engage directly with the public and showcase how our research can have a real-world impact. I was also keen to gain experience in public engagement, understand how people perceive emerging healthcare technologies, and receive feedback that could help shape future research and deployment strategies. The festival was recommended within the department as an excellent opportunity to share research beyond academia.”

Imperial Research Staff Member, first-time contributor



To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: ‘I got involved in the Great Exhibition Road Festival to practice my public engagement skills’



2026

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree

Four broad themes underpinned the public engagement objectives of contributors:

• Inspiring the next generation of scientists

"I hoped to spark curiosity and an interest in science in young people or any age. I hoped to translate my passion for it to others. I hoped to meet people who do research on what I want to go in and network a little bit too."

Partner external to Imperial, first-time contributor

"Help visitors navigate and enjoy the science as much as possible. Getting kids excited about science and hopefully more of them would choose STEM as their career goal."

Imperial Undergraduate student, first-time contributor

• Share their interests and passions

"Spread the joys of cooking to more people and raise awareness about the different developments ongoing in sustainable cuisine."

Imperial Postgraduate student, first-time contributor

"To teach kids how planes fly with paper planes. I wanted to inspire more people to be as fascinated with aircraft as I am."

Imperial Postgraduate student, repeat contributor

• Raising awareness

"Let people know about sickle cell disease."

Imperial Postgraduate student, first-time contributor

"Our main public engagement aim was to increase awareness of how radar sensing technology can be used in healthcare and independent living applications."

Imperial Research staff member, first-time contributor

"I just wanted people to get a greater appreciation of prosthetics and to understand what people's main questions and ideas about the field are."

Imperial Undergraduate student, first-time contributor

• Obtain feedback

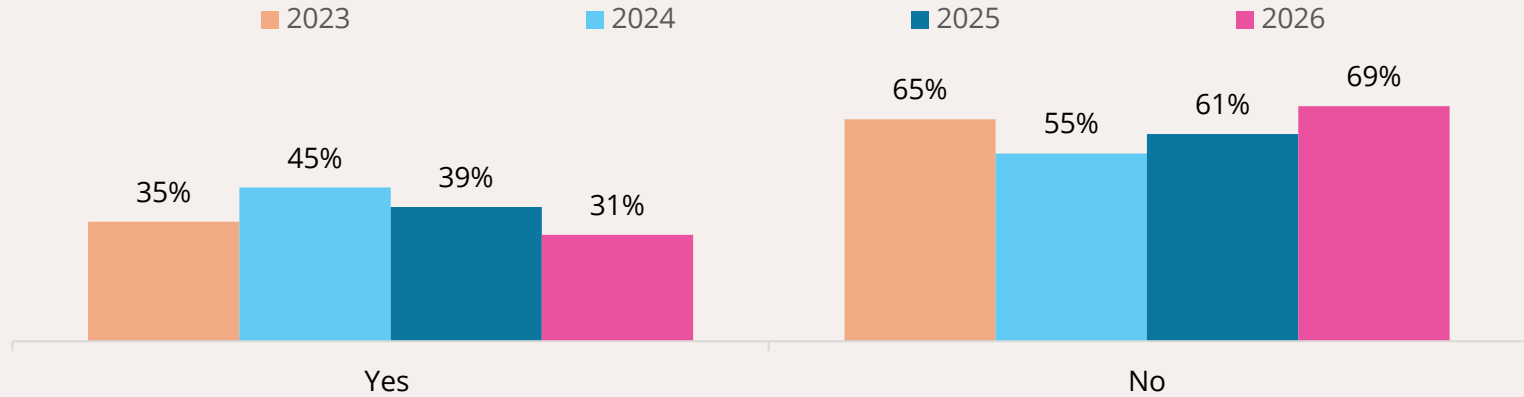
"We wanted to get more feedback on our research prototypes than we can typically accomplish through open calls for participation. It was great being in the Adult Zone, as this made it very easy to do."

Imperial Academic staff member, repeat contributor

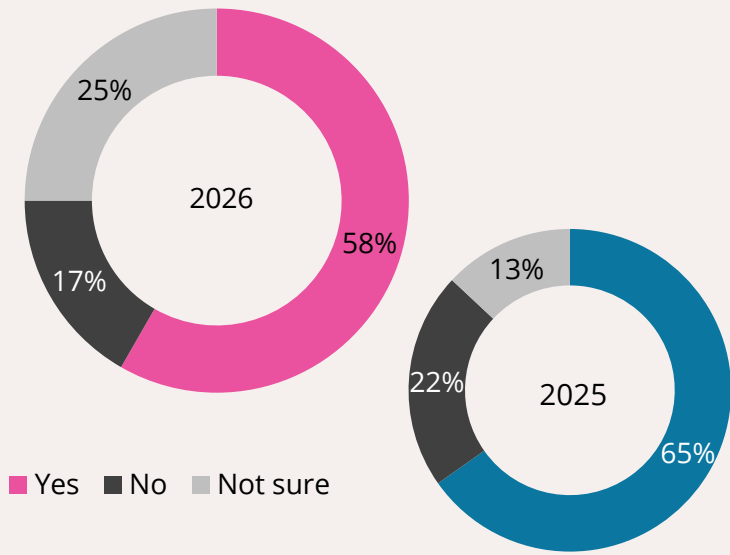
"Get people's opinions on the work we're doing and explain the future of dementia research."

Imperial Postgraduate student, first-time contributor

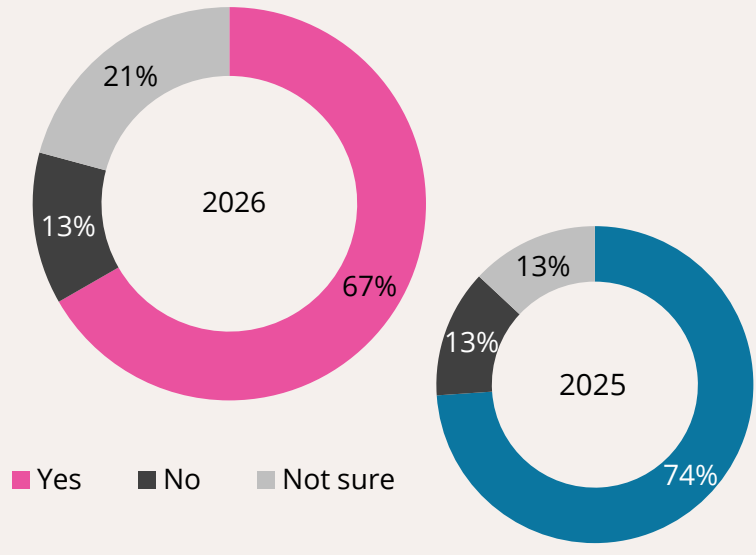
Did you attend any of the Great Exhibition Road Festival engagement training sessions in April and May?



Did you share any of the learning, materials or resources from these sessions with members of your team?



Did you or any of your team use any of the tools or techniques (shared at the training) at the Festival?



3 in 10 contributors took advantage of the pre-Festival training

Of those attending, 2 in 3 put their training into practice at the Festival.

- Indication of declining uptake of training since 2024. Also, lower proportion sharing and using learnings in 2026, when compared to 2025.
- Staff (71%) were more likely than students (47%) to share learnings or materials from the training with others.

Base: 2026 Total (77), 2025 (61), 2024 (68 assumed), 2023 (66 assumed); Those who went on the training 2026 (24)*, 2025 (23)* small base

QUALITATIVE INSIGHT



The training content designed to support interactions with Festival visitors was well received. The practical tips around tailoring and simplifying language and how to start and maintain conversations were highlighted as especially useful.

"The training made me think about an opening hook statement which I used constantly at the festival. Also gave me some ideas for accessibility and primarily about making sure language used is not isolating people by making it too technical."

Imperial Postgraduate Student, first-time contributor

"The skills training was excellent and covered a wide range of topics. Particularly handy for us were the tips on how to draw people in and how to tailor the activity for people with accessibility needs"

Imperial Postgraduate Student, first-time contributor

"The language table of "what scientists say" and "what the public may hear" was especially good at helping members of my team have an idea of how important it is to tailor one's language to the audience. Additionally, the extra resources on how to talk about science."

Partner external to Imperial, repeat contributor

QUALITATIVE INSIGHT



Only a few contributors suggested improvements to the training. Amongst those who did, feedback covered a range of topics, spanning things like the timing of the training and additional content.

"I love [staff member's name] new approach to inclusivity - it would be great to have an additional (short) training on that - even if its online, just a space to have discussions about how to make the stand more inclusive."

Imperial Research Staff, repeat contributor

"Many of my volunteers came on board so late that they missed the training. Possibly a later training session would be good, but you of course need to move over to delivery at some point."

Imperial Professional Services staff, first-time contributor

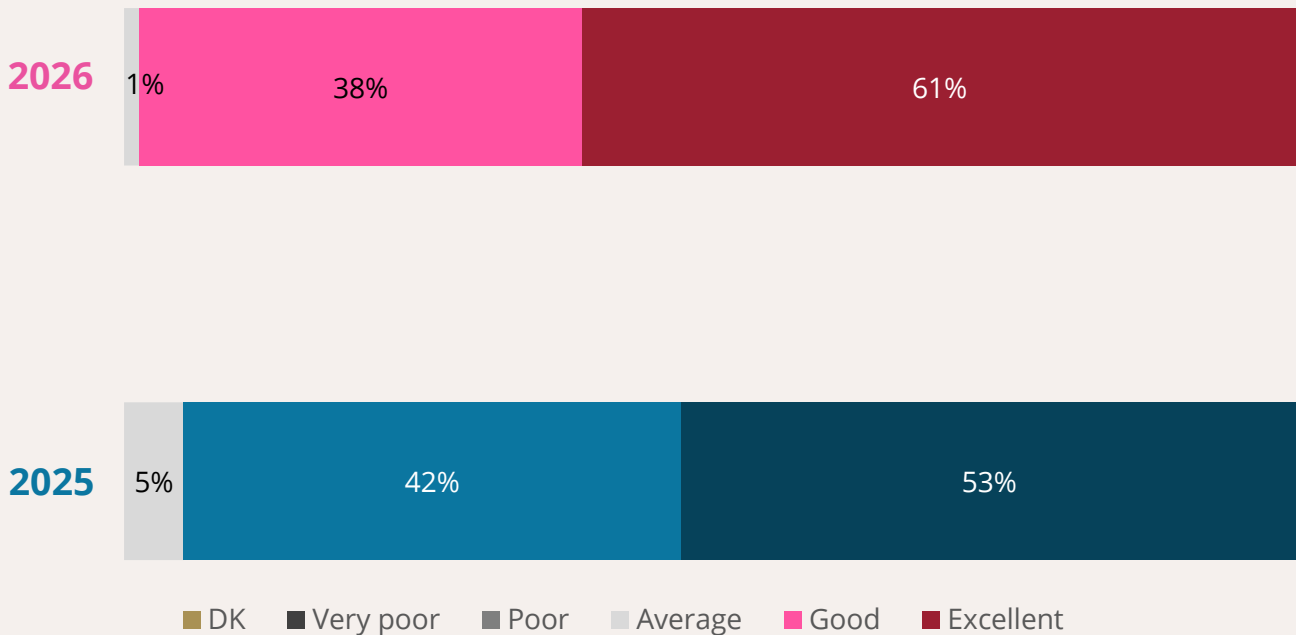
"I think training opportunities for the whole team would be appreciated instead of just representatives relaying the training info back to the team as a whole."

Imperial Undergraduate student, first-time contributor

"Maybe some exercises to simplify concepts to children."

Partner external to Imperial, first-time contributor

How would you rate the experience overall?



