

Luton

**STEP
FORWARD
LUTON**

**Luton
Rising** Our airport.
Our community.
Our planet.



Evaluation of Luton's Hosting of Radio 1's Big Weekend 2024



Executive Summary: Economic Impact

The total audience for Radio 1's Big Weekend was **111,350** and it attracted **56,340** unique visitors to Luton.

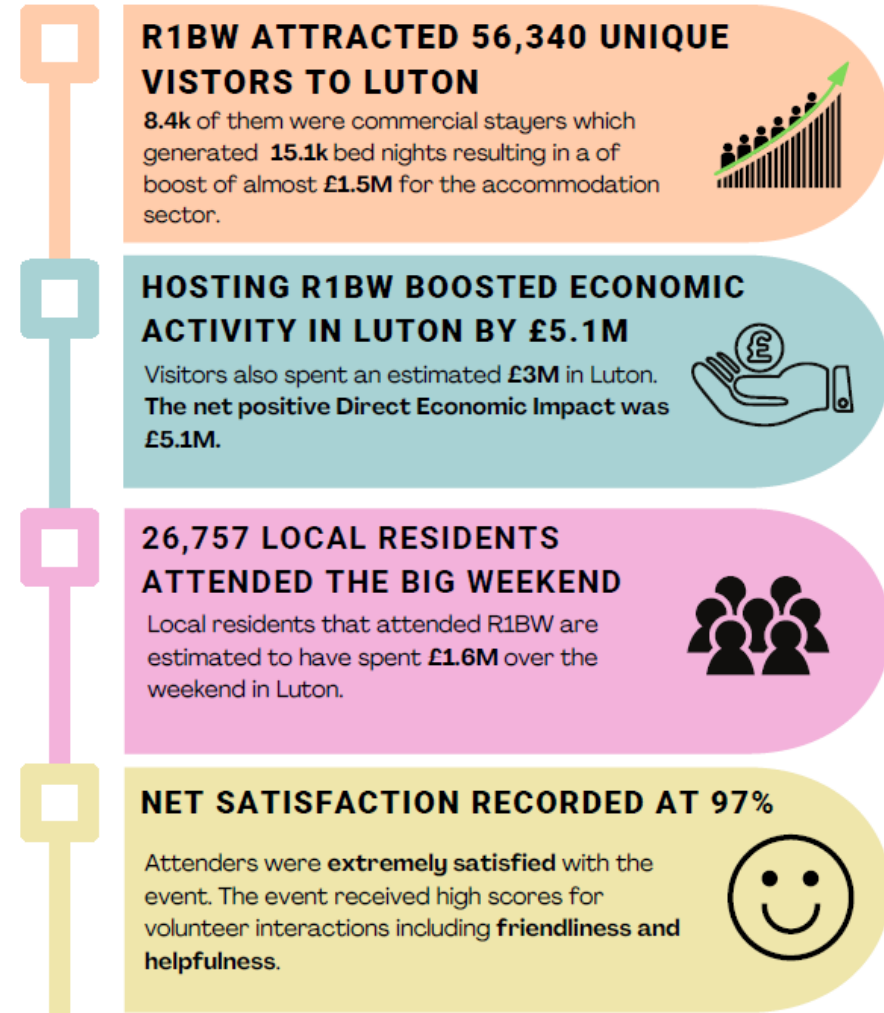
Four in ten (39.8%) came from the areas surrounding Luton and a quarter (25.8%) came from elsewhere in England. 1.6% came from elsewhere in the UK and 0.5% were from outside the UK with home countries USA, Netherlands, Kuwait, Jersey, Ireland, India, Greece, France, Germany, Portugal and Tanzania identified in the attender survey.

8,395 were overnight 'commercial stayers' (individuals who stayed in paid accommodation such as hotels B&B, self-catering etc). This resulted in almost **£1.5M** revenue for Luton's accommodation sector over the course of the weekend.

3,493 were 'non-commercial stayers' (individuals who spent the night but did not pay for accommodation, e.g. stayed with friends/family), and 44,452 were day visitors.

Visitors spent an estimated **£3M** during the weekend (outside the event site) resulting in a net positive Direct Economic Impact of **£5.1M** for Luton.

26,757 local residents attended the Big Weekend. Local residents (residing in LU1>LU4 postcodes) spent an estimated **£1.6M** in Luton (outside the event) resulting in an Economic Impact including local residents of **£6.7M**.



Executive Summary: Social Impact

94% of all attenders agreed 'Its great to see Luton hosting Radio 1's Big Weekend'. This increased to **98%** of local residents.

Residents perceive their town as diverse, developing, and inclusive, with strong community engagement. These perceptions highlight a community that is **growing and embracing its rich cultural fabric**.

Radio 1's Big Weekend played a pivotal role in **challenging stereotypes** about the town, leaving a profound social impact. Many visitors remarked on how their perceptions of Luton shifted significantly after experiencing Luton firsthand.

The event not only reshaped external perceptions but also instilled a sense of **pride and positivity among residents**. Many expressed gratitude for the opportunity to showcase **Luton in a positive light and to demonstrate its vibrancy**.

There is clear evidence that hosting the Big Weekend created a **collective experience** amongst locals and visitors to Luton. Nearly all (**95%**) of attenders agreed 'I have spent quality time with friends or family at Radio 1's Big Weekend'.

Looking ahead, there is **optimism** that the event's impact will endure beyond its duration. Attendees **expressed hope** that it would lead to **continued investment** in Luton's cultural and entertainment infrastructure. Moreover, the event served as a testament to the town's capability to host large-scale events **safely and successfully**.

CHALLENGING STEREOTYPES

Radio 1's Big Weekend in Luton transcended its role as a music festival by **challenging stereotypes**, fostering **community pride**, and **inspiring optimism** for the town's future.



CIVIC PRIDE IS ELEVATED

Many locals expressed gratitude for the opportunity showcase the town in a positive light with **95%** agreeing R1BW 'represented Luton well'.



COLLECTIVE EXPERIENCES

R1BW created a **collective experience** amongst locals and visitors to Luton. **95%** of all attenders agreed 'I have spent quality time with friends or family at Radio 1's Big Weekend'.



VISITOR IMPACTS ARE EVIDENT

Visitors describe Luton as 'diverse' and 'developing'. **87%** have a positive impression of Luton, and **56%** indicated they would consider visiting again in the future.



Executive Summary: Volunteers

A total of **3,372** volunteer hours were worked by Luton Rising Volunteers by **284 individuals**.

Social media (54%) and word of mouth (32%) were the most common ways volunteers found out about opportunity.

The top reasons for choosing to volunteer at Radio 1's Big Weekend were to **be part of a big event (77%)** and to **engage with their community (71%)**.

72% of volunteers expressed that they had **acquired experience beneficial for their future employment**. Among the key skills gained, 85% highlighted **'Helping people'**, while 79% noted improvements in **'Dealing with members of the public/customers'**.

Radio 1's Big Weekend had an extremely positive impact on the volunteers. The vast majority expressed pride, enjoyed their experience, and felt that the event improved both the town's image and their sense of community connection.

- 96% of volunteers believe Radio 1's Big Weekend helped improve perceptions of the town.
- 84% feel more connected to their community after volunteering.
- 84% heard positive feedback from visitors to Luton.

284 INDIVIDUALS VOLUNTEERED

A total of **496** shifts were worked resulting in **3,372** volunteering hours. There was **diverse demographic participation** across gender, age and ethnicity reflecting broad community inclusion.



ALL VOLUNTEERS HAD A GREAT EXPERIENCE

An overwhelming **100%** of volunteers feel proud to have been part of the event and **100%** also had a great volunteering experience.



VOLUNTEERING AT R1BW ENHANCED 8 OUT OF 10 VOLUNTEERS' PRIDE IN LUTON

Volunteering strengthened **community bonds**, improved perceptions of the town, and provided personal fulfillment through **positive contributions**.



84% HEARD POSITIVE FEEDBACK FROM VISITORS TO LUTON

Volunteers consistently heard from attendees that they had a great time at the event, with many expressing their enjoyment and satisfaction of R1BW in Luton.



Executive Summary: Media Impacts

The extensive media coverage of the event has provided Luton with significant exposure.

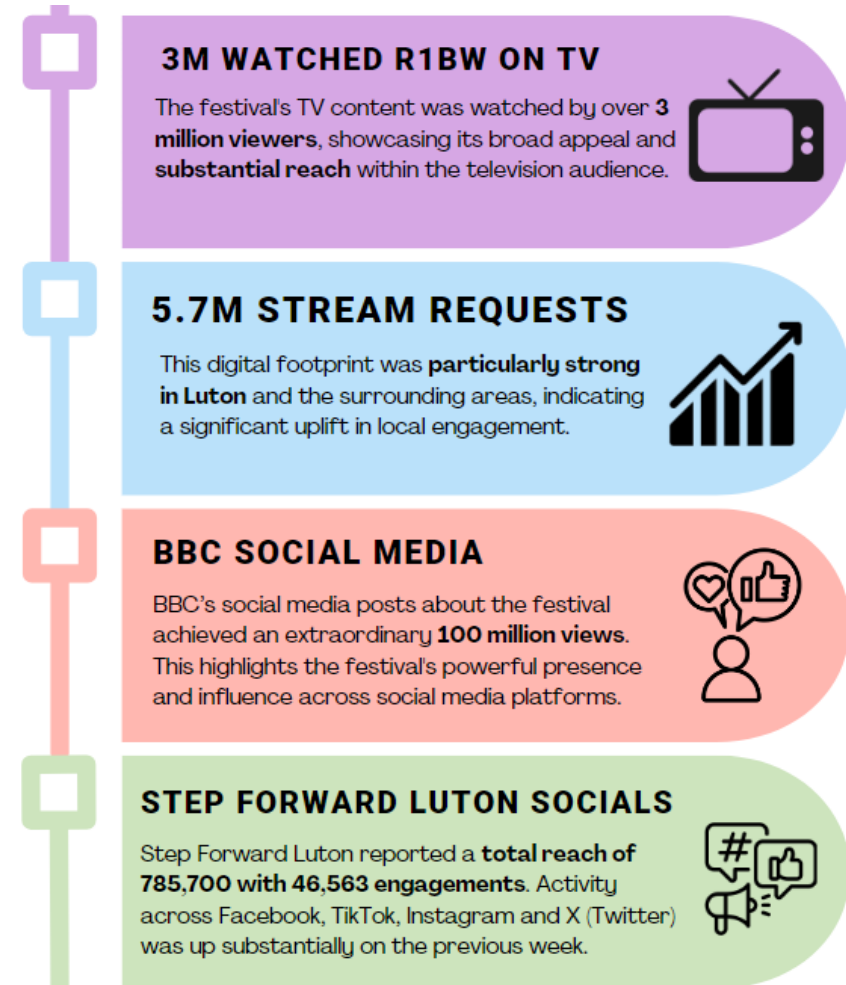
Over **3 million viewers** watched BBC TV content, indicating the broad appeal and massive reach within the TV audience.

The **BBC's** social media posts about the weekend achieved a massive **100 million views**. The festival's powerful presence and influence across social media platforms amplified its impact beyond traditional media. There were a remarkable 5.7 million stream requests on BBC iPlayer and BBC Sounds.

Step Forward Luton reported a total **reach of 785,700 with 46,563 engagements**. Activity across Facebook, TikTok, Instagram and X (Twitter) was **up substantially** on the previous week.

Luton Council saw strong growth from 23rd May to 3rd June. Facebook's reach hit 356,800 (+403%) with 36,200 visits (+172%) and 721 new followers (+675%), while Instagram's reach grew to 26,100 (+332%) with 2,700 visits (+442%) and 255 new followers (+193%).

Luton Rising also experienced growth over the same period with a Facebook reach of 71,300 (+3,400%) with 900 visits (+1,200%) and 54 new followers (+1,700%). On X (Twitter), impressions reached 12,753, with 561 engagements (+442%).