	2023	2024	2025	2026
EXCELLENT / GOOD	92%	96%	95%	99%

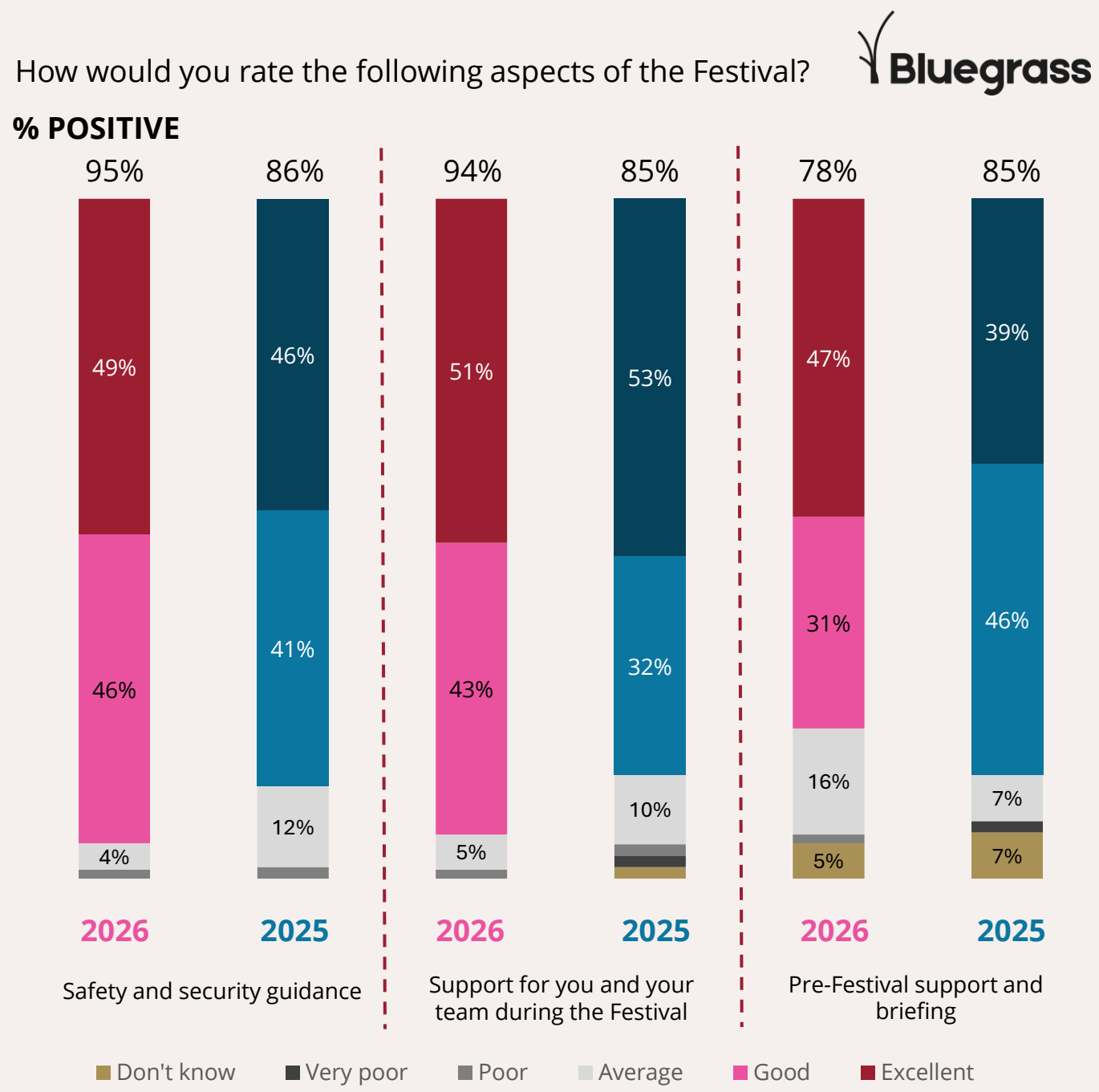
Base: 2026 (77), 2025 Total (59), 2024 (68 assumed), 2023 (66 assumed)

Satisfaction levels amongst contributors were exceptionally high, with 99% rating their overall experience positively.

- 3 in 5 had an ‘excellent’ overall experience, exceeding the level obtained in 2025.
- 2026 rating represented the highest overall satisfaction score of the past four years.

Contributors felt well supported throughout their Festival experience, with almost all satisfied with the safety and security guidance provided and the support received during the Festival.

- While pre-Festival support scored less strongly than other areas, there was an increase in 'excellent' ratings this year. This improvement was offset by a decrease in the proportion giving positive ratings overall.



Base: 2026 Total (77), 2025 (59) *Percentages less than or equal to 2% have been removed from this graph

How would you rate the following aspects of the Festival?

Safety and security guidance

	2023	2024	2025	2026
EXCELLENT / GOOD	80%	83%	86%	95%

- Positive ratings for safety and security have increased year-on-year since 2023.

Support for you and your team during the Festival

	2023	2024	2025	2026
EXCELLENT / GOOD	78%	94%	85%	94%

- Positive ratings in 2026 have returned to 2024 levels.

Pre-Festival support and briefing

	2023	2024	2025	2026
EXCELLENT / GOOD	80%	89%	85%	78%

- Satisfaction with pre-Festival support has declined this year, reaching its lowest level in the past 4 years.

The Festival’s strongest areas of impact continue to be delivering a rewarding and motivating experience and supporting the development of transferrable skills.

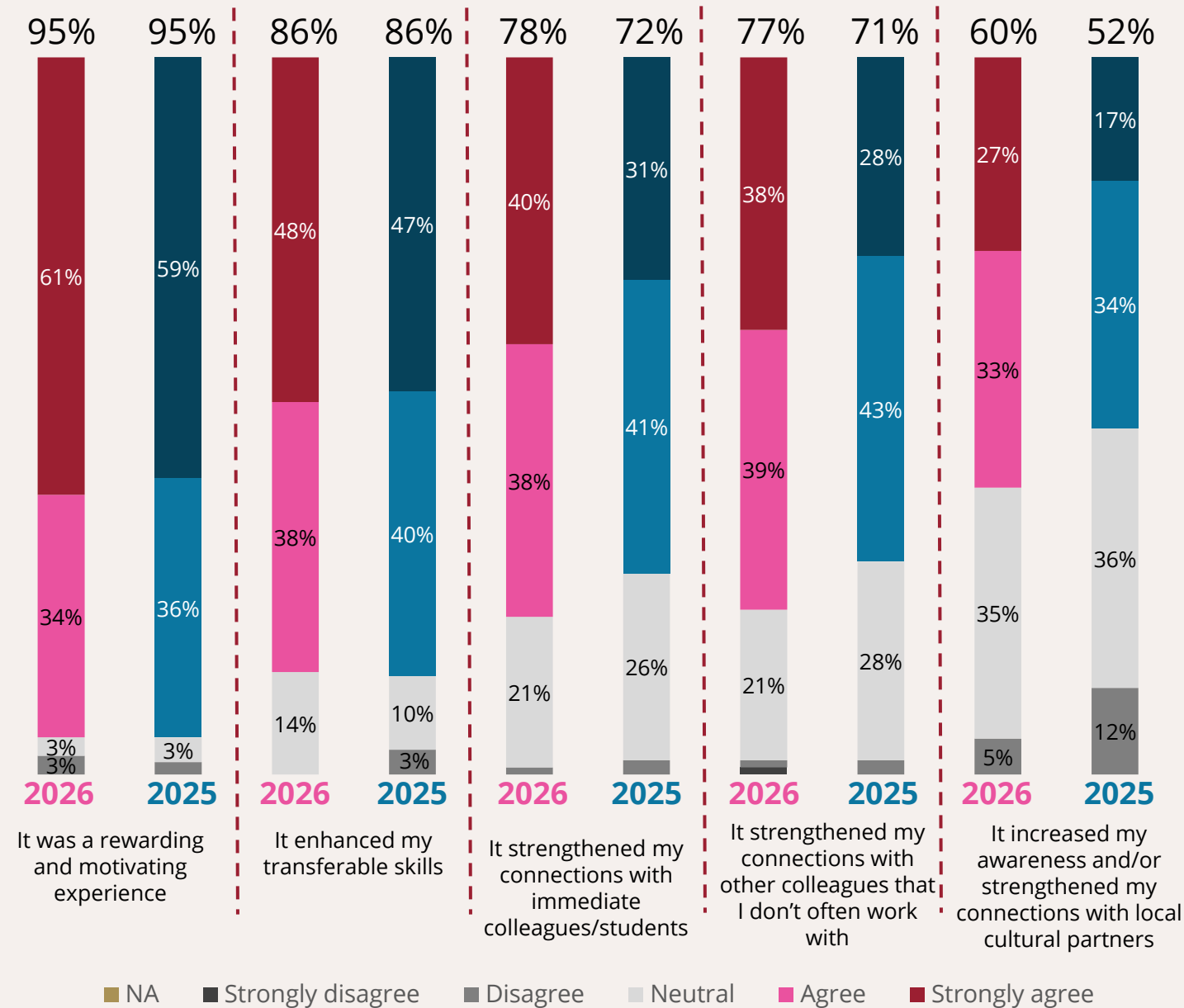
It is also playing an increasingly important role in strengthening connections, with both close and more distant colleagues.

However, it performed less strongly when it came to strengthening connections with local cultural partners.

Base: 2026 Total (77), 2025 (58);
*Percentages less than or equal to 2% have been removed from this graph



How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the Festival's potential outcomes for you?
% POSITIVE



How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the Festival's potential outcomes for you?

It was a rewarding and motivating experience

	2023	2024	2025	2026
STRONGLY AGREE / AGREE	96%	94%	95%	95%

It enhanced my transferable skills

	2023	2024	2025	2026
STRONGLY AGREE / AGREE	84%	85%	86%	86%

- Findings relating to the event being rewarding and motivating have been very consistent since 2023.
- The same can be said of the proportion agreeing that contributing to the event enhanced transferable skills.

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the Festival's potential outcomes for you?

It strengthened my connections with immediate colleagues/ students

	2023	2024	2025	2026
STRONGLY AGREE / AGREE	78%	76%	72%	78%

It strengthened my connections with other colleagues that I don't often work with
**2023 'with other colleagues'*

	2023	2024	2025	2026
STRONGLY AGREE / AGREE	60%	65%	71%	77%

It increased my awareness and/or strengthened my connections with local cultural partners

	2023	2024	2025	2026
STRONGLY AGREE / AGREE	43%	60%	52%	60%

- The proportion feeling strengthened connections with colleagues / students increased in 2026, matching the 2023 peak.
- The steady year-on-year increase in the proportion who feel the experience strengthened connections with colleagues outside of their immediate team continued in 2026.
- Following a decline in 2025, awareness of cultural partners increased in 2026, returning to levels seen in 2024.

When looking at impacts on research / contributors' work, the extent to which the Festival had a positive impact varied.

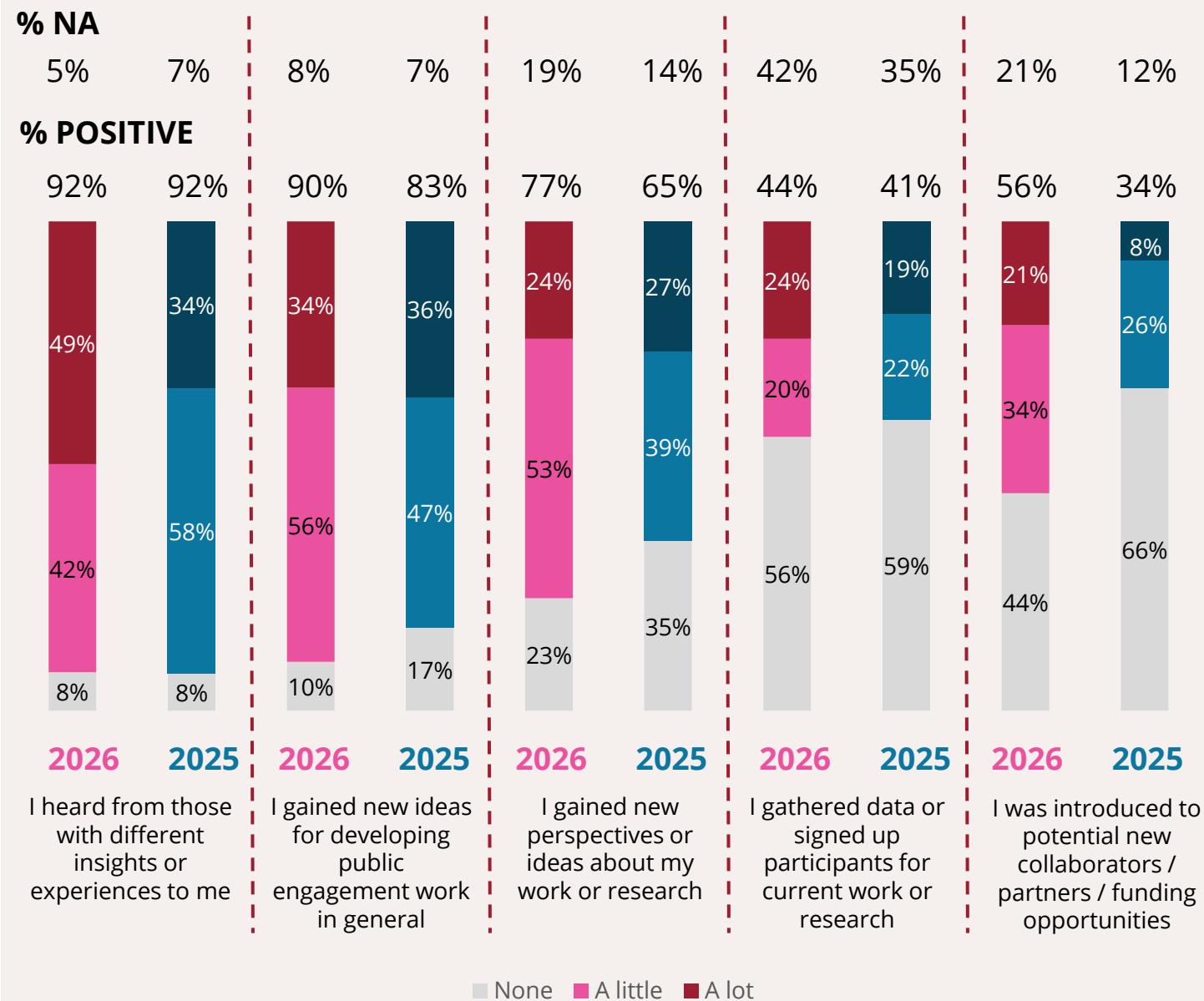
Amongst those who said it applied to them, the overwhelming majority agreed that they had the chance to hear varied insights and experiences or gain new ideas.