Contents

	Page
Executive summary	2
Objectives of the event for Luton	7
Background, evaluation objectives and methodology	8
Legacy of Radio 1's Big Weekend	11
Demographic profile of attenders	13
Event feedback	19
Social impact and civic pride	30
Economic impact	43
Media impacts	48
Volunteers	55
Outreach / Radio 1 Life Hacks	70

Objectives of the event for Luton



The overarching objectives related to hosting the event in Luton were to...

- Generate significant economic impact for the town.
- Achieve social impact, delivering improved perceptions of Luton.
- Create a lasting legacy including volunteering opportunities.
- Improve media perceptions and generate positive media impressions for Luton.

Background & Evaluation Objectives

Radio 1's Big Weekend in Luton took place in Stockwood Park on Friday 24, Saturday 25, and Sunday 26 May 2024. Luton Council partnered with the BBC/Festival Republic to deliver the event.

As hosts, Luton Council and Luton Rising invested significant resources into the event and established a number of objectives to ensure the town got a positive social and economic return on their investment.

Luton Council appointed Dodds & Law Research Associates Limited to deliver an independent social and economic impact report.

This report may be used for reporting to the press and public, for internal learning and to inform future event activity in Luton.

Luton Council were responsible for festival-related activity outside the event site in Stockwood Park, while BBC/Festival Republic were responsible for operations within the site. All related transport, public safety and welfare in the area surrounding the park was provided by Luton Council.

This report focuses on broad implications for the town as the host and the economic impact related to activity outside of the event site.

Luton Council's objectives related to the event evaluation were:

- Establish the demographic profile of attendees.
- Gather feedback on the event from Luton residents and visitors who attended.
- Assess the social impact on the town and its residents, including civic pride.
- Determine the economic impact on local businesses and the town.
- Identify opportunities from the Step Forward Luton e-commerce app.
- Evaluate the impact of wider town marketing and town dressing to improve perceptions of Luton among visitors and residents.
- Evaluate the impact of volunteering, training, and development opportunities, including the Luton Rising Festival Makers programme.
- Assess the legacy impact on the community, creative sector, young people, and visitor economy, and provide recommendations for maximising these legacy opportunities.

Methodology

Face-to face onsite attendee survey

Market Research Interviewers were positioned at various sampling points at Stockwood Park. Each interviewer conducted a predetermined number of interviews with attendees. To ensure a random sample, interviewees were selected using a random method. When the potential interviewee was part of a family, group, or couple, the adult with the next upcoming birthday was chosen. This method ensured everyone had an equal chance of being interviewed, thereby creating a random sample and minimising sampling error or unintended interviewer bias.

Each interviewer carried identification and recorded responses electronically on Computer-aided personal interviewing devices, ensuring the security of the collected information. For quality control, face-to-face interviews underwent back-checking verification, where a random 10% of total interviews were checked to ensure compliance with our strict quality criteria. Range and logic checks were performed on the raw data to identify any inconsistencies or illogical responses. Any inconsistencies found were investigated individually.

A total of 411 interviews were conducted on-site.

Note: The base numbers shown throughout the report will vary as these were voluntary surveys, and respondents were free to choose to provide an answer or not, as they wished.

Post-event Online survey

The face-to-face attendee survey was adapted for online use and sent to all ticket purchasers via the BBC on the 28th of May. The survey remained open for 7 days.

This method ensured that every ticket purchaser had an equal opportunity to participate and allowed them to complete the survey at their convenience. This survey captured reactions, views, and experiences while they were still fresh, minimising memory decay. This was particularly important for collecting information related to spending, which is crucial for economic impact analysis.

The survey was hosted on SNAP Survey software and analysed using SPSS. Range and logic checks were performed on the raw data to flag any inconsistencies or illogical responses. Attendees were also invited to express their interest in follow-up research in the form of case studies. A total of 3853 online interviews were conducted. After merging the raw data from both collection methods, the final sample size is 4264 with a maximum margin of error of $\pm 1.5\%$.

Volunteer Feedback Survey

Luton Council issued a survey to those who had volunteered to be 'Luton Rising Festival Makers'. 56 volunteers responded to the survey. This represents a very strong response rate of 20%. Volunteers were also invited to register for follow-up qualitative research in the form of case studies.

Case Studies

Over 100 participants from both the post-event Attender Surveys and Volunteer Survey were re-contacted and sent a link to provide additional information and detailed comments about their experiences. All case study participants featured in this report provided consent for their name, photograph and comments to be used.



“This is the year of Luton. I have always known how magic this town is, now a load more people do too! Thank you for playing a part in showing off my creative, vibrant, friendly hometown to the world. I honestly feel emotional thinking about Luton. My town is going places - just you wait and see!”

Legacy of Radio 1's Big Weekend : Luton Council

A festival town

The highly successful Radio 1 Big Weekend event has established Luton as a natural setting for future festivals and major events. Luton's outstanding location and vibrant community were demonstrated by 90% of attendees reflecting positively on the festival atmosphere around the whole town, while the economic benefits and improved reputation of the town make a clear case for the potential of hosting future events. Across all aspects, Luton demonstrated its capability to manage major events of this kind. However, strategic planning will be necessary to capitalise on the momentum of this event to further strengthen infrastructure, attract event organisers and the necessary sponsorship required for such events. The potential for future events is not just promising, it's exciting, and we are openly exploring any future opportunities.

Growing a visitor economy

The Radio 1 Big Weekend was a catalyst that highlighted the immense potential for the growth of a major visitor economy in Luton. With over 75,000 visitors and an additional £5.1 million injected into the local economy over the weekend, the opportunity is clear. Luton's strong cultural offer, including major events like the Luton International Carnival, was exposed to a wider audience, setting the stage for further growth. As the evidence in this report suggests, a visitor economy can be built on by growing the cultural and night-time offer, alongside capacity in hospitality to attract more overnight stays which generate substantially higher economic inputs. This potential for growth should inspire and motivate us to continue our efforts in this direction.

Legacy of Radio 1's Big Weekend : Luton Council



Luton's improving image

The Radio 1 Big Weekend was a transformative event for Luton, not only in terms of the festival's success but also in its impact on the town's image. With 8.7 million people watching and listening to the festival live, and over 100 million views across social media, the event put Luton in a positive spotlight. The transformational impact was also felt on the ground, with 87% of attendees leaving with a positive view of Luton and a clear sense of civic pride among the majority of residents. The event's reach extended well beyond the local area and the UK, with visitors from across Europe experiencing Luton, many for the first time. The event has built on other recent boosts to Luton's image, including Premier League football, and has helped to further grow the town's place brand, challenging negative perceptions of the past.

Festival Makers legacy

The Luton Rising Festival Makers were a huge success and instrumental to the smooth delivery of the event and the positive perceptions of the town. The programme not only ensured the successful execution of the event but also fostered a sense of community engagement and pride. There is a clear legacy opportunity with 90% of Festival Makers wishing to volunteer in future, providing a pool of over 250 dedicated community volunteers to support major events in the town again. For the individuals there is also a clear legacy, with seven out of every ten benefitting through experience that can support them in future employment.

Overall, Luton can seek to build on the success of the Radio 1 Big Weekend, to actively attract future events of this kind that can be central to the growth of a major visitor economy, which will directly benefit the town's businesses and residents and continue the positive trajectory of the town's image.



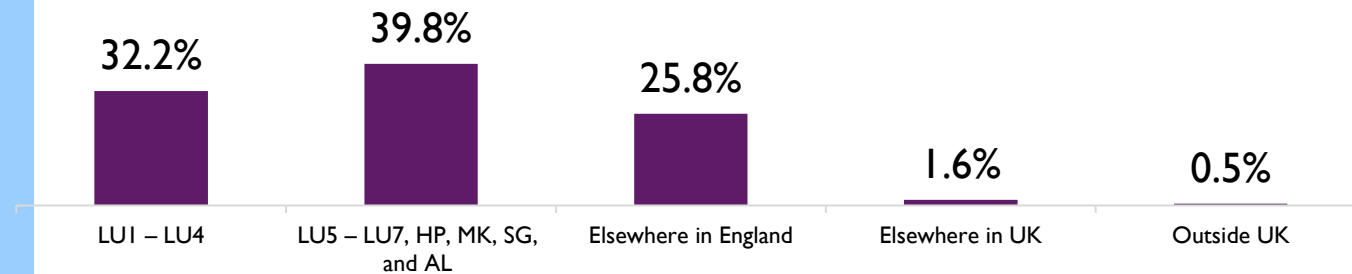
Luton

Demographic Profile

Home location of attenders

32.2% of attenders live in Luton (postcodes LUI > LU4). **39.8%** were from the surrounding areas, **25.8%** were from elsewhere in England. **1.6%** came from the rest of UK.

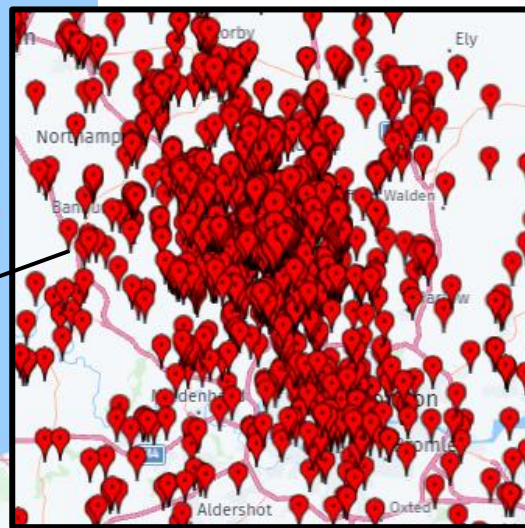
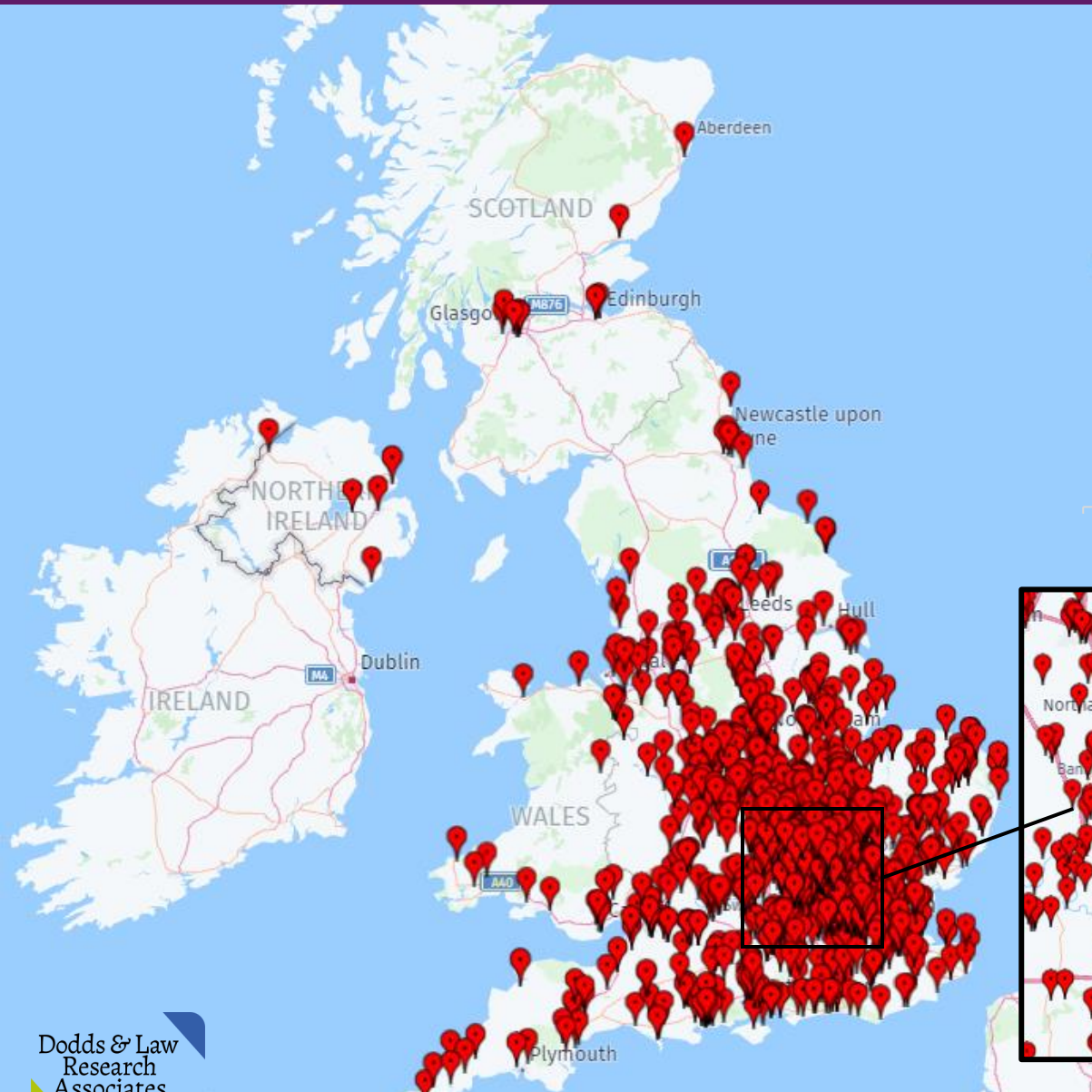
It is appropriate to highlight that **0.5%** were from outside the UK, including individuals from **USA, Netherlands, Kuwait, Jersey, Ireland, India, Greece, France, Germany, Portugal and Tanzania** identified in the attender survey.