Obtaining new perspectives about their work was an impact for over around 3 in 4.

Around 2 in 5 contributors obtained data or signed up new research participants, although the findings suggest that this wasn't an objective for a sizable proportion of contributors.



To what extent did participating in the Festival have any of the following outcomes?



Base: 2026 Total (77) 2025, (57); total minus not applicable (45-73)

To what extent did participating in the Festival have any of the following outcomes?

I heard from those with different insights or experiences to me

	2023	2024	2025	2026
STRONGLY AGREE / AGREE	80%	87%	92%	92%

I gained new ideas for developing my public engagement work in general

	2023	2024	2025	2026
STRONGLY AGREE / AGREE	82%	92%	83%	90%

I gained new perspectives or ideas about my work or research

	2023	2024	2025	2026
STRONGLY AGREE / AGREE	56%	73%	65%	77%

- The proportion of contributors engaging with those with different insights and experiences remained consistent with 2025 levels.
- The proportion who gained new public engagement ideas increased in 2026, reversing the decline seen in 2025.
- The proportion of contributors who feel they gained new perspectives on their work increased, with 2026 showing the highest agreement levels so far.

To what extent did participating in the Festival have any of the following outcomes?

I gathered data or signed up participants for current work or research

	2023	2024	2025	2026
STRONGLY AGREE / AGREE	24%	37%	41%	44%

I was introduced to potential new collaborators/ partners/ funding opportunities

	2023	2024	2025	2026
STRONGLY AGREE / AGREE	24%	44%	34%	56%

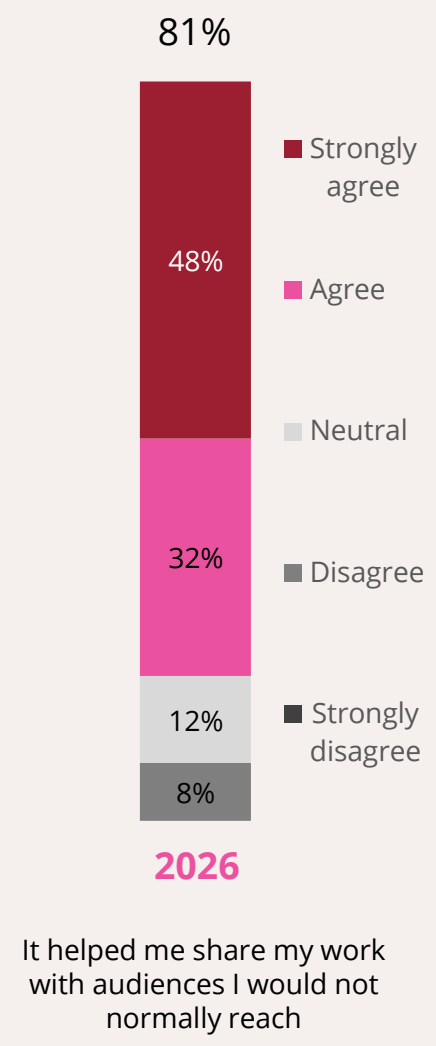
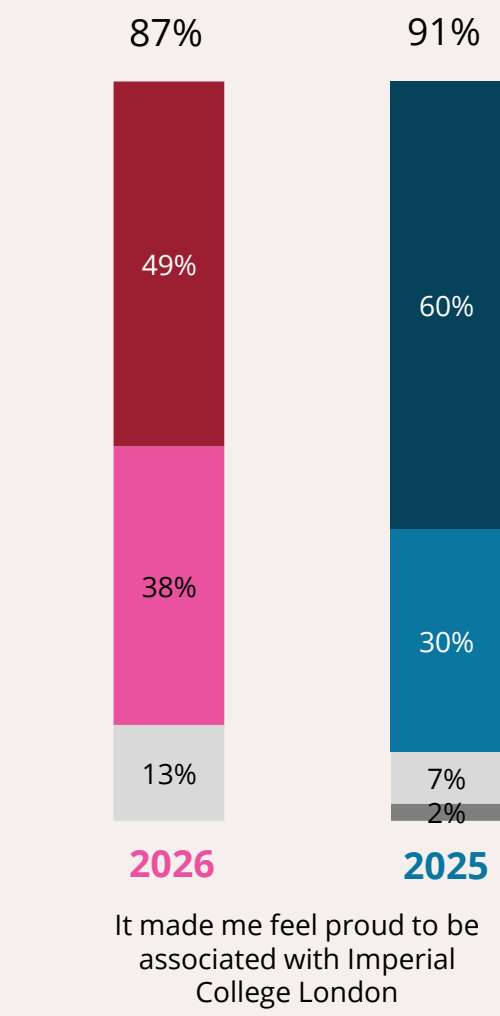
- Although fewer contributors were using the Festival to recruit participants or gather data in 2026, the year-on-year picture suggests that contributors are increasingly able to achieve these objectives through their Festival activity.
- The results for making connections with potential partners returned its highest agreement levels to date.

For almost 9 in 10 contributors, the Festival made them proud to be associated with Imperial College London.

- Whilst overall positive ratings remain broadly consistent, the strength of positive sentiment declined in 2026 compared with 2025.

Given that engaging new audiences was a key motivation for many contributors, it is encouraging that 4 in 5 contributors felt they achieved this objective.

% POSITIVE



Base: 2026 Total (77), 2025 excluding external partners (43)

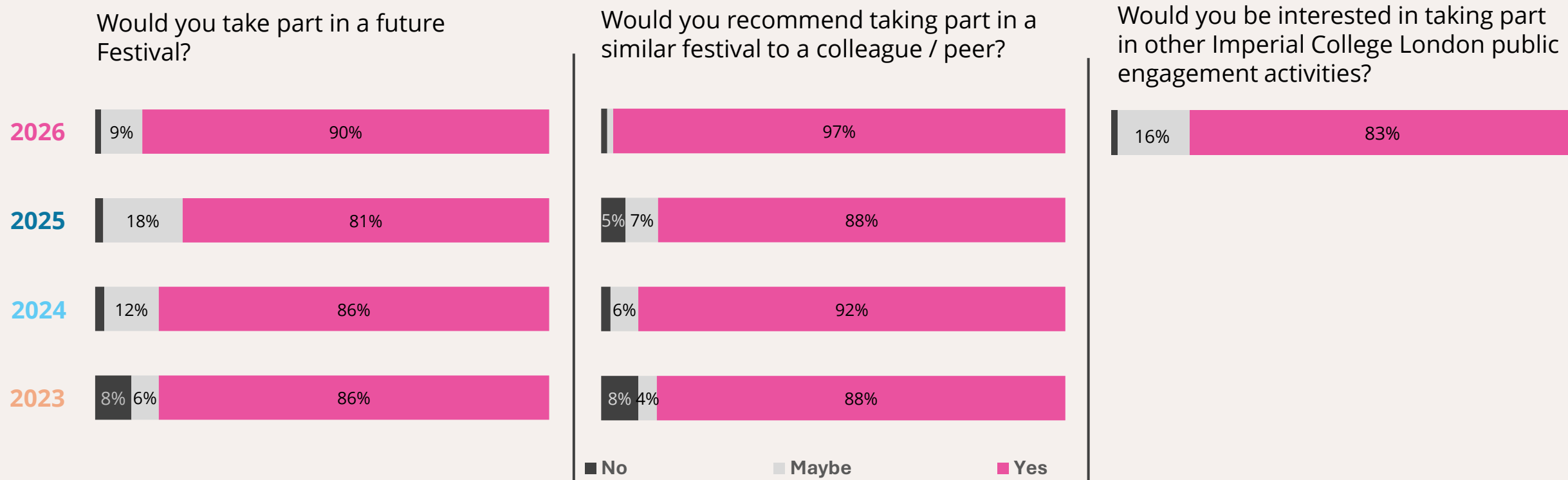
9 in 10 contributors can see themselves taking part in future Festivals.

- This was up on 2025 levels.

At 83%, interest in taking part in wider engagement activities was more muted.

At 97% positive, contributors were almost Bluegrass unanimous in recommending participation to their peers.

- The 2026 rating was an increase in positivity, after remaining consistent between 2023 and 2025.



Base: 2026 Total (77), 2025 (57), 2024 (68 assumed), 2023 (66 assumed) *Percentages less than or equal to 2% have been removed from this graph

CONTRIBUTORS

Two in-depth interviews undertaken with contributors, to obtain more detailed insights around their motivations and experience with the Festival.

MOTIVATIONS FOR TAKING PART

This contributor is a senior teaching fellow in the Department of Mathematics at Imperial College London, where they also lead the department's outreach efforts. They have been involved in the Festival on numerous occasions but, over the past two years, have taken on a more prominent leadership role, responsible for organising and coordinating activities for the Festival within the maths department.

"It's really kind of my thing. I really enjoy. I always have enjoyed kind of giving back or teaching."

They are passionate about maths and enjoy sharing that enthusiasm with others. For this contributor, the Festival is one of the best opportunities to inspire people who wouldn't normally engage with maths and encourage them to take an interest in the subject.

I find lots of things in maths very exciting and beautiful, or cool or just fun. So, I like to try and give others that same reaction or open that door to them. The Festival is naturally a great place to do that.



CONTRIBUTORS: CASE STUDY 1 (2 of 3)

EVENT ORGANISATION

Although this contributor received support from the GERN team, they found the support in past years to be more practical and detailed. Previously there was a dedicated staff member whose primary focus was maths but, this year, they felt there was less direct support. They emphasised that this was not the fault of any individuals and that those who did help were great.

“If they want to expand the Festival and they want to grow then it would be good if we had someone a little bit more dedicated again, because we can run more ideas off them.”

Although this contributor was unable to attend the training session this year, they found it convenient that the slides were provided. The training offered useful information about the Festival, health and safety, and how to engage with people.

This contributor noted that they feel valued as a contributor - both within their department and by the central Festival team.



“

From my perspective, what we've offered has gotten better, so it's got kind of more streamlined and more focused and targeted, and we do a bit more. And I think part of that has come from the festival team doing a better job of, kind of you know, organising the festival better.

”

I've always thought it kind of acted in many, many, many kind of faceted ways, but I suppose the biggest one for me is just to help bridge the connection between scientists and lay people.

THE IMPACT

This contributor views the Festival as a valuable opportunity for increasing visibility and promoting Imperial as a place to study.

In particular, they see it as a good platform to engage with young people and show that maths can be fun and interesting. Additionally, they believe it's a good opportunity to interact with parents and demonstrate what Imperial has to offer.

"They are the next generation that will shape the future, and if we can get more of them interested in studying at Imperial, even if it's not maths, even if it's just you know Imperial and science and whatever, that's great."

This contributor wondered whether the team could organise another event similar to GERF through the year. They feel that the maths department has the capacity to be involved in an additional activity.



MOTIVATIONS FOR TAKING PART

This contributor is a second-year medical student at Imperial College London who works with the 'Invisible Warrior Project', to raise awareness of sickle cell disease. They volunteered at the Festival for the first time last year, and after participating in a number of other events, returned this year as a contributor. They enjoy sharing their passion for science with those who are eager to learn and is interested in a variety of public engagement activities.

"It's just nice because it makes your work feel important because there's people who are genuinely curious about it who want to get to know what you're doing. So, I think it's really nice."

One of this contributor's main motivations for taking part in the Festival was to encourage people to join the blood donor register and get tested for their sickle cell genotype. They see the Festival as an exciting opportunity to improve their scientific communication skills but also acknowledge the importance of the cause they are involved in.

I think it really improves my scientific communication as well, which is really important in my career. So, I think it was really nice to practice explaining science in kind of layman terms or in terms that are a little bit easier to understand. So, I think I do appreciate that as well.



EVENT ORGANISATION

This contributor was very impressed with the organisation and communication of the event, particularly given the size of the Festival. They felt everything was managed well and they knew who to contact if they encountered any issues.

"I think we were really good in terms of, like, we had all the equipment we needed. I think that was all organised really well, and yeah, I think it was really good. It was really smooth sailing."

They found the training session prior to the Festival very useful, especially learning about language and how to interact with different audiences. They also noted that they felt valued as a contributor and enjoyed working as part of a team.

“There is just so much that goes on behind the scenes of organising something, especially when it comes to projects like this that are always in someone's spare time, they're not what their day-to-day job is, so it's a lot of love and passion that goes into it, especially with something like sickle cell.”



CONTRIBUTORS: CASE STUDY 2 (3 of 3)



THE IMPACT

The experience of being a contributor at GEF has been very positive for this contributor. They found their role very meaningful and enjoyed interacting with a variety of different people. They see the Festival as a valuable opportunity for people at Imperial to communicate science and research to the public.

"I think the nicest thing was to kind of see a lot of the kids who came and were reflecting on what they learned, and it was really nice to see that they had actually taken away something from it and learned something from it. I just thought it was so mature of them to kind of understand what sickle cell was and to have that empathy for people who go through it."

Previously they felt that the Festival was mainly beneficial for kids but, this year, they interacted with a lot more adults and found them to be equally as curious and eager to learn. They noted that it's nice to see, as events go on, that more and more people are becoming aware of sickle cell.

This contributor is very interested in being involved in the Festival again and has also encouraged friends to participate.

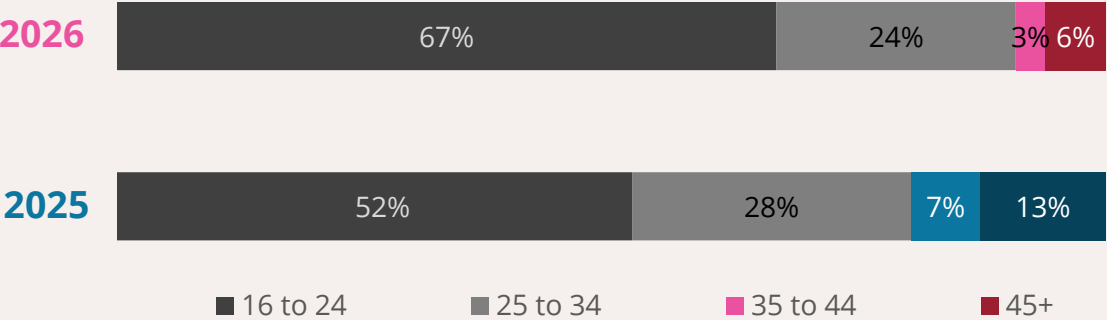
"I would say that it's a really nice celebration of science and people's work and kind of curiosity in general, and it's a really nice way to step out your comfort zone and learn new things and kind of keep things fresh."

VOLUNTEERS

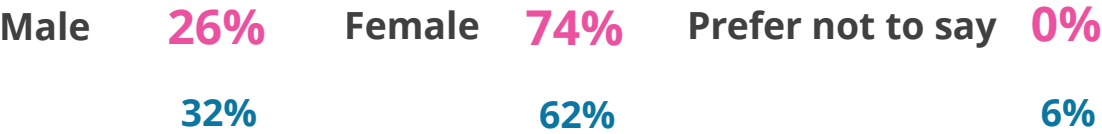
Profile Experience Impacts

A total of 34 volunteers responded to the invitation to share feedback on their volunteering experience. Given the small sample size, commentary is limited to topline findings and does not include direct year-on-year comparison.

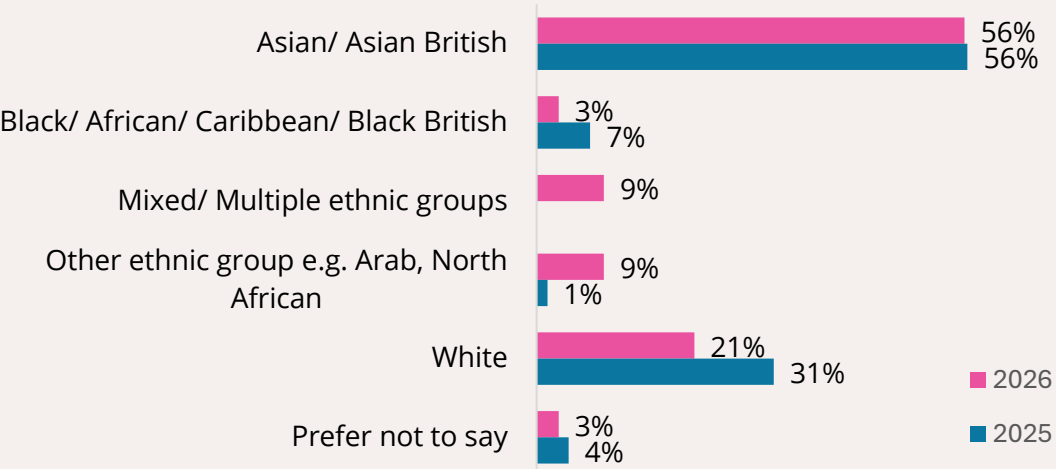
What is your age?



Please select the gender which best aligns with your identity



Which ethnic group best describes you?



Base: 2026 Total (33-34)* small base, 2025 (70-71)

Most volunteers within the sample were aged 16-24, although age profiles up to 45+ were included.

Approximately 1 in 4 of those responding to the survey were men; 3 in 4 were women.

Over half of respondents were Asian/Asian British.

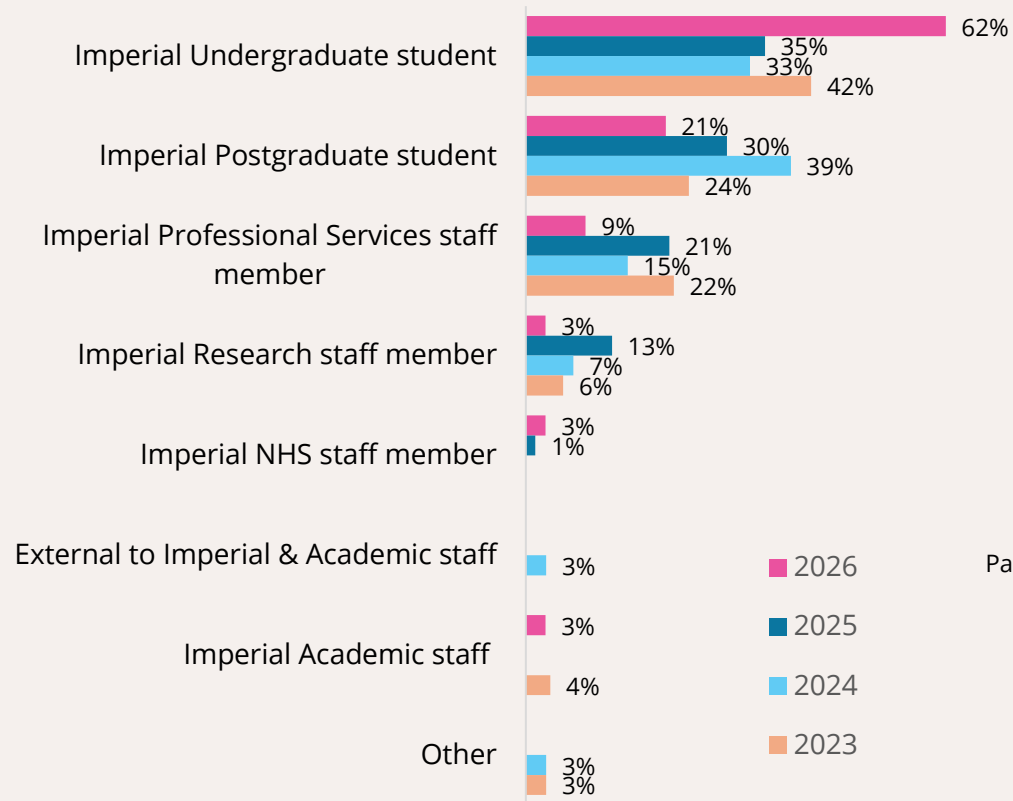
Representation from LGBTQIA+, disabled and neurodivergent volunteers was achieved.

	2025	2026
Do you consider yourself a member of the LGBTQIA+ community?	10%	15%
Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health condition or disability?	6%	9%
Are you neurodivergent?	7%	9%

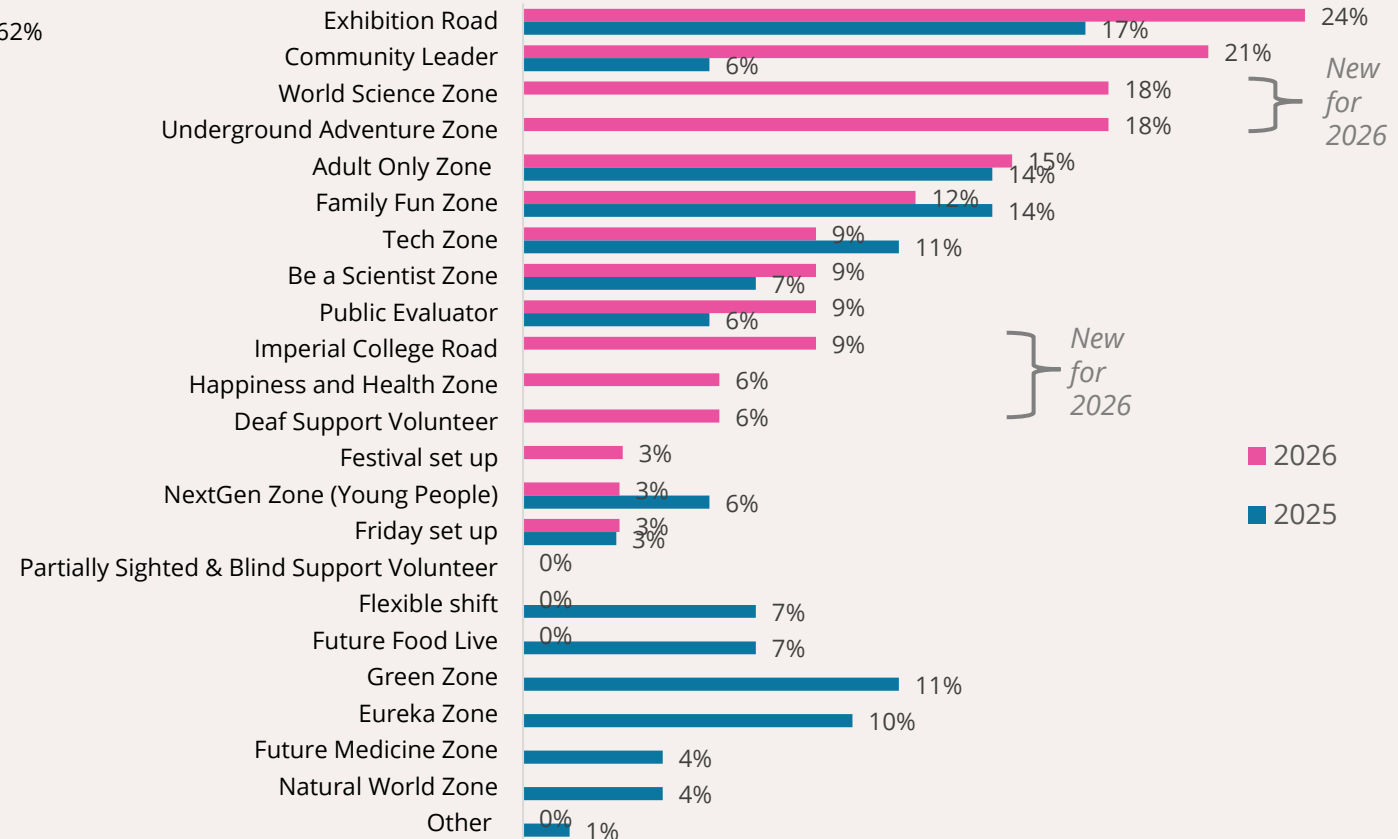
Most volunteers within the sample were undergraduate students.

- A broad range of volunteer roles were represented amongst those responding to the survey – some new for 2026.

Which of the following best describes you?



What volunteer role(s) did you do at the Festival this year?

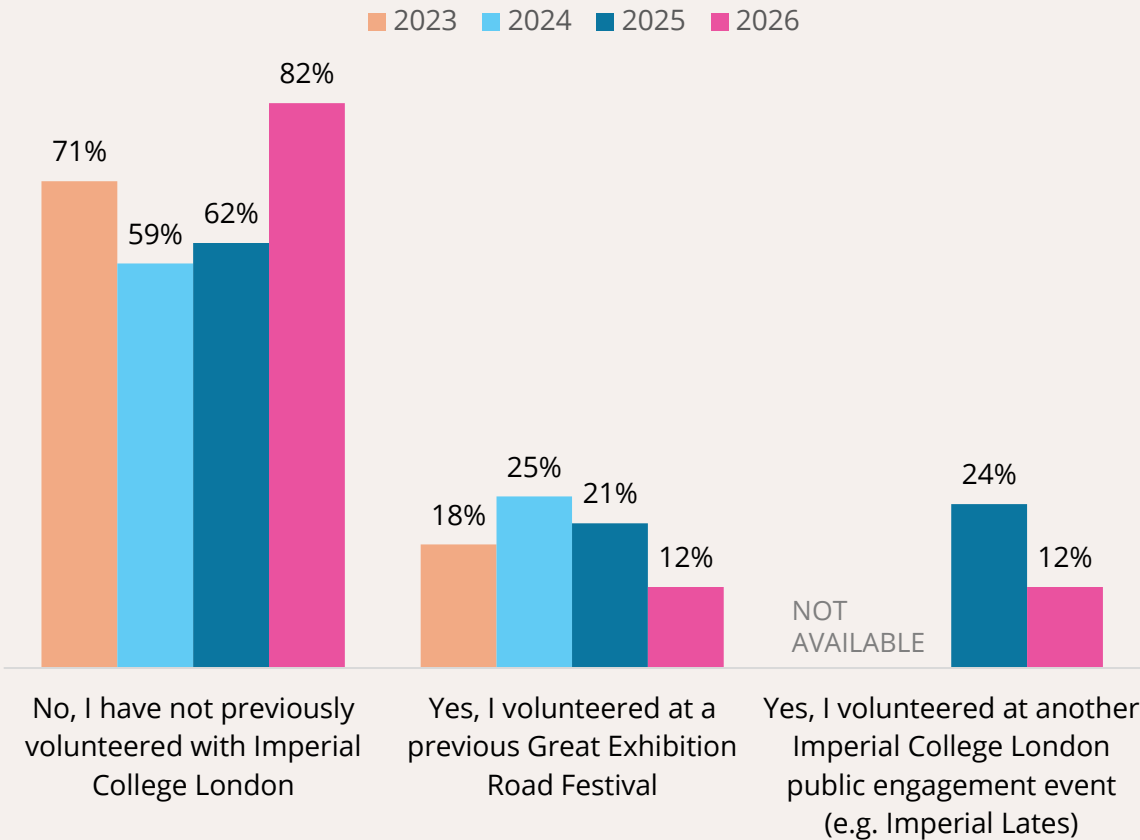


Most survey respondents were volunteering with Imperial for the first time.