Source: Attender Survey (Base: 4264)

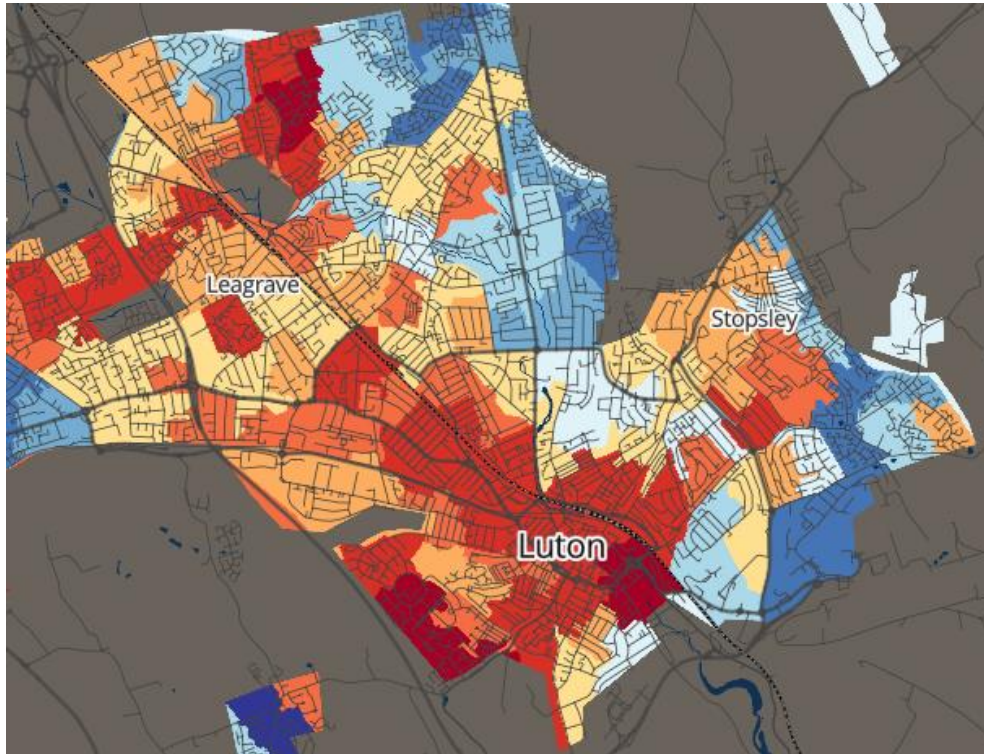
The ticket allocation strategy broadly reflects the attenders home location:

- 40% of tickets reserved for LUI – LU4 postcodes.
- 30% of tickets reserved for surrounding areas (LU5 – LU7, HP, MK, SG, and AL postcodes).
- 30% of tickets unreserved for general sale.



Map generated using attender postcodes collected in the attender survey

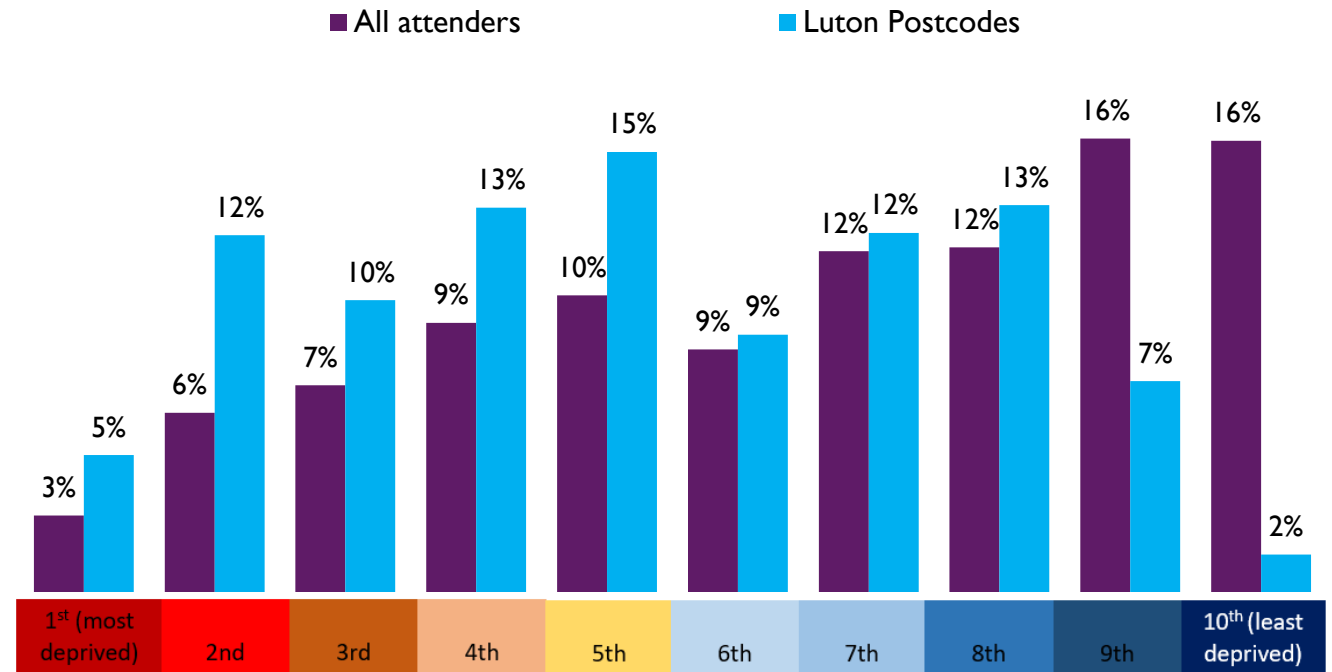
IMD Profile of attenders



The English Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) ranks small areas (called data zones) in order from most deprived (ranked 1 and shown in dark red) to least deprived (ranked 10 and shown in dark blue).

IMD provides information to help improve the understanding of the outcomes and circumstances of people living in the most deprived areas in England.

The chart below compares the distribution of attendees from all England and Luton postcodes across different deprivation deciles. It indicates that attendees come from a range of deprivation levels.



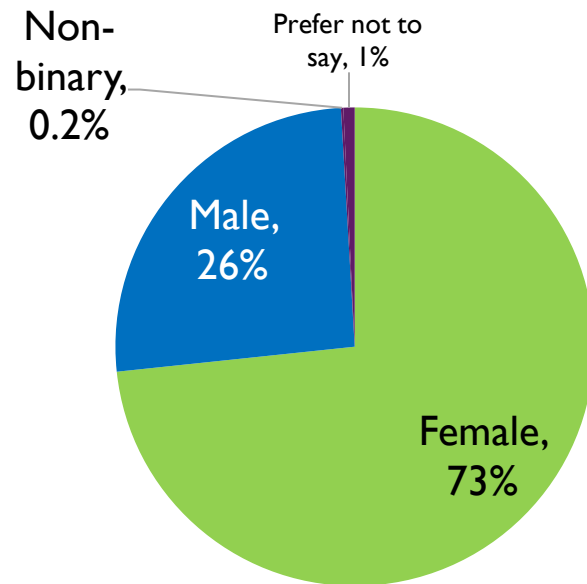
Source: Attender Survey (Base: 3872) – Valid Postcodes

Age and Gender of Attenders

The reported gender of survey respondents is female orientated. Ticket purchase may be female-led therefore the survey was more likely to reach females. Comparing the reported age range of survey participants against the age range of the 'whole group' highlights a broadly similar age breakdown with the addition of under 16-year-olds.

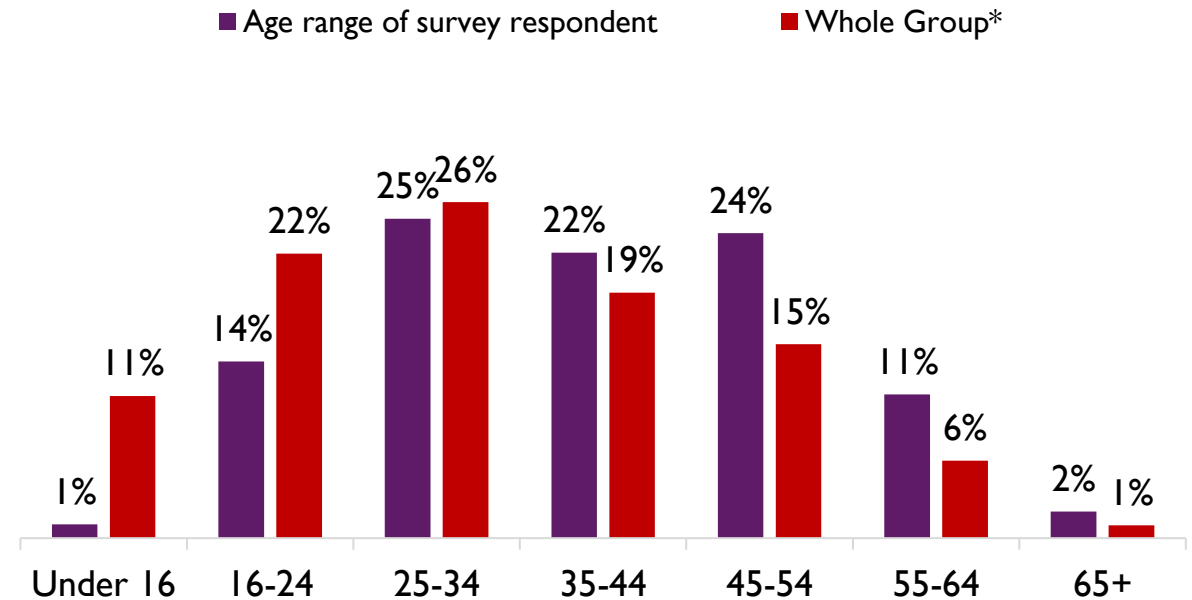
Gender

Source: Attender Survey (Base: 4226)



Age Range

Source: Attender Survey (Base: 4261)



*Survey respondents were asked to indicate the number of people in their group within each age range, including themselves, to provide a broader picture of age distribution, especially since children likely did not purchase their tickets.