- Only a small proportion - around 1 in 10 - had volunteered at GERF before.

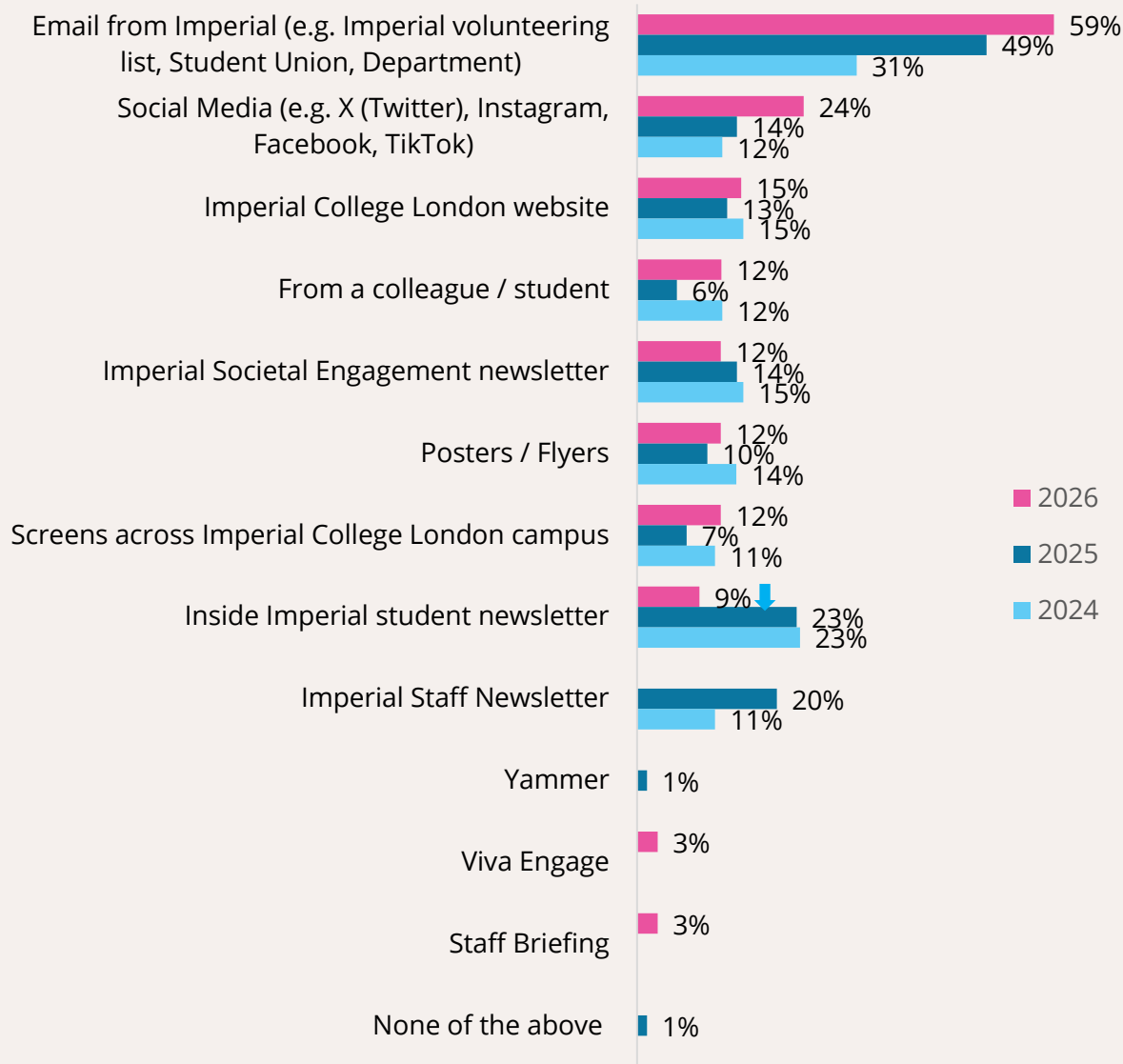


Have you previously volunteered at any of the following events?



Base: 2026 Total (34)* small base, 2025 (71), 2024 (72 assumed), 2023 (60 assumed)

How did you hear about the opportunity to volunteer at the Festival?



Based on those surveyed, volunteers were most likely to find out about the GEF volunteering opportunity via an email from Imperial.

- This was often recalled as a departmental or a direct Festival email, although a sizeable proportion couldn't remember the email source.

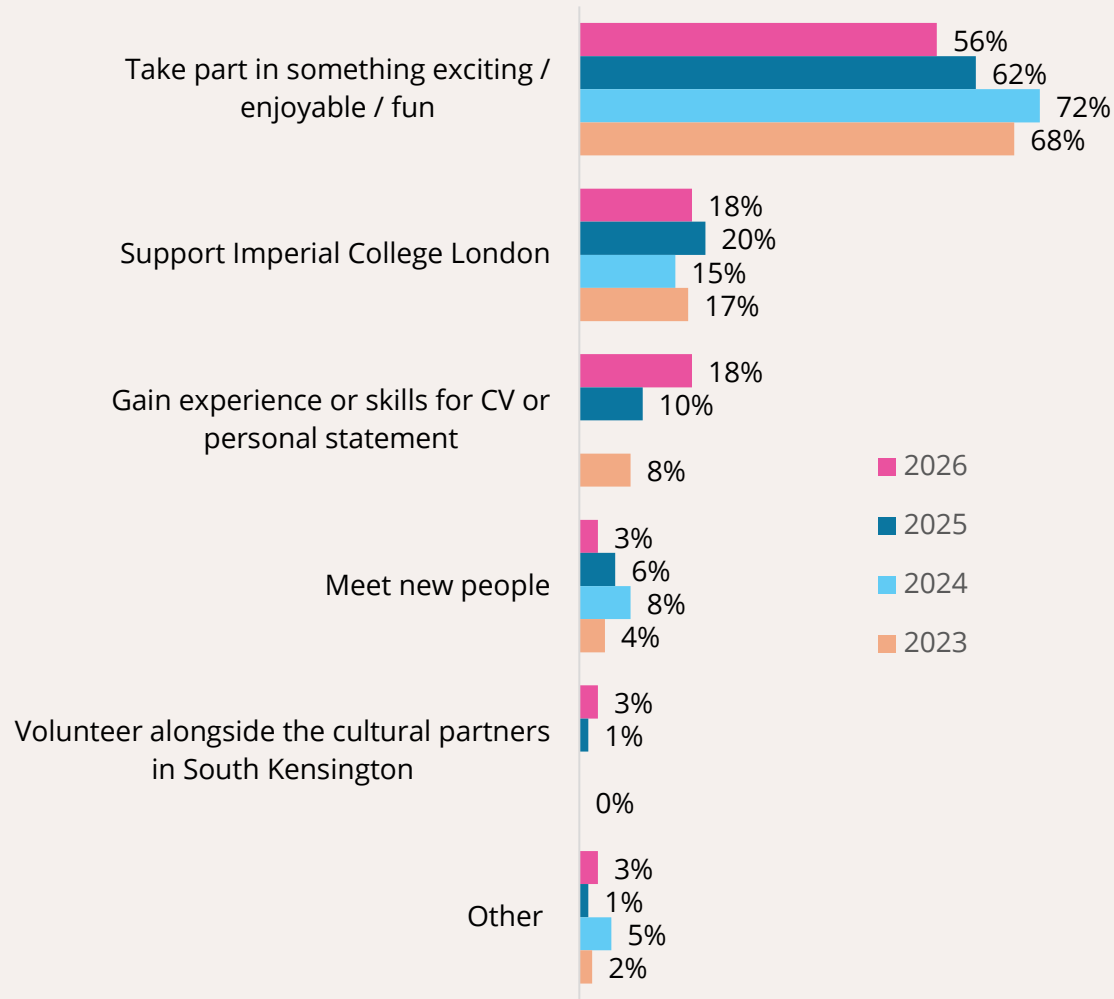
Base: 2026 Total (34)* small base, 2025 (71), 2024 (72 assumed); Those receiving email (35); Those saying social media (10)

Based on those surveyed, the most common reason for volunteering at GERV was the thought that it would be fun and exciting.

- Supporting Imperial and gaining experience were also motivators for a small proportion.



What was your main reason for volunteering at the Festival?

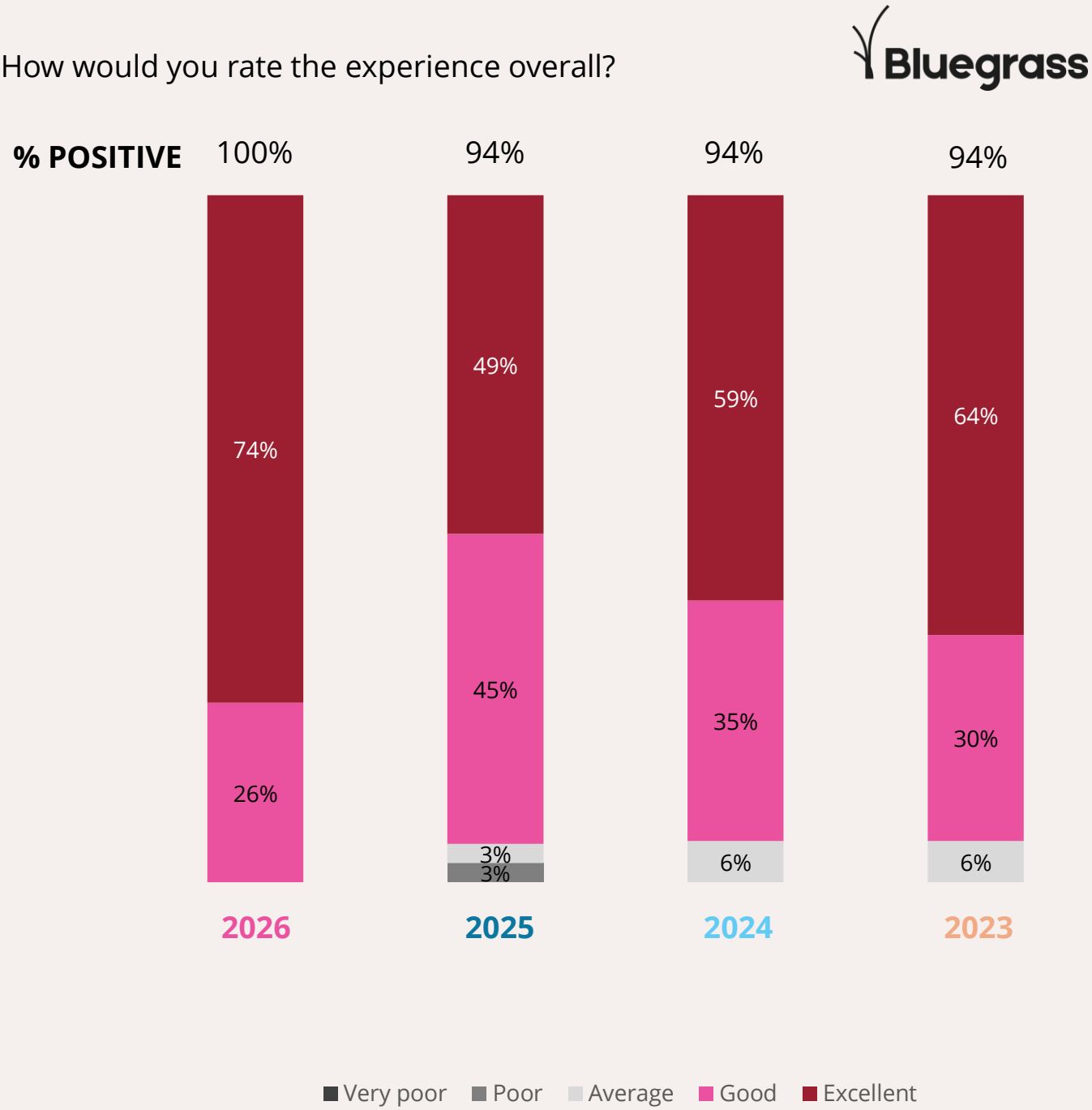


Base: 2026 Total (34)* small base, 2025 (71), 2024 (72 assumed), 2023 (60 assumed)

All volunteers surveyed had a positive overall experience at the Festival.