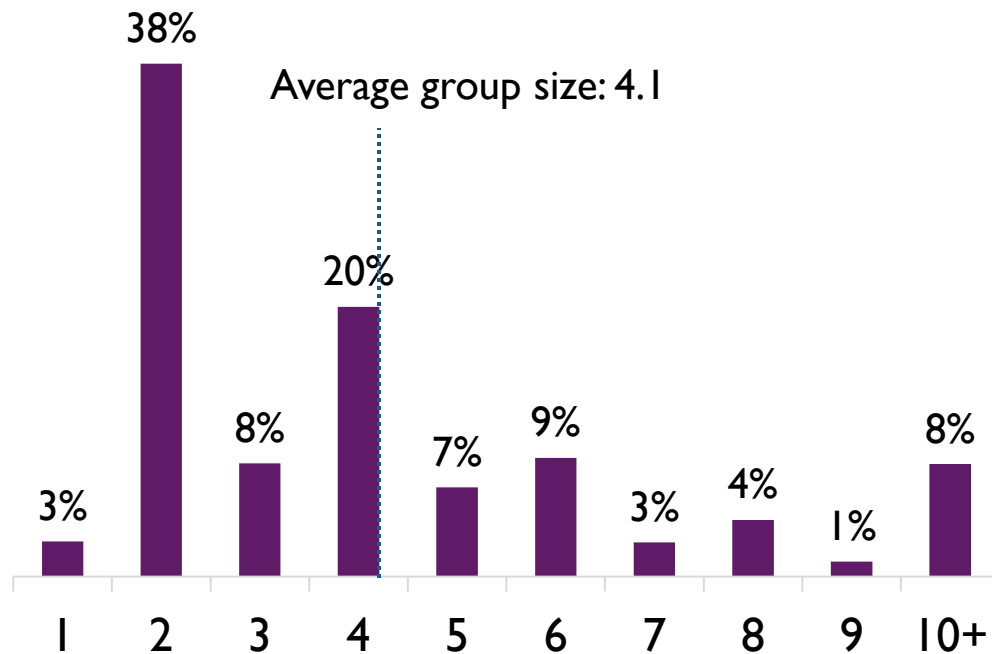
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“Luton should be very proud of the fantastic festival they put on. It was well organised, clean and a very friendly atmosphere. As a family we all had a wonderful Sunday and my 19-year-old had a fantastic Friday as well. Thank you.”

Group Composition

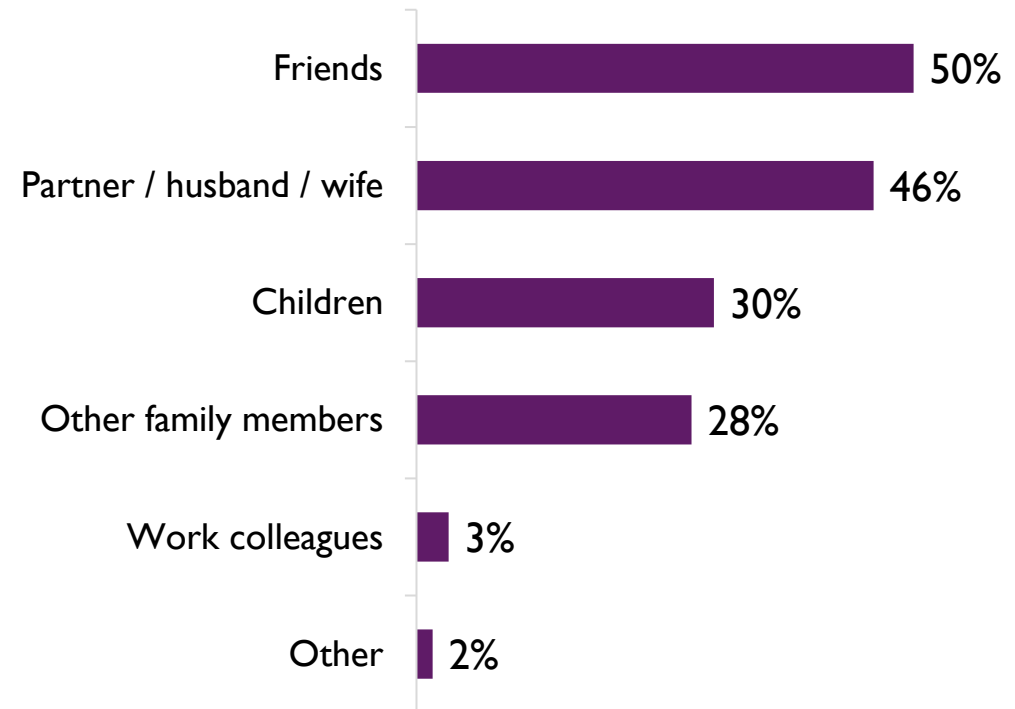
Over a third of attendees (38%) were in groups of two people. The average group size was 4.1 people, indicating that many attendees came in larger groups. The fact that many attendees were with family members highlights a strong family-friendly group composition.

Q3. How many people, including yourself, were in your immediate party (i.e. your group of friends and/or relatives)?



Source: Attender Survey (Base: 4260)

Q5. Who did you attend Radio 1's Big Weekend with?



Source: Attender Survey (Base: 4219)



Luton

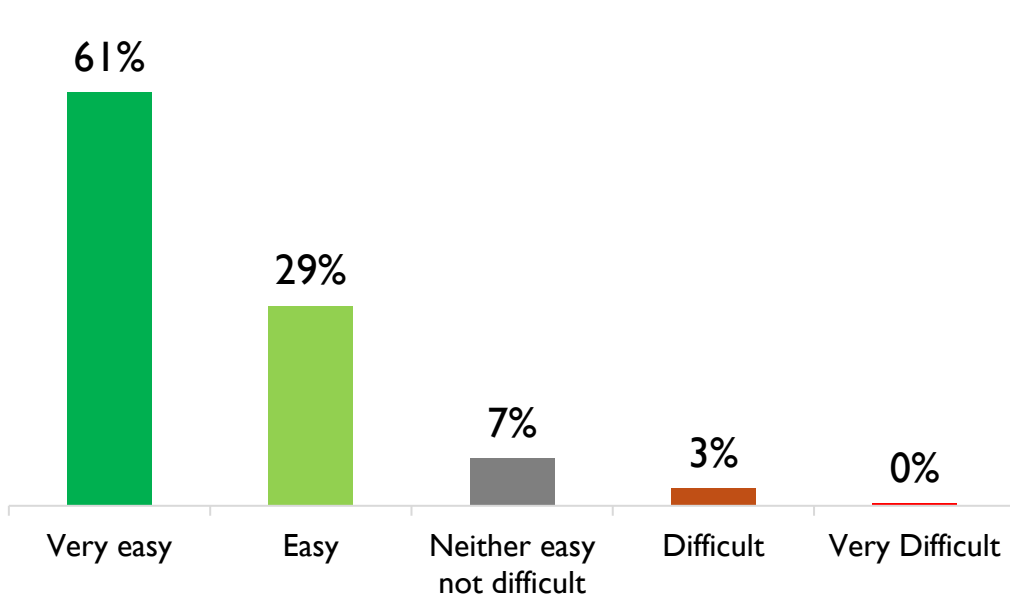
Event Feedback

“Thank you for putting this festival on, myself and family has a great positive experience making good memories for us all. Great line up good to see a wide age group range in attendance.”

Accessing information

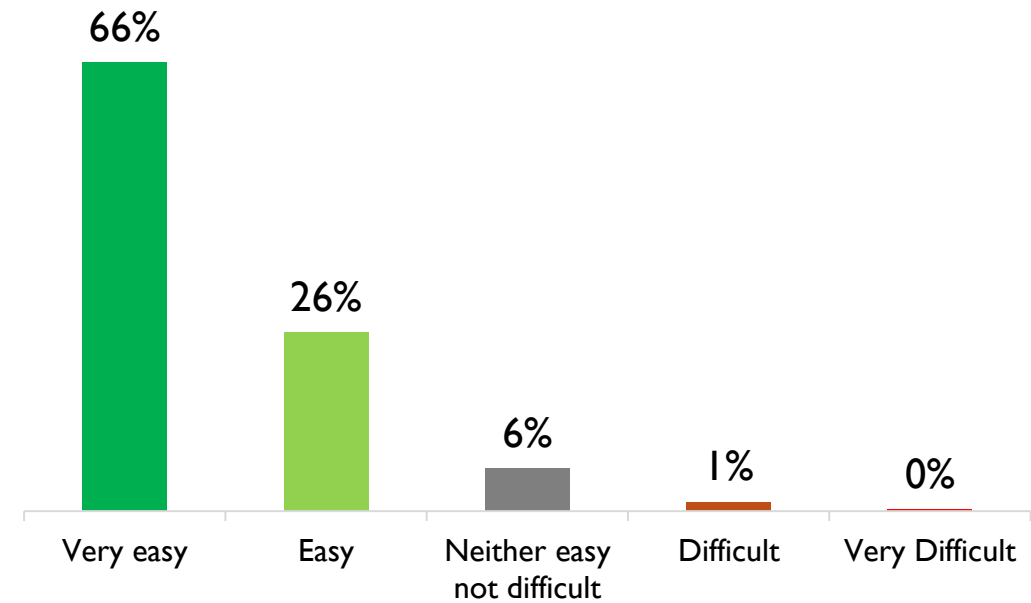
Overall, a significant majority of respondents found it very easy or easy to access information about both the event and its location.

Q7. How easy or difficult was it to find out information about... Radio 1's Big Weekend in Luton?



Source: Attender Survey (Base: 4228)

Q7. How easy or difficult was it to find out information about... The location of Stockwood Park (the festival site)?



Source: Attender Survey (Base: 4178)

Event Aspects Ratings

Q15. On a scale of 1 to 10 (where 1 is very poor and 10 is very good) how would you rate the quality of your experience Radio 1's Big Weekend?



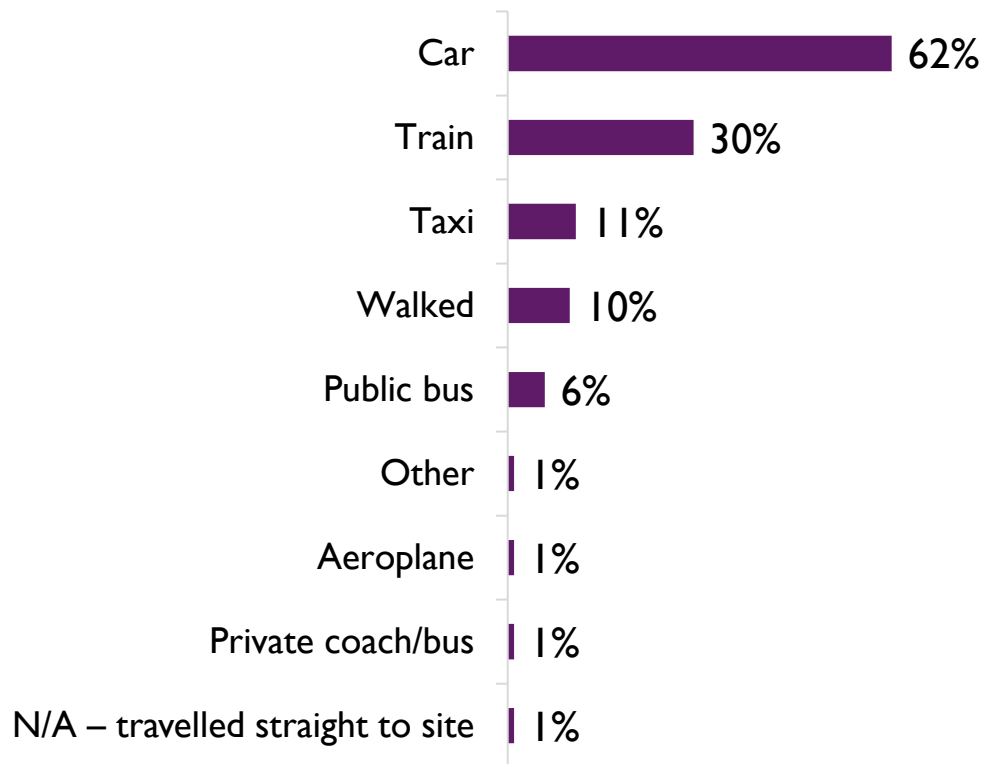
The chart shows attendee ratings of various aspects of Radio 1's Big Weekend event on a scale of 1 to 10. Key highlights include:

- **Friendliness and Helpfulness of Volunteers:** Rated highest at 9.4 and 9.2 respectively.
- **Overall Event Quality:** Also highly rated at 9.2.
- **Entry, Welcoming, and Sound Quality:** All received a rating of 9.2.
- **Security Staff Attitude and Festival Location:** Both scored 9.0.
- **Lineup of Bands and Artists:** Rated 8.8.
- **Cleanliness:** Surrounding area rated at 8.3, while the festival site itself rated 7.8.
- **Transportation:** Pickup and drop-off rated 7.2, and car parking facilities rated lowest at 6.6.

Overall, the event received high scores for volunteer interactions and the quality of the event, while car parking facilities received the lowest score, it should be noted that it is still positive overall.

Travelling to Luton

Q6. [Visitors to Luton Only] How did you travel to Luton?



Comments re Travel

“The exiting and crowd control filtering back to the train station was very slick. Very impressed that trains with multiple carriages were provided to get everyone moving quickly.” (Visitor to Luton)

“This might be boring but I was so impressed with the organisation leaving the event and going to the train station with different routes depending on travel north or south. The staff were so friendly at the station too. I attended Big Weekend in Coventry and it wasn’t organised at the station and actually felt quite scary and stressful as it was so crowded.”

“Only negative is that when exiting all signs were for drop off/pick up or car parking however, car park R3 was not signposted and many had an extra mile added to their walk as the route took everyone to the town centre.”

“My only concern was the distance from the car park to the main entrance I have mobility issues and found it difficult to walk around.”

“The parking near the event was also excellent and the walk to the park clearly set out.”

Parking & Transport

Parking and transport were identified by some attendees as an area needing improvement.

Parking locations were considered too far from the event, causing long walks, especially challenging for those with mobility issues.

Drop-off and pick-up points were chaotic for some, leading to traffic jams and confusion. Some attendees reported long taxi waits and difficulty locating pick-up areas, suggesting better signage and communication would have helped.

The steep uphill walk to Stockwood Park was also not made clear to some attendees, leading to difficulties for some.

Post-event transportation frustrations included difficulty finding transport home, long distances to taxis or public transport, and poorly lit areas (which led to some feeling unsafe). The lack of coordination with local transport services for additional buses or extended train schedules was perceived as a missed opportunity.

“It was not made clear that we'd have to walk up a brutal hill - with a dodgy foot, I would have liked to have been able to arrange something in advance.”

“A free shuttle bus from the car park as there was no prior knowledge about having to walk up a huge hill, we picked the closest car park available on purpose to make the walk easier, but it was hard going.”

“Signage and information around permit holders could have been communicated better to the staff- spent longer trying to get to the street than the festival itself! Also, for a big event, to have local buses finish at 9 was ridiculous and would have been super expensive for people living in the nearby towns not served by the train line to get to and from the event.”

“It was extremely difficult to get back home to St Albans and in the end had to walk a while and then get a taxi for £45.”

“Network Rail cancelled trains then directed everyone to the wrong platform so it was carnage swapping over the footbridge! Also, glad we got our very rammed train as I heard queues were horrendous for trains after midnight!”

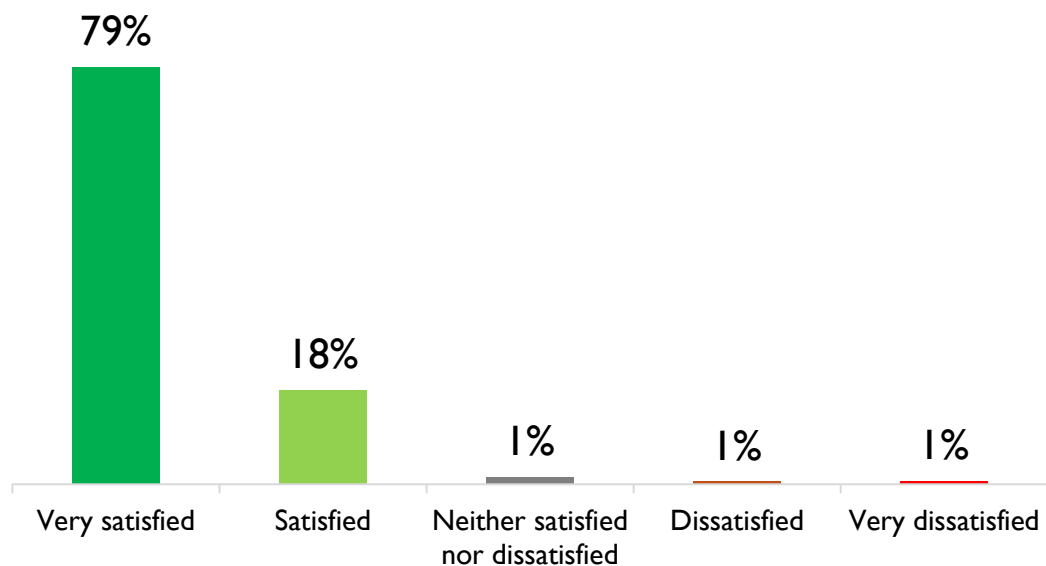
“The bus was excellent to get there. However, for getting back home again, it was a shambles! We had no idea where the buses left from as the roads were closed and every steward told us something different, finally sending us to the pick-up, drop off point where there were no buses or taxis.”

Overall Satisfaction

Q16a. How satisfied are you overall with Radio 1's Big Weekend – Luton 2024?

Satisfaction was exceptionally high with 97% indicating they were satisfied.

For Luton residents, this increases to 98%.



“When it was announced it was to be Luton it was a must. So easy to book tickets and the whole experience was brilliant so glad I tick that off my list. Would certainly try and do another one. Thanks for the memories.”

“Thanks for putting on this wonderful event. I’m still buzzing three days later. It was a great intro to festivals for my 10-year-old. I really appreciated the brilliant line up for a very accessible price. Thank you for employing litter pickers also. I really wish people would use bins!”

“I had a brilliant time and I think what you do is **BRILLIANT**. The cost of the festival makes it so much more accessible than other opportunities to see live music.”

“It was a brilliant event from start to finish. So welcoming and friendly. All staff were brilliant, I just wish there were more events like this nearby! I also felt the cost of tickets was very reasonable for what you got. Pricing of food and drink seemed fair in comparison to other similar events I have attended.”

“Well done to everyone involved. It was lovely to see all generations together in a wonderful, safe environment.”

Radio I's Big Weekend had a significant and multifaceted impact on perceptions of Luton, as evidenced by the extensive positive feedback from local attendees.



“Was the best weekend in my 8 years in Luton and I’m very proud and grateful to be here. Absolutely smashed it.”

“Was fantastic and really hope and pray we host more fantastic Music festivals in our amazing home town. We Are Luton Town. Think it has helped put Luton back on the map very positively.”

“The fact it was held in Luton and brought such a positive impact and vibe to the town with music to cater all. Definitely need to see BBC Radio I return to the town!!!!”

“Happening in my home town!! This is a huge win for Luton and it’s made me feel very proud to be here.”

“I love that Luton was given this chance, I was really impressed with how organised it was.”

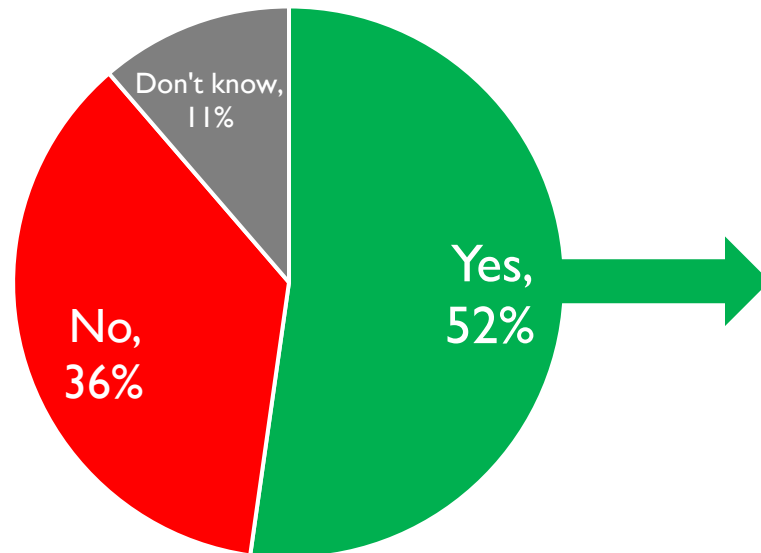
“The good atmosphere and seeing Luton in the spotlight for putting on a good event!”

“Hard to say best bit as it was all so good. Being local, Luton gets a bad name but the overall atmosphere and vibe was just perfect. Very proud to be from Luton.”

Luton

Big Weekend: Potential enhancements within Stockwood Park

Q17a. Is there anything you feel could have made the event better?



Key areas of potential improvement within the event site:

Facilities and amenities: The event suffered from a lack of sufficient toilets, leading to long queues and hygiene issues such as lack of toilet paper and unclean facilities. Additionally, there were not enough seating areas, which was a major inconvenience for those needing to rest. There was a perceived scarcity of bins resulting in litter problems, and the absence of adequate covered areas left attendees exposed to bad weather.

Pricing and quality of food and drink: Many attendees were dissatisfied with the high prices of food and drinks, which they felt were not justified by the quality offered. The variety of food and beverage options was also limited, leading to further frustration. Issues with overcharging and poor service at the bars compounded the negative experience, and there was a call for more affordable and diverse options, including better non-alcoholic choices.

Scheduling and information: There was widespread frustration with the lack of clear and accessible information on performance timings. Attendees disliked having to pay for lanyards to get set times and felt that announcements about schedules were often too late. Improved communication and timely updates on artist schedules were desired to help attendees better plan their day and ensure they did not miss performances they wanted to see.

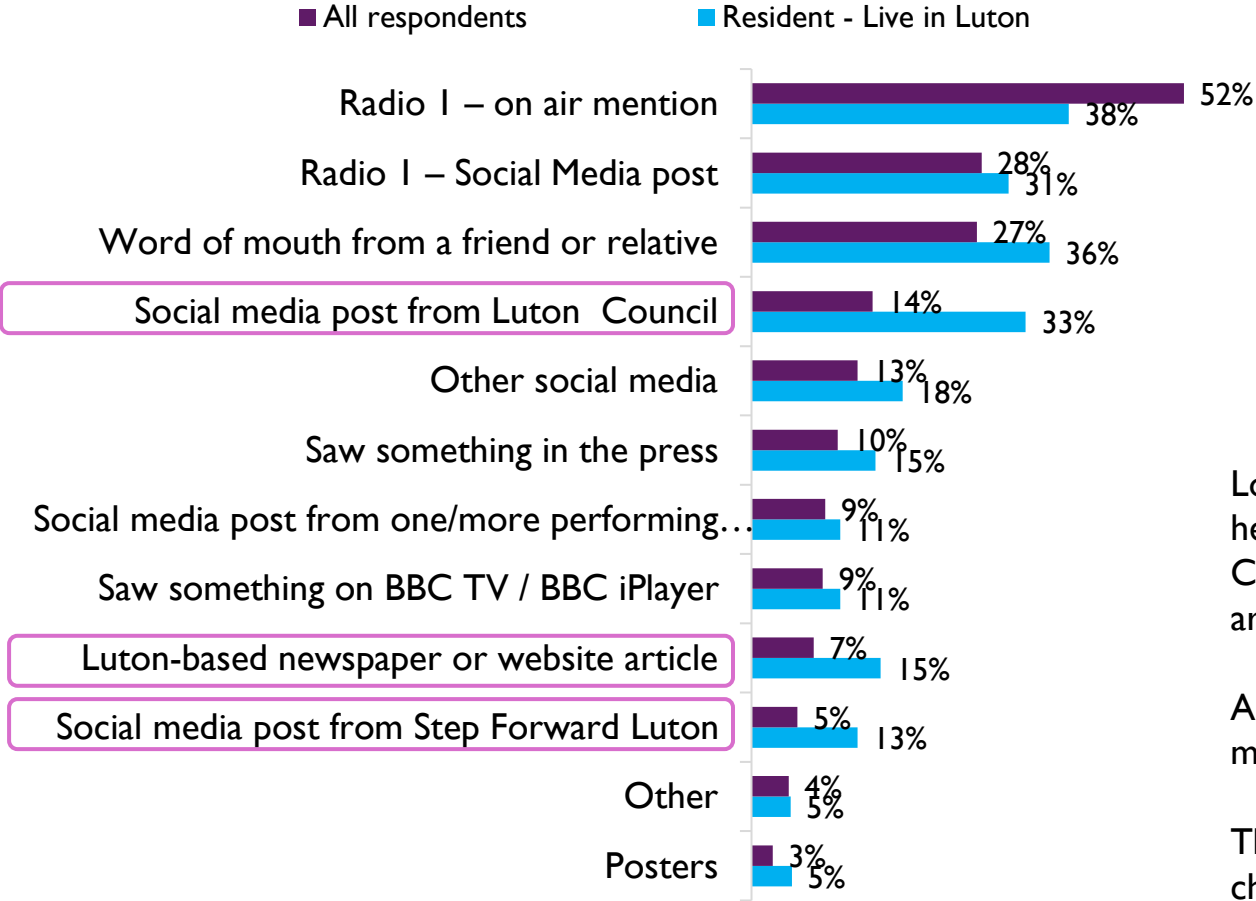
Luton



“The whole event was brilliant. A real positive event for Luton. It brought very positive vibes and the atmosphere in the town was greatly improved. The staff at the event were great very friendly. I've only heard positive comments from everyone who attended. Thank you, Radio I, for choosing Luton.”