- Most rated their experience as 'excellent'.

Base: 2026 Total (34)* small base, 2025 (71), 2024 (72 assumed), 2023 (60 assumed)



QUALITATIVE INSIGHT

- Volunteers' strong levels of satisfaction were linked to the Festival's ability to offer a rewarding, inspiring and enjoyable experience.

"Volunteering at such an impactful festival was an excellent decision to make and I believe I would do the same event next year if I had a chance to do so. Thank you."

Imperial Postgraduate student, first-time volunteer

"You are doing amazing. Keep doing, I loved the event and had a very positive experience."

Imperial Postgraduate student, first-time volunteer

"It was an absolutely amazing experience, and everyone was just incredible!"

Imperial Postgraduate student, first-time volunteer

- Some also felt it was a great community building exercise. They liked being part of that collective spirit.

"People, staff, other volunteers. Networking part was the best: it boosted my confidence and helped me to feel that I am a part of Imperial, a part of the Festival."

Imperial Postgraduate student, first-time volunteer

"Meeting new people! I had lot of fun with my immediate team."

Imperial Professional Services staff member, first-time volunteer

“

Meeting and socialising with other people who are in different years and study different courses.

Imperial Undergraduate student, first-time volunteer

”

All aspects of the volunteering process were highly valued.

- The overall experience and support during the event itself receiving only 'good' and 'excellent' ratings.
- The pre-Festival briefing stands out as having a comparatively lower rating amongst the sample.

QUALITATIVE SUGGESTION:

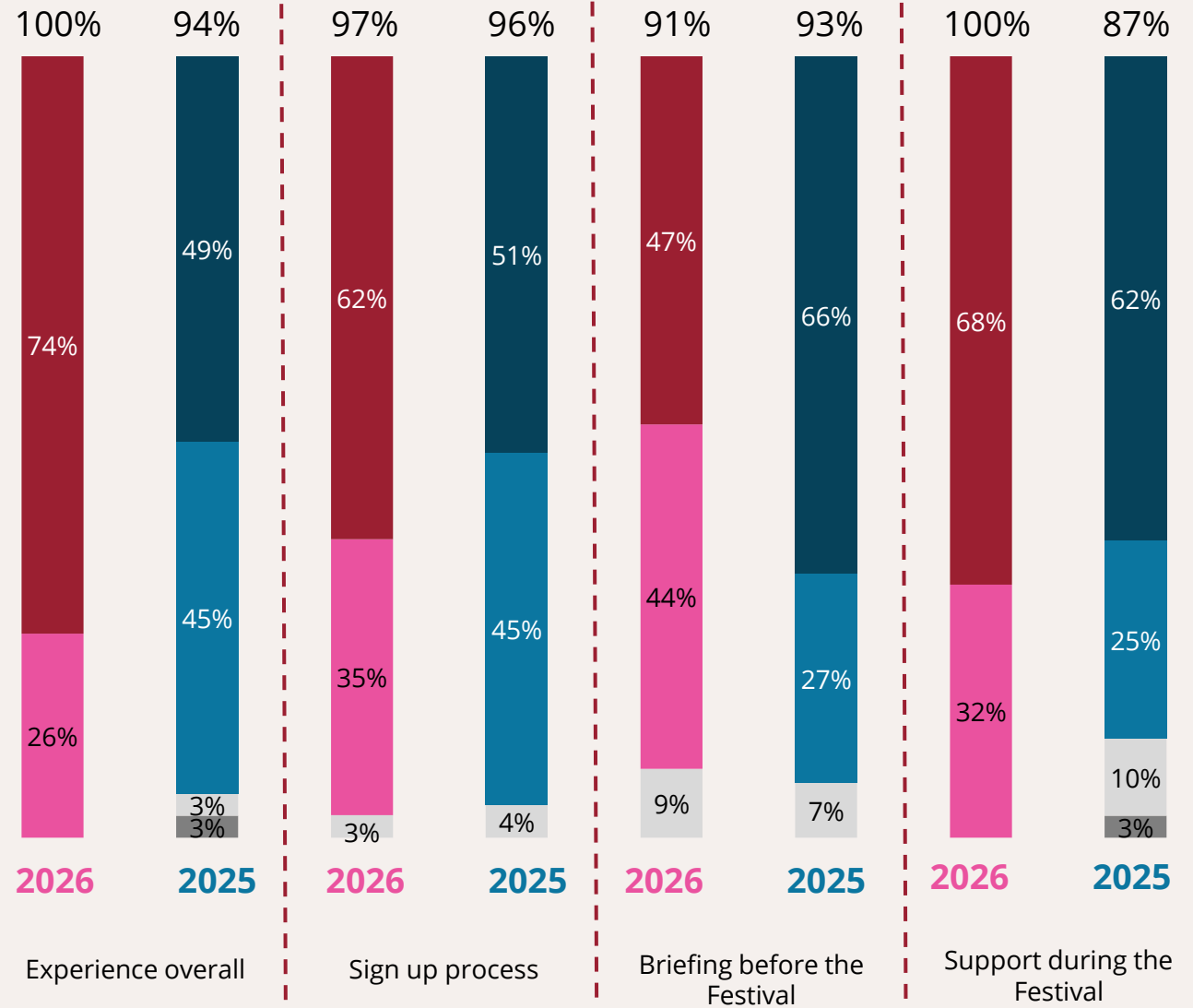
"A briefing document would be more helpful to supplement a walk-around on the day itself."

Base: 2026 Total (34)* small base, 2025 (71)

How would you rate the following aspects of the Festival?



% POSITIVE



Don't know Very poor Poor Average Good Excellent

QUALITATIVE INSIGHT



- Volunteers consistently felt that the Festival was a valuable learning opportunity, which enhanced confidence, communication skills, and teamwork. Working with the public and children were central to this.

"Playing a public-facing role gave me the chance to enhance my communication skills."

Imperial undergraduate student, repeat volunteer

"It strengthened my skills and interest in working with children."

Imperial undergraduate student, first-time volunteer

- For a number of volunteers, the experience provided increased belief in themselves and their ability to engage with the public in an open space.

"Public engagement is nowhere near as scary as it has seemed."

Imperial Postgraduate student, first-time volunteer

"It really helped me to believe I can be helpful and people will be happy with me helping them."

Imperial Postgraduate student, first-time volunteer

"The Festival allowed me to talk to and work with other volunteers and interact with members of the public, helping me to be more confident in public."

Imperial undergraduate student, first-time volunteer

QUALITATIVE INSIGHT

- Volunteers were broadly positive of the organisation and logistics of the Festival.
- However, when challenges were experienced, these mainly revolved around communication gaps in the briefing, a lack of role clarity, and workload pressures.

"It would have been nicer to have a clearer briefing and know exactly what my role was."

Imperial undergraduate student, first-time volunteer

"I feel like they could have stayed a few more minutes to demonstrate more clearly."

Imperial undergraduate student, repeat volunteer

"I'm not sure how actively inter-volunteer communication was used."

Imperial Research staff member, first-time volunteer

"Since there were only 3 volunteers, it was a bit tricky to coordinate the wheelchair users as well as the rest of the group."

Imperial Research staff member, first-time volunteer

- Some volunteers offered suggestions based on the challenges they faced, noting:
 - **A briefing document to refer back to**
 - **Follow-up communication to confirm they feel fully briefed**
 - **Announce volunteer opportunities ahead of time**

QUALITATIVE INSIGHT

- Volunteers were very positive about the Tony's chocolate they received as a thank you.

"The chocolate is a very lovely reward!"

Imperial Research staff member, repeat volunteer

- Other suggestions for showing appreciation were:
 - Volunteer references/proof of volunteering**
 - Experience letters**
 - Certificates**
 - Financial/voucher rewards**
 - A party/celebration**

"A celebration event would be nice like what happens for Graduation volunteers."

Imperial undergraduate student, first-time volunteer

"It would have been great if all volunteers could get a picture taken together, just for keepsakes."

Imperial Postgraduate student, first-time volunteer

- Multiple volunteers felt that the experience alone was enough of an incentive/reward.

"The set up was more than rewarding enough, as the actual volunteering is what is fun and rewarding in itself, although the chocolate was a massive bonus (plus the lunch)."

Imperial Postgraduate student, first-time volunteer

How would you rate the following aspects of the Festival?

Sign-up process

	2023	2024	2025	2026
EXCELLENT / GOOD	89%	94%	96%	97%

Briefing before the Festival

	2023	2024	2025	2026
EXCELLENT / GOOD	88%	92%	93%	91%

Support during the Festival

	2023	2024	2025	2026
EXCELLENT / GOOD	83%	89%	87%	100%

- Year-on-year comparisons should be viewed with caution due to the small sample size in 2026.

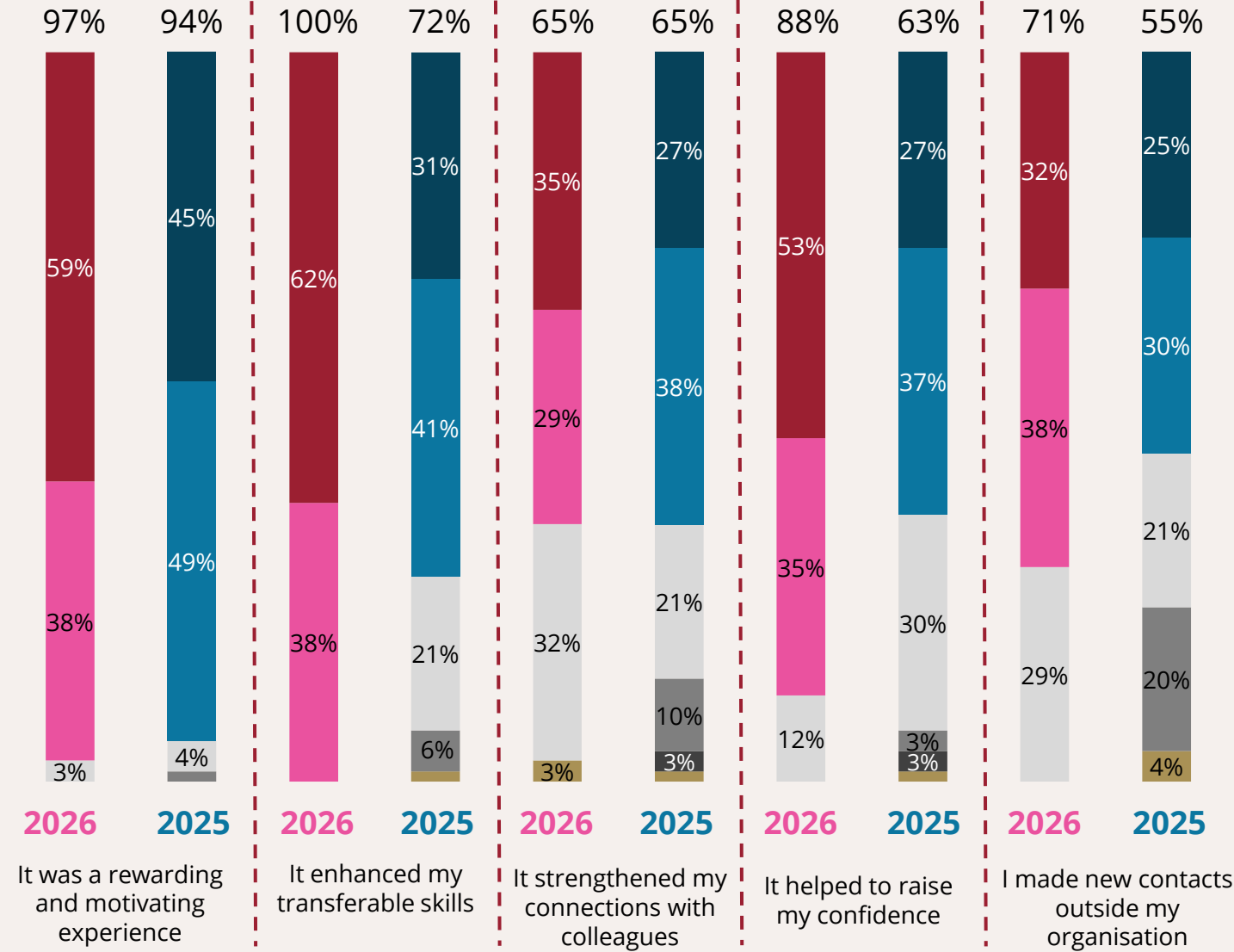
The extent to which volunteers surveyed had experienced certain outcomes varied – although over half, in each case, did agree they had been achieved.