Marketing

QOOI. How did you hear about Radio 1's Big Weekend this year?



LUT ON Step Forward Luton is at Kenilworth Road.
 29 January · Luton · 🌐

Greg James was broadcasting his show LIVE from Luton Town Football Club this morning and he had some epic news - BBC Radio 1 Big Weekend is coming to OUR town this year!

And it's set to be their BIGGEST Weekend ever.

📅 Mark your calendars - May 24-26 at Stockwood Park... See more



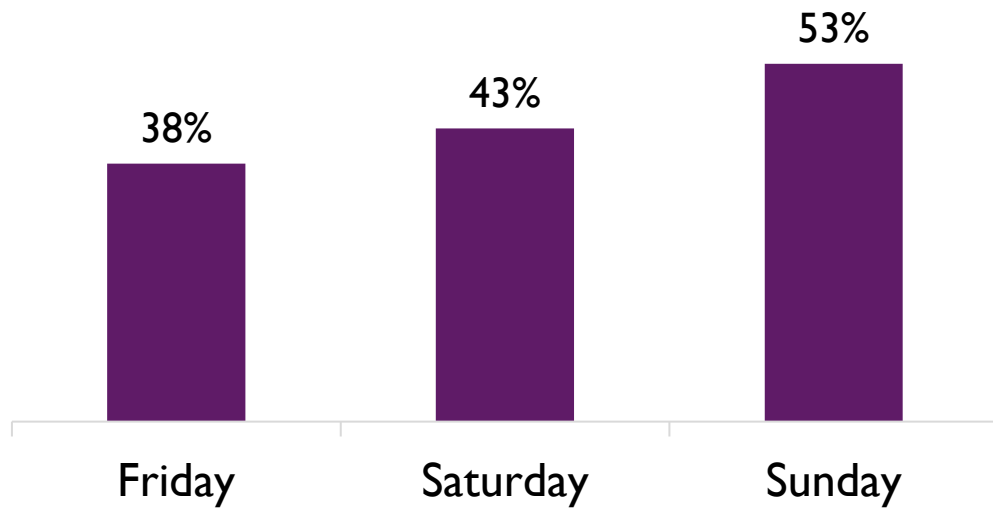
Local sources played an important role for Luton residents, with 33% hearing about the event through social media posts from Luton Council, and 15% through Luton-based newspaper or website articles.

Additionally, 13% of residents learned about the event from a social media post from Step Forward Luton.

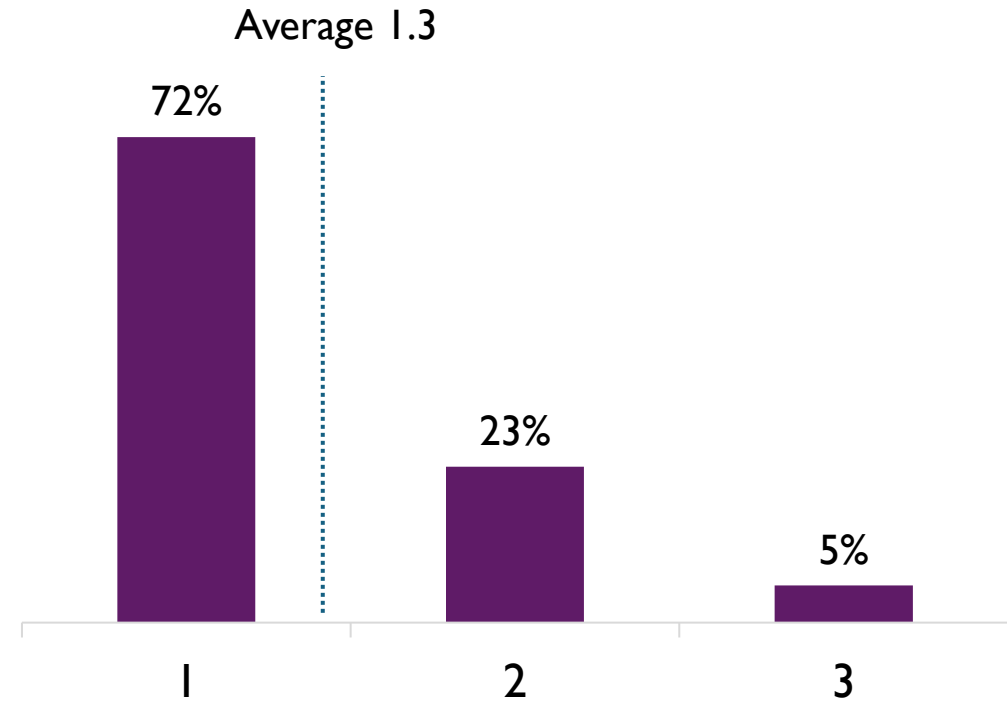
These figures underscore the effectiveness of local marketing channels.

Days Visited

Q18. Which days did you attend Radio 1's Big Weekend this year?



Number of days attended





Luton

Social Impacts & Civic Pride

“I'm a strong advocate for the positive sides of living in Luton, and the Big Weekend felt like an extremely significant cultural moment for the town. Myself and my friends and family will talk about it for years to come. I felt privileged to attend and proud to live in Luton. It felt like Luton was seen for its positive strengths instead of negative stereotypes.”

Radio 1's Big Weekend was a well-organised, diverse, and friendly event that positively showcased Luton



Luton

“It was a wonderful festival, brought together lots of different people, ages, diverse community that represented Luton very well. Coverage on BBC has been great to relive the action I missed.”

“Was an amazing event in Luton against all the negativity for its location. Everyone we met was extreme friendly and helpful. The welfare team was amazing when I became separated from my youngest. Living close to Luton we are aware of the negative impression of the area and this event highlighted the benefits and positivity that Luton has to offer.”

“Very well organised and wonderful event for Luton I live near but not in Luton and was impressed with the positive vibe at the event”

“This event greatly helped reduce the negative image of Luton. Well done Luton for hosting this event!”

“Thank you. And thank you for educating people around Britain about the importance of Luton's diversity, equality and strong transport links. I have worked in a local college for over 25 years and music is such a great leveller across all age groups.”

“Prior to coming to Luton, I had only heard negative views and was quite worried about the safety in Luton but with the volunteers, security and police, I can confirm we felt very safe.”

Radio 1's Big Weekend in Luton transcended its role as a music festival by challenging stereotypes, fostering community pride, and inspiring optimism for the town's future.

Radio 1's Big Weekend in Luton played a pivotal role in **challenging stereotypes** about the town, leaving a profound social impact. Many visitors remarked on how their **perceptions of Luton shifted significantly** after experiencing Luton firsthand: *"the event really helped to challenge the negative stereotypes I had about Luton. It was such a vibrant and welcoming atmosphere."*

This sentiment was echoed by many, highlighting the event's power to **challenge preconceived notions** and **dispel negative stereotypes** about the town. *"I hope people see Luton how us residents do - it's not all bad, we are diverse and inclusive,"* observed one resident. Another stated, *"It's great to hear people talking about Luton in such a positive light. The event really showcased the best of our town."*

The event not only reshaped external perceptions but also instilled a sense of **pride and positivity among residents**. Many expressed gratitude for the opportunity to showcase **Luton in a positive light and to demonstrate its cultural vibrancy**. *"The Big Weekend showed the world just how great the town is, the facilities we have, and the ability to host such an event,"* said a proud resident.

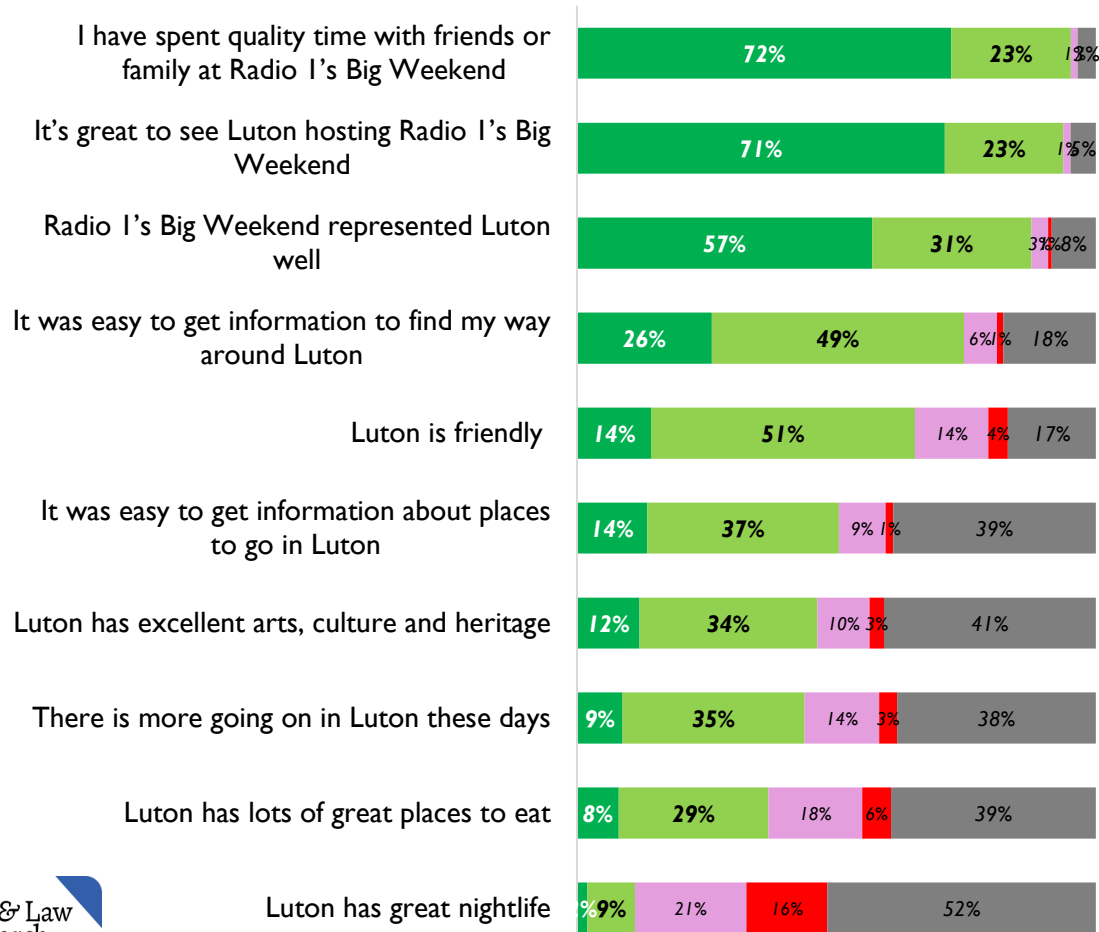
Looking ahead, there is **optimism** that the event's impact will endure beyond its duration. Attendees expressed hope that it would lead to continued investment in Luton's cultural and entertainment infrastructure. Moreover, the event served as a **testament to the town's capability** to host large-scale events **safely and successfully**.



Attitudes towards Luton: Overview

Q22. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

■ Agree strongly ■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Disagree strongly ■ Don't know



A significant majority of respondents expressed positive sentiments, with a combined 95% agreeing that they spent quality time with friends or family at the event, and 94% appreciating Luton hosting it. Additionally, 88% felt the event represented Luton well.

Regarding navigational ease, 75% found it easy to get information to find their way around Luton, and 65% agreed that Luton is friendly.

However, there is less certainty on other aspects of Luton. For example, 51% agreed it was easy to get information about places to go, while only 46% acknowledged Luton's excellent arts, culture, and heritage.

Opinions on Luton's dining and nightlife were less positive, with 37% agreeing it has great places to eat and just 11% endorsing its nightlife. Notably, 52% were unsure about the nightlife, indicating a lack of awareness or experience. This data highlights both the success of the event and the variations in the perception of Luton's local amenities.

Interview with Sean: Visitor to Luton

“Luton is a great town and has been overlooked for far too many years”

What motivated you to attend Radio 1’s Big Weekend in Luton?

“The chance to see Coldplay in Stockwood Park in Luton was a dream come true. I’m a proud Lutonian but have been living in Ireland for 40 years. Never once have I forgot my heritage and visit Luton which is and always will be my first home whenever I can. Have always thought Luton has been overlooked for years as it is a fantastic town. I was fortunate to live only a street away from Memorial Park and Stockwood Park growing up, both of these parks were my childhood playgrounds. This was an event that I was not going to miss.”

How did the experience compare with your expectations?

“I arrived early into Luton on the Sunday morning and could clearly see the organisation that had gone into the event with lots of police a volunteers on the streets meeting and greeting people. The event was also well sign posted for people arriving and not familiar with Luton. Cannot thank the people who made this event happen in my home town enough. The day as a whole will go down as one of the most memorable in my life and went beyond all possible expectations that I had for the day. But I find this as no surprise as Luton is a great town and has been overlooked for far too many years.”

How did attending Radio 1’s Big Weekend affect your feelings about Luton?

“I am not naive and know that Luton has problems, just as countless other towns throughout the UK currently face. I am sure that the Big Weekend along with the Carnival on the bank holiday Monday have shown Luton and it’s people in a most positive light.”

If you spent time in Luton over the Big Weekend, please share the activities you participated in “From arriving on the Sunday we first dined at one of our favourite cafes 50Nine. Later that day dined at the Brache on Osbourne Road which was beside our place of stay the Premier Inn. On Monday, we had breakfast at the Red Lion and then attended the Luton Carnival. After doing some shopping in The Mall we then had a late lunch in Pizza Express before finally taking a walk out to Wardown Park before finally catching the Dart back up to the Airport. Our one night and two days stay in Luton was a delight and although exhausted by the time we finally arrived back in Kilkeel, Ireland, has been one of our most memorable weekend stays in Luton and one I feel might be hard to top”

Would you visit Luton again either for similar events or for something else you discovered during your visit? I intend to visit Luton many more times in the future and look forward to the new football ground at Power Court and the boost that this will inevitably bring to the town centre and town as a whole.”

Views on Town Dressing “Saw them all around the town the two days we stayed. I thought it put the whole town very much centre stage, and the weekend as a whole put Luton very much on the map in the most positive way possible.”

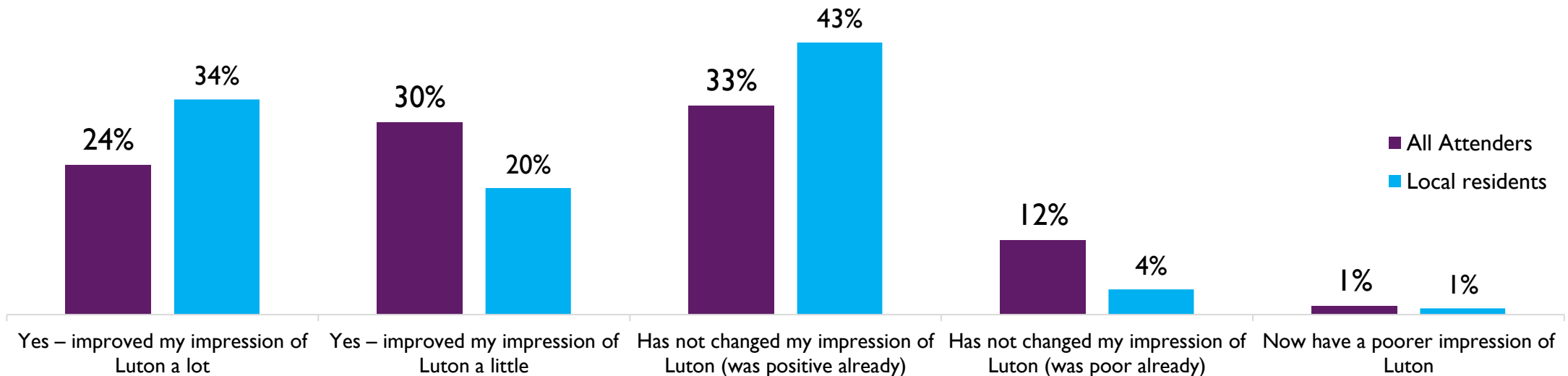
What impact do you think hosting Radio 1’s Big Weekend has had on Luton’s image overall? “I think the Big Weekend showed Luton in a most positive light. The timing around the Carnival was also perfect, allowing any visitors to the town to see the amazing diversity of cultures in Luton, just getting along and having a really good time...Again I would just like to thank all the organisers of the event, including all the artists who performed, LBC, Festival Republic and not forgetting the local residents and all the people of Luton who embraced the event and made it a weekend that will be remembered for years to come.”



Impressions of Luton

Q19. Has attending Radio 1's Big Weekend in Luton changed your impression of Luton?

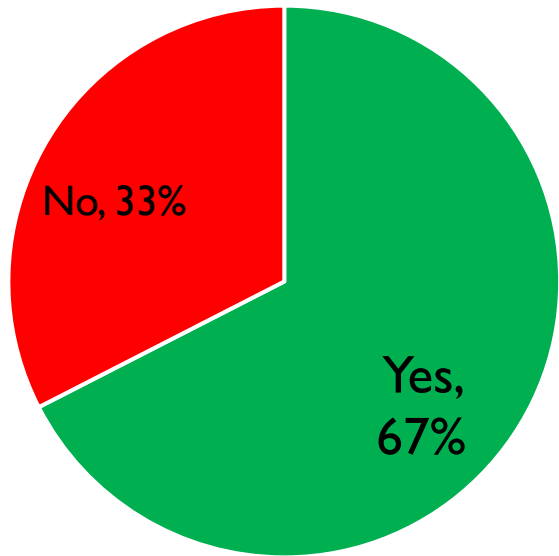
54% of all attenders indicated that attending has improved their impression of Luton, while 33% already had a positive impression. Local residents are even more positive.



Previous visits to Luton and willingness to return

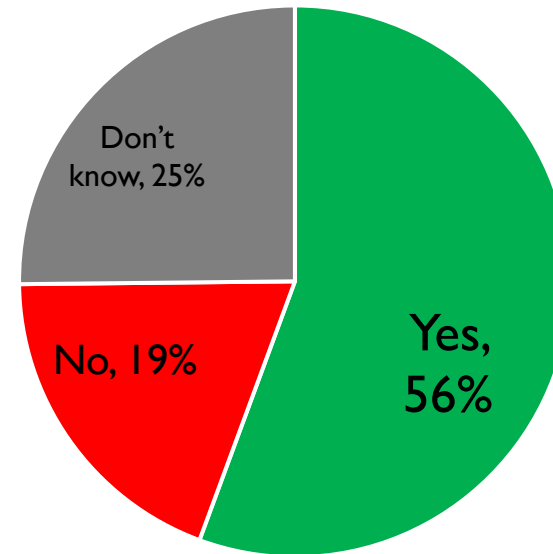
67% of visitors had previously visited Luton and 56% of visitors expressed a willingness to visit Luton again in the future.

Q20a. Have you visited Luton previously? (Visitors only)



Source: Attender Survey (Base: 2444)

Q20b. Would you visit Luton again in the future? (Visitors only)



Source: Attender Survey (Base: 2436)

Interview with Sherri: Visitor to Luton

“We met so many local volunteers... their enthusiasm made the weekend even more special for us”

What motivated you to attend Radio 1's Big Weekend in Luton?

“My favourite band Vampire Weekend were announced as playing but we had already decided to try for tickets because we love Radio 1 and had never been to a Big Weekend.”

How did the experience compare with your expectations?

“The experience totally exceeded our expectations. It was so well organised and many more bands to see than we imagined.”

How did attending Radio 1's Big Weekend affect your feelings about Luton?

“I had heard quite negative things about Luton, people saying it wasn't a very nice place because of crime and it was very run down. I had been to Luton once before but wasn't there long enough to form any opinions. After attending the Big Weekend I was pleasantly surprised, the area around the park was clean and lovely. All the people we met (and danced with!) from Luton were friendly and proud of their town. So, my impressions have changed in a positive way.”

If you spent time in Luton over the Big Weekend, please share the activities you participated in

“We visited the golf club next door for breakfast and drinks later on. The food was delicious and staff very welcoming. Great atmosphere.”

Would you visit Luton again either for similar events or for something else you discovered during your visit?

“I would definitely visit Stockwood Park again for any kind of music event as it was a great venue.”

What impact do you think hosting Radio 1's Big Weekend has had on Luton's image overall?

“A really positive impact and a great boost for the people who live there- we met so many local volunteers who were really proud to be involved. Their enthusiasm made the weekend even more special for us!”



Luton

A vibrant outdoor festival scene in Luton. The image is filled with colorful triangular bunting in shades of red, yellow, blue, green, and pink, strung across the top. In the foreground, a woman with long brown hair, wearing a blue denim dress and a tan jacket, is walking towards the camera. She is surrounded by other people, some sitting at tables and others standing. The background shows a stone building and more people, creating a lively and festive atmosphere.

“Thank you for the opportunity to showcase the potential Luton has. Security staff, volunteers and police were all positive and welcoming. I have never been so proud to be a Lutonian as I was this weekend”

Luton Perceptions - Breakdown

Q21. Which of the following words or phrases apply to Luton?

	Total	Resident - Live in Luton	Visitor to Luton
Diverse	63%	73%	58%
Developing	44%	55%	39%
Community engagement	35%	45%	30%
Inclusive	31%	41%	26%
Neglected	31%	29%	31%
Equality	20%	30%	15%
Vibrant	20%	27%	16%
Progressive	20%	30%	15%
Opportunity	19%	28%	15%
Dull	13%	9%	15%
Participation	12%	19%	9%
Exciting	12%	21%	8%
Thriving	12%	18%	9%
Collaboration	11%	16%	8%
Safe	10%	14%	8%
Innovative	8%	12%	6%
Boring	7%	9%	7%
Cool	7%	11%	6%
Modern	7%	8%	6%
Fairness	7%	11%	5%
Old fashioned	6%	6%	6%
Trendy	5%	5%	5%
Isolated	3%	3%	3%
Base	3726	1213	2513

This table illustrates perceptions of Luton, segmented by total respondents, residents, and visitors. The percentages show the proportion of respondents who associate each word or phrase with Luton.

73% of residents consider Luton "Diverse" and 58% of visitors agreeing. This indicates a **strong perception of diversity**. "Developing" is seen as applicable to Luton by 55% of residents, and 39% of visitors. Residents are more **optimistic about Luton's development**.

"Community engagement" is acknowledged by 45% of residents, and 30% of visitors, **suggesting active community involvement amongst residents**.

Other prominent perceptions include "Inclusive" (41% of residents, 26% of visitors) and "Neglected" (31% overall, 29% of residents, 31% of visitors). **Inclusivity is more recognised by residents, while neglect is equally noted by both groups**.

Overall, the data suggests a positive view of Luton, particularly among residents who see their town as diverse, developing, and inclusive, with strong community engagement. These perceptions highlight a community that is growing and embracing its rich cultural fabric.