- They widely agreed that it was a rewarding and motivating experience.
- All felt it had enhanced transferable skills and almost 9 in 10 said it had raised their confidence.
- Strengthening existing connections and making new contacts wasn't always a takeaway for volunteers.

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about volunteering at the Festival?



% POSITIVE



Base: 2026 Total (34)* small base, 2025 (71) *Percentages less than or equal to 2% have been removed from this graph

QUALITATIVE INSIGHT



- Volunteer feedback indicated that opportunities to engage and educate both children and adults were viewed as significant and meaningful impacts of the experience.

"Talking to people and feeling fulfilled after helping them out I think it made me become more open towards people and also understand how to deal with people with disabilities."

Imperial Postgraduate student, first-time volunteer

"It was a very rewarding experience. I made new friends and had a chance to talk to many people with different backgrounds."

Imperial undergraduate student, first-time volunteer

- A number of volunteers mentioned engaging with children specifically was impactful, seeing the experience as enjoyable and memorable. Some were also able to develop skills relevant to their future careers.

"Dancing with the kids all day while they learn fun and exciting new things."

Imperial Postgraduate student, first-time volunteer

"Seeing children excited during haematology workshop about hanging their creations up on the walls."

Imperial undergraduate student, first-time volunteer

"It was really rewarding and enjoyable. It strengthened my skills and interest in working with children, which will be important in my future career as a doctor, especially since I am interested in paediatrics."

Imperial undergraduate student, first-time volunteer

QUALITATIVE INSIGHT

- Volunteers valued the opportunity to work with vulnerable members of the public, offering both experience and greater understanding.

“Learning more about how the deaf community experiences such an event.”

Imperial Professional Services staff member, repeat volunteer

“It made me become more open towards people and also understand how to deal with people with disabilities.”

Imperial Postgraduate student, first-time volunteer

- Some volunteers felt that greater flexibility was needed to allow for more varied engagement and shifts that were more convenient. Some mentioned pre-event bonding exercises to support the community feeling of those volunteering.

“More interactive roles rather than standing.”

Imperial undergraduate student, first-time volunteer

“Pre-bonding activities.”

Imperial Postgraduate student, first-time volunteer

“

Maybe making it like shifts? Since some people might not have had time all day, some people could not do such wonderful impacts, however, making it both for the day and like shifts (3-4 hrs) would be meaningful for others too if they want to participate but cannot because of their time being scheduled for other tasks.

Imperial Postgraduate student, first-time volunteer

”

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about volunteering at the Festival?

It was a rewarding and motivating experience

	2023	2024	2025	2026
STRONGLY AGREE / AGREE	86%	89%	94%	97%

It enhanced my transferable skills (e.g. communication or organisation skills)

	2023	2024	2025	2026
STRONGLY AGREE / AGREE	72%	83%	72%	100% ↑

It helped to raise my confidence

	2023	2024	2025	2026
STRONGLY AGREE / AGREE	77%	76%	63%	88% ↑

- Year-on-year comparisons should be viewed with caution due to the small sample size in 2026.

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about volunteering at the Festival?

It strengthened my connections with colleagues

	2023	2024	2025	2026
STRONGLY AGREE / AGREE	72%	72%	65%	65%

I made new contacts outside my organisation

	2023	2024	2025	2026
STRONGLY AGREE / AGREE	54%	57%	55%	71%

- Year-on-year comparisons should be viewed with caution due to the small sample size in 2026.

Volunteering at GERV has a widely positive impact on perception of Imperial.

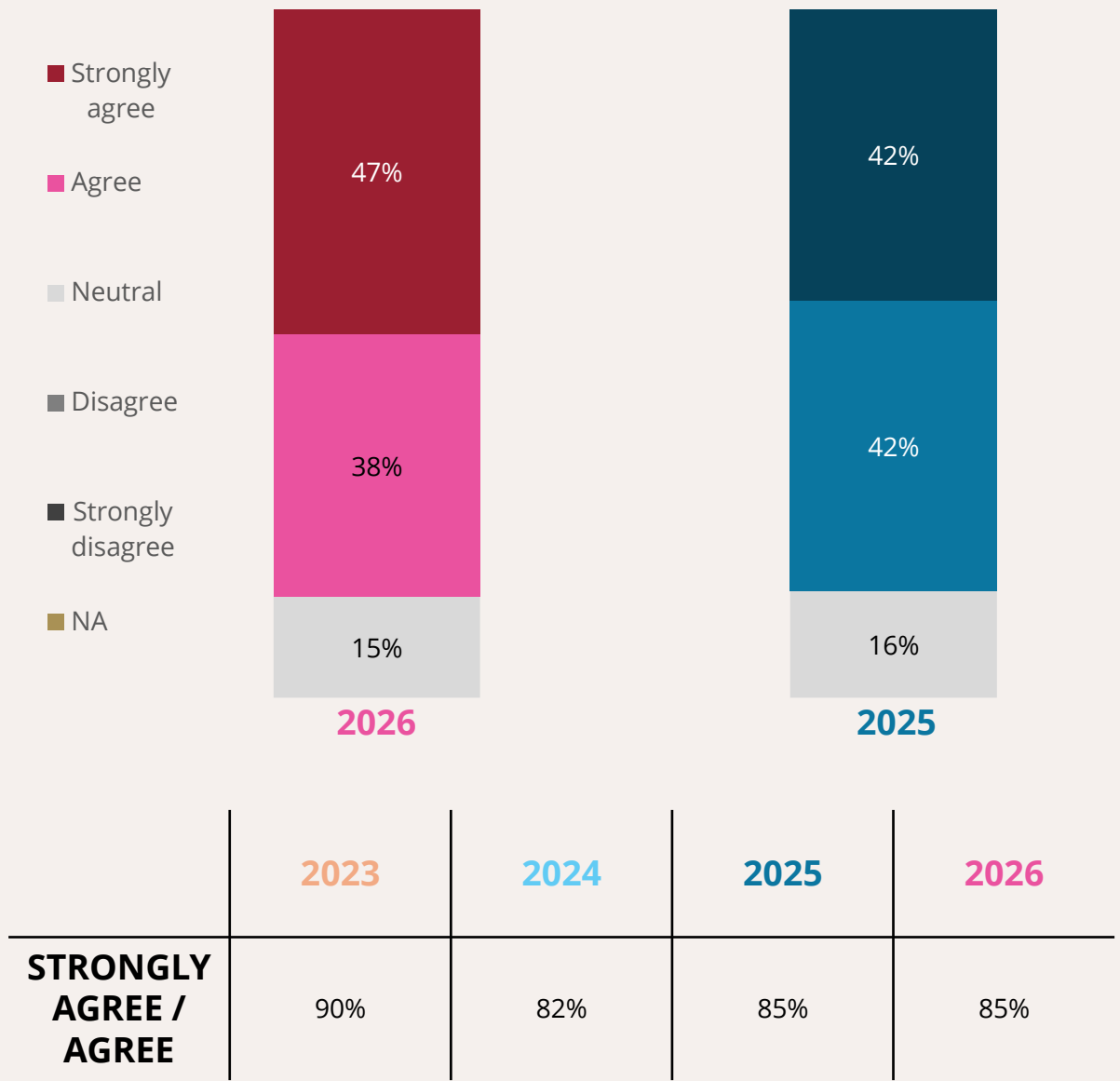
- Only 1 in 6 didn't feel that the experience made them more positive about the University.

QUALITATIVE INSIGHT:

“People, staff, other volunteers. Networking part was the best: it boosted my confidence and helped me to feel that I am a part of Imperial, a part of the festival.”

Imperial Postgraduate student, first-time volunteer

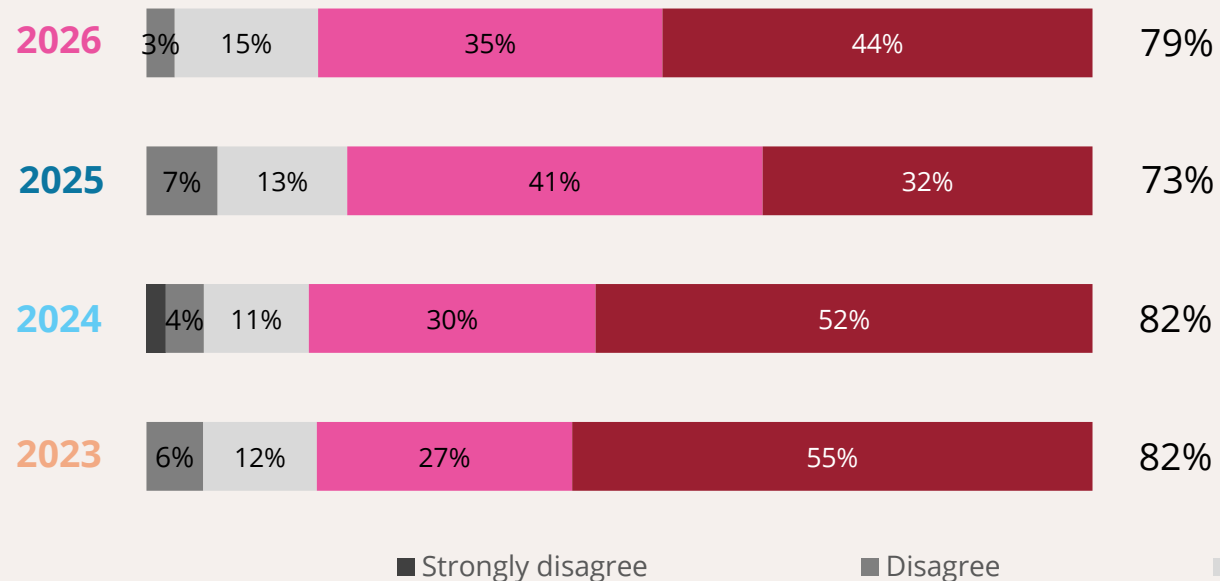
It made me feel more positive about Imperial College London



Base: 2026 Total (34)* small base, 2025 (71), 2024 (72 assumed), 2023 (60 assumed)

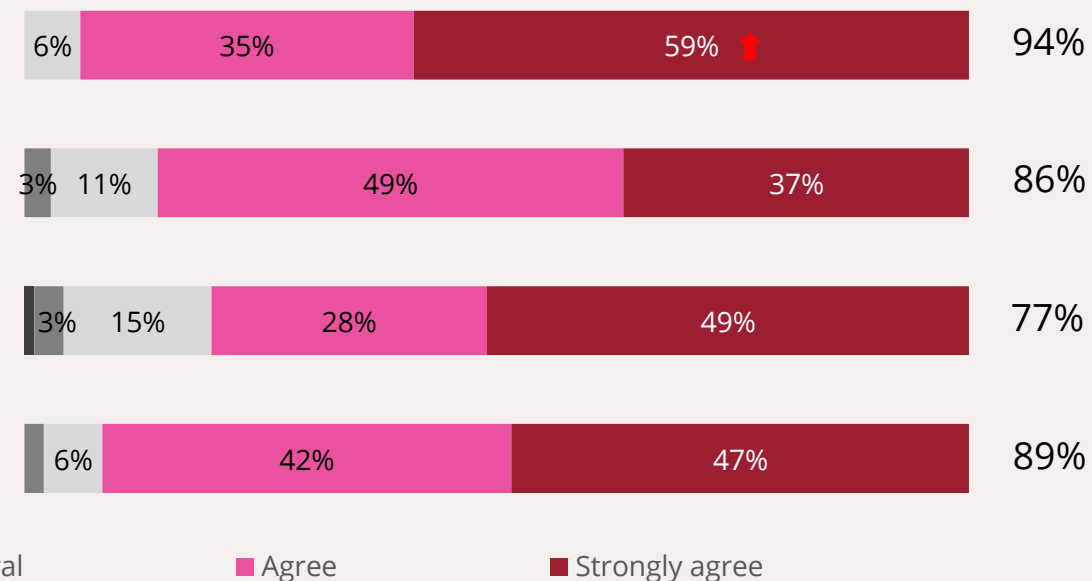
I would now consider participating in the Festival in other ways in the future (e.g. participating on a stand)

% AGREE



I feel more motivated to volunteer at other events in the future

% AGREE

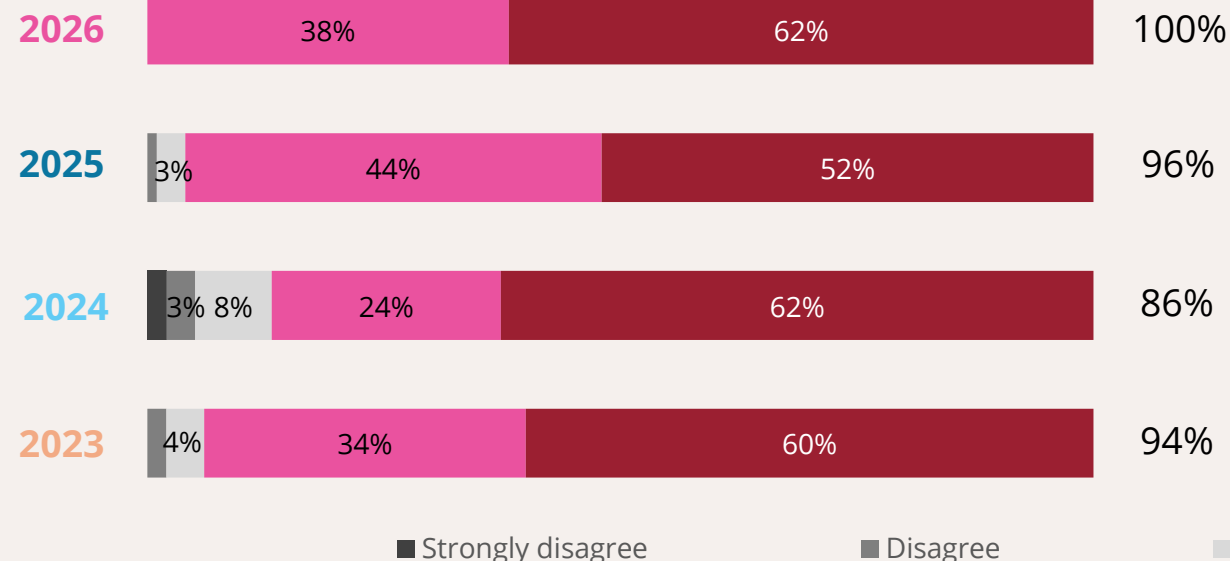


Volunteers surveyed this year widely agreed that they would consider different ways of getting involved in future Festivals.

Motivating those taking part to volunteer at other events was a successful outcome, with most feeling that they would.

I would recommend volunteering at a future Festival

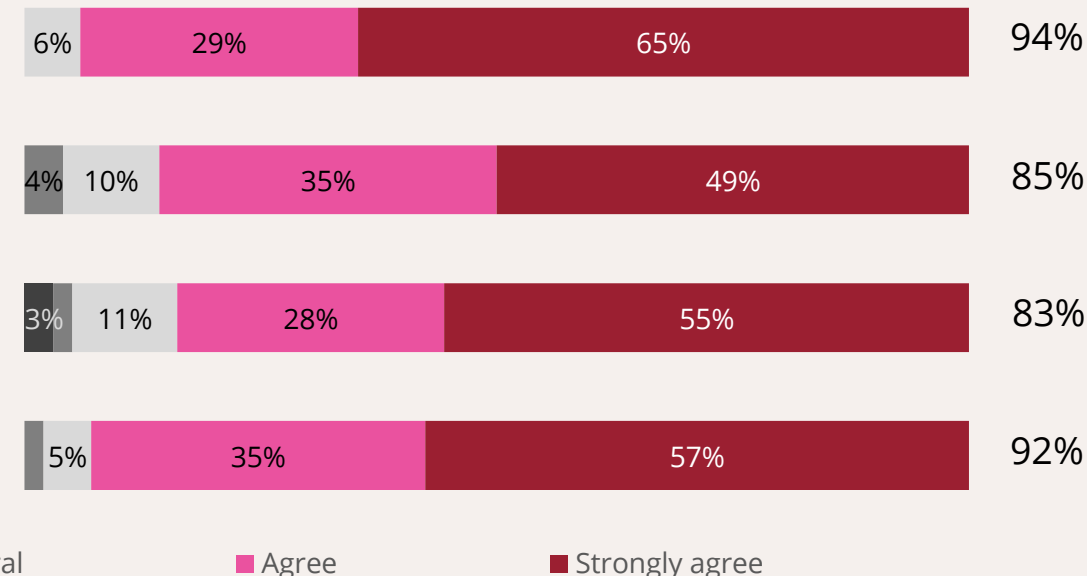
% AGREE



I would volunteer at the same event again



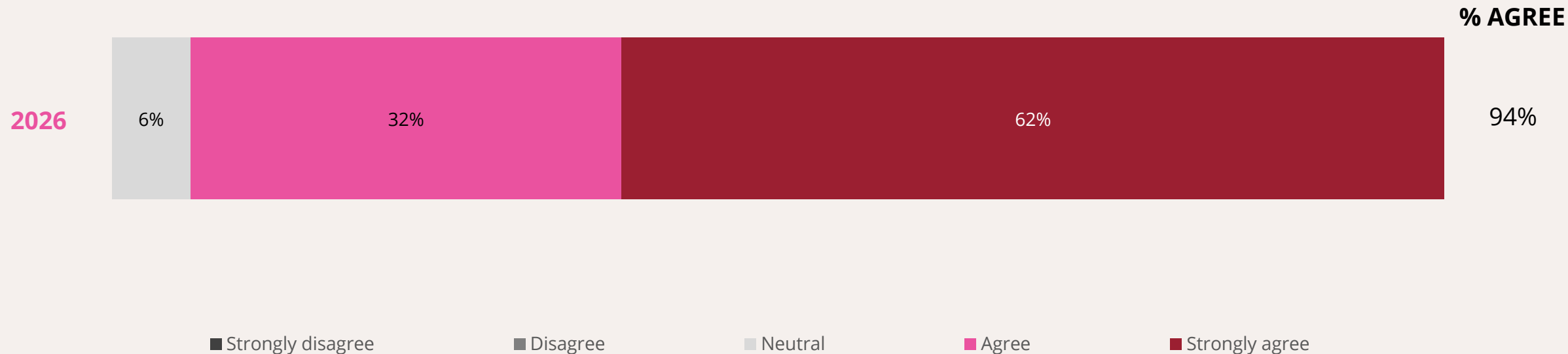
% AGREE



All volunteers survey would recommend the volunteering experience to others.

The vast majority of volunteers surveyed would volunteer at GERV again.

I would be interested in taking part in other Imperial College London public engagement activities



Almost all volunteers surveyed would be interested in participating in other Imperial public engagement events – with most ‘strongly interested’ in doing so.

VOLUNTEERS

Two in-depth interviews undertaken with volunteers, to obtain more detailed insights around motivations and the experience of volunteering.

MOTIVATIONS FOR TAKING PART

This volunteer, a master's student in neuroscience at Imperial College, decided to volunteer after hearing good things about it from a friend. They saw the experience as a valuable opportunity to enhance their CV and support their aspirations of pursuing a PhD.

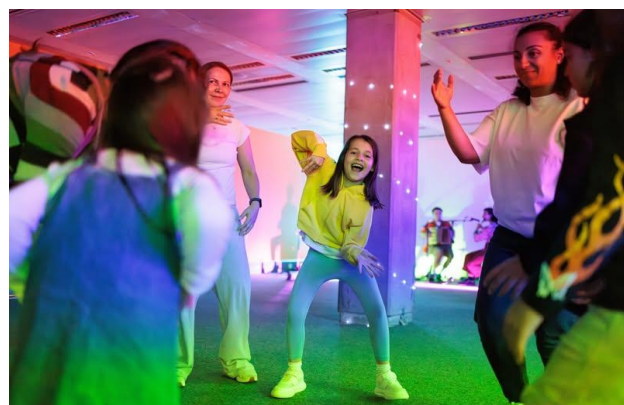
Their awareness of the Festival's scale and their curiosity about how such a large event is organised were also key factors motivating them to volunteer.

"It's like both for my personal satisfaction of volunteering and feeling that I'm offering something to people, but also for my own curiosity to see how you run such a big thing."

Although this volunteer had previously been involved in voluntary work whilst living in Greece, they hadn't volunteered for some time. The Festival was a good opportunity for them to re-engage with voluntary work.



I would say it's a must-see event in London, even if you're not into sciences, especially if you are young and you're just starting high school, or you're about to go to uni. There's lots of things to see around.



VOLUNTEERS: CASE STUDY 1 (2 of 3)

EVENT ORGANISATION

This volunteer praised the Festival's organisation, highlighting the clear communication from event organisers and supervisors throughout their volunteering experience. A pre-event campus tour ensured they felt well prepared, with their questions answered before the event began. Despite the high volume of visitors, they noted that supervisors were always available to provide support.

They also found the PowerPoint training to be very helpful, appreciating the flexibility to complete it at their own pace before the event.

"The organisation level of this event was just crazy. It feels like you've been using the feedback a lot. I could see it."

As a volunteer in the Tech Zone, they received clear instructions on their responsibilities for the day which included answering visitor questions, queue management and keeping the area tidy. Overall, they felt their experience of the Festival matched the expectations set by the organising team.

Their only complaint was that their break was delayed because another volunteer took a 1.5-hour break rather than a 30-minute one. In the future, they recommend making length of break times more explicit.



Everyone was smiling. Everyone was super happy. Imperial people were always amazing. I don't have any complaints.

THE IMPACT

This volunteer sees the Festival as an opportunity to raise awareness of science and technology and showcase how they can be applied to everyday life. In particular, they saw it as an opportunity to inspire young people to find enjoyment in subject areas they might not have considered before.

“Even if you're not completely science-y, like let's say physics, maths, neuroscience, you can still find things that you might like where technology and science is applied to.”

They position the Festival as a ‘must-see event’ with something for everyone to take part in. They had the opportunity to visit the stalls on Saturday as they volunteered only on Sunday. They highlighted how interesting they found the breadth of content across the stalls, including everything from student research projects to large companies displaying their work.

This volunteer recognised the value the Festival has for the South Kensington community, acknowledging the possibility that event visitors will consider returning to the area to visit local museums in the future.

“It's a nice weekend escape, I guess because there's food stalls even if you're not into the science, you can just go to do some people watching, eat some food, chill by the park. There's lots of things to do, so I'd say it's definitely a must do.”



VOLUNTEERS: CASE STUDY 2 (1 of 4)

MOTIVATIONS FOR TAKING PART

This volunteer works as a research assistant at Imperial and enjoys getting involved in a variety of volunteering opportunities. They previously worked as a teacher and volunteering at GERF gave them an opportunity to step back into this role.

"I'm kind of keen to get involved in actually presenting some scientific stuff in a way that's interesting, telling a story, not making it super data dense."

Their role primarily consisted of helping different groups to navigate the Festival. On the Saturday they supported a community group of older women, and their role on the Sunday involved supporting D/deaf individuals. They framed their volunteer work as a unique chance to learn about the experience of these communities.

"I kind of didn't know about what the roles would entail, and they were kind of both a bit chaotic and different, both very fun, but both chaotic in different ways."

“

I like getting involved in things like the Festival. I guess I kind of like working with different people... meeting lots of different kind of groups, and as I said, teaching different groups.

”



VOLUNTEERS: CASE STUDY 2 (2 of 4)

PRE-FESTIVAL EXPERIENCE

This volunteer found the sign-up process to be easy and straightforward but had a negative opinion of the pre-event briefing and inductions. They were required to have a general briefing as well as a briefing for each of their two specialist roles. They found the amount of information overwhelming and often repetitive.

"I got one general induction, and then one deaf induction and one community induction and fair enough they're all quite different but the inductions repeated a lot of stuff."

They noted that the amount of information could be particularly overwhelming for younger people who haven't previously done any volunteer work.



It's not useful getting in total like over 100 pages of PDFs. I don't need to know about every community group that's coming or like every possible tent that's happening, it was a bit overloading. So, I guess I had a bit of anxiety beforehand going in.

VOLUNTEERS: CASE STUDY 2 (3 of 4)

“

The volunteering team at Imperial are super great, they're really nice to talk to but I think they were just kind of overworked. It seems like so much planning, and I think maybe for the community groups there needs to be more staff and spending more time in advance, doing some more planning.

”



EVENT ORGANISATION

This volunteer described their experience of the event as chaotic, particularly working with the community group on the Saturday. They mentioned that members of the community group of older women borrowed mobility scooters for the first time. Several users were inexperienced and struggled to control the scooters. They felt this was poorly planned and potentially dangerous.

“If all three of us hadn't been there working really hard all day, then the community group would have just been an absolute chaos.”

They emphasised the need for more volunteers working with the community groups to support smooth running in the future. They also suggest a more central meeting point for the groups as it was quite a long walk for the group of older people.

Additionally, this volunteer explained that a rush on Sunday morning prevented a structured introduction. They felt this was essential when working with the D/deaf community because at the time they were unsure who was deaf, who was staff, and who was a family member.

VOLUNTEERS: CASE STUDY 2 (4 of 4)

THE IMPACT

This volunteer found the experience of the Festival rewarding, especially learning about the D/deaf community's Festival experience. They see their main contribution as helping people to feel comfortable and being a friendly face to assist with any issues. They felt that the size of the Festival meant that there is something for everyone to get involved in and learn.

"I think it was nice, especially the Saturday, they were mentioning how much they learnt, how much they enjoyed it, how helpful we were. So yeah, I think we were helpful."

They expressed a desire to volunteer again, aiming to improve their understanding and support. They praised Imperial's outreach efforts and the Festival's variety.

I think in terms of the quantity of people that come along and learn a little thing about science, then go off to like their day in South Kensington, I think that's pretty amazing because like thousands of people there doing different stuff.