STEP
FORWARD
LUTON

Download our new app

Interview with Misty: Luton Resident

“I hope that the Big Weekend elevates the town and has inspired more investment into the local economy”

What motivated you to attend Radio 1's Big Weekend in Luton?

“Having such a large-scale festival event with the calibre and quality of the artists performing in my hometown made this event an unmissable opportunity. I mostly have to travel into London and beyond to see these types of shows so having this on my doorstep was amazing.”

How did the experience compare with your expectations?

“It exceeded my expectations-the festival was co-ordinated very well, and I actually felt safe at all times. Staff were friendly and helpful and there were plenty of areas to go to, so you didn't feel too crowded.”

How did attending Radio 1's Big Weekend affect your feelings about Luton?

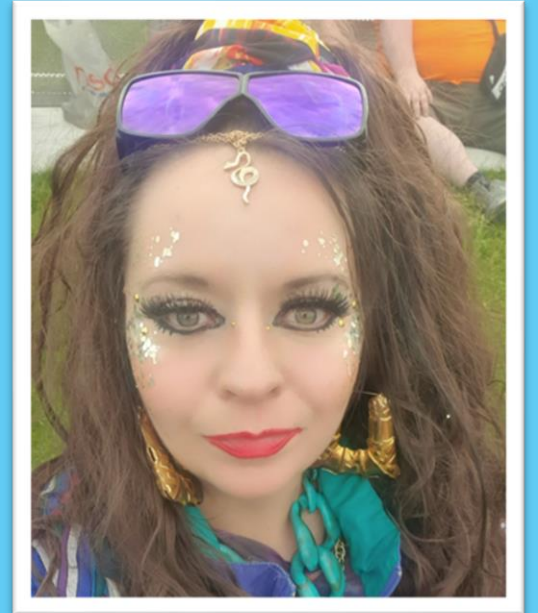
“Attending the Big Weekend made me feel that events of this scale are possible in Luton and confirmed to me that a music and arts festival needs to happen regularly to rejuvenate the town and continue to give residents hope that they are considered. This would then hopefully provide more opportunities for local people to be involved throughout the whole process, so it made a positive impression on me.”

If you spent time in Luton over the Big Weekend, please share the activities you participated in

“I went to a couple of the local pubs, however I largely spent my time at the Big Weekend festival. Unfortunately, the carnival is a shadow of its former self and since they removed the sound system trucks and condensed the performances into the middle of the town it has unfortunately lost its appeal which is a massive shame. The carnival needs to return to its former glory and events need to be held again in Wardown park.”

What impact do you think hosting Radio 1's Big Weekend has had on Luton's image overall?

“I hope the big weekend will promote positive discussions within the town and that the local authority will take inspiration from what can be achieved with collective effort and planning. There is a lot of work that needs to continue to make Luton a better place for entertainment and the arts-and in capturing the attention of local people so they don't always have to travel out of the area for these experiences. I hope that the big weekend elevates the town and has inspired more investment into the local economy. Overall, the Big Weekend has proven that an event can be run safely and it was a fabulous experience. I would like to thank all of the staff involved in the Big Weekend. It was also very good to have such a wide range of food trucks on offer that catered to dietary requirements, we need a street food festival to be replicated in the middle of the town, and we need an annual music and arts festival.”



The Impact of Town Dressing for Radio 1's Big Weekend

“I have absolutely loved the time leading up to the Big Weekend in town. The effort that has gone into cleaning everything and clearing stuff, cutting grass, washing street signs, repainting car park lines...” (Luton Resident)

60% of all attenders noticed the town dressing.

The town dressing for Radio 1's Big Weekend was widely perceived as a significant boost to Luton's image, promotion, and overall atmosphere.

Brightening up the streets: 89% of attenders agreed that the images significantly brightened up the streets. This overwhelming approval highlights the strong appreciation for the aesthetic enhancements brought to the town.

Festival atmosphere: Similarly, 90% of attenders felt that the images contributed to creating a vibrant festival atmosphere. This consensus underscores the vital role of visual elements in enriching the overall festival experience.

Positive image for Luton: 86% of attenders agreed that the town dressing projected a positive image of Luton. This strong agreement reflects a shared belief in the beneficial impact of the visuals on Luton's reputation.

Promotion of Luton: Additionally, 84% of attenders believed that these images helped promote Luton. This indicates that the majority view the town dressing as a valuable promotional asset for the town.

Luton

Economic Impact

Event Statistics

- Radio 1's Big Weekend in Luton saw a total attendance of **111,350**. On average, each individual attended **1.3 days**, resulting in approximately **83,097 unique attendees**.
- Of these, **56,340 were visitors to Luton**, while **26,757 were local residents** (*from postcodes LU1 to LU4*).
- Overall, the event generated **75,496 day visits from visitors to Luton** throughout the weekend.
- A total of **8,395 visitors stayed overnight** in commercial accommodations (*such as hotels, guest houses, B&Bs, or rented self-catering*) in Luton.
- These visitors stayed for an average of **1.8 nights**, resulting in **15,110 commercial bed nights** generating **£1,448,180** for the accommodation sector in Luton.
- Including other expenditures in Luton along with organisational spending, the **Net Direct Economic Impact** of Radio 1's Big Weekend in Luton is estimated to be **£5,103,460**.
- Local residents also spent **£1,644,640** over the course of the weekend resulting a potential net impact of **£6,748,100**.

The Direct Economic Impact measures the total additional expenditure within a specific geographical area directly attributable to staging an event. This calculation only includes spending in Luton outside the event site. Expenditures by attendees within the event site (Stockwood Park) are excluded. Organiser spend/income by the BBC/Festival Republic is not included.

While spending by locals is typically considered economic activity that would have occurred regardless of the event, we have calculated the total potential economic impact. The EVENTimpacts model and Direct Economic Impact focus on new economic activity from visitor spending (non-locals), which brings additional income to the local economy. In contrast, local spending often redistributes existing expenditure without creating a net gain.

All figures are subject to rounding.

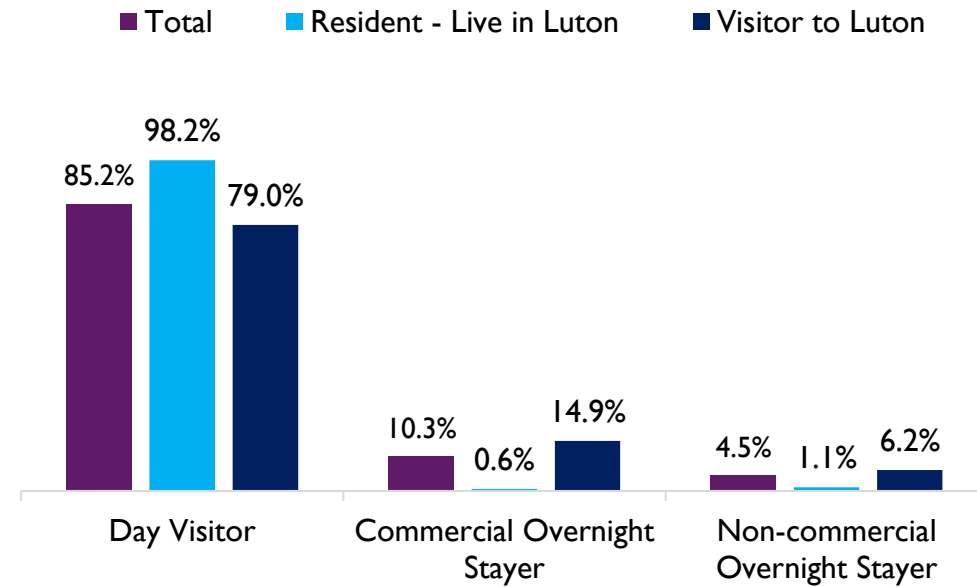
Attender Breakdown

To enable the Economic Impact calculations, attender are divided into three classifications:

Day Visitors: These are individuals who visit the event but do not stay overnight in the host economy. They typically travel to the event from their home or stayed outside the host economy and return on the same day. Day visitors contribute to the local economy through spending on things like food, beverages, and sometimes local transportation, but they do not spend on accommodation.

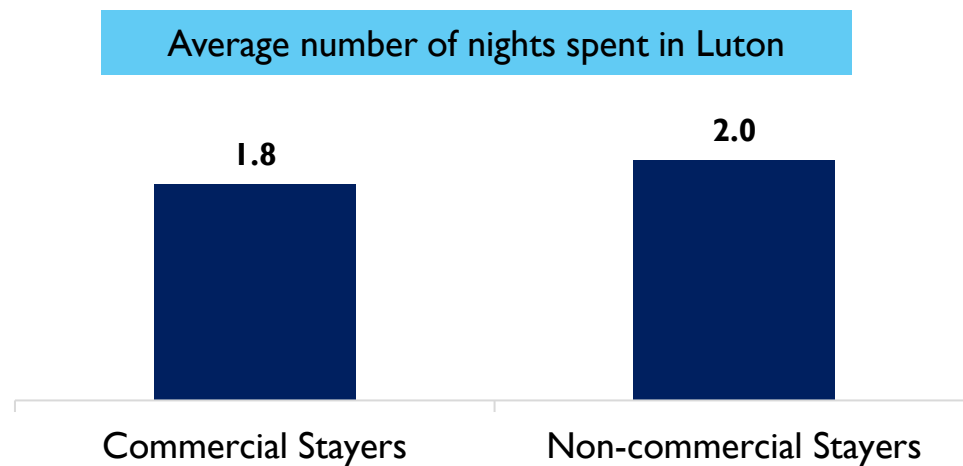
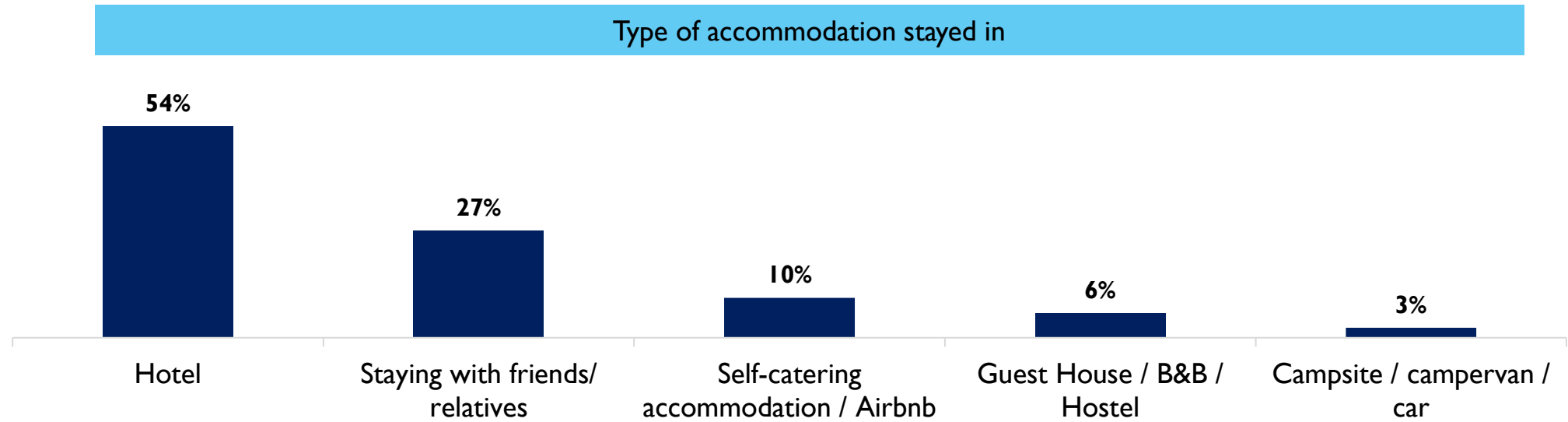
Commercial Overnight Stayers: These are individuals who attend the event and stay overnight in commercial accommodations such as hotels, guest houses, b&bs or rented self-catering accommodation. They contribute significantly to the local economy by spending on accommodation in addition to other expenses such as eating out meals, and other event-related purchases.

Non-Commercial Overnight Stayers: These are individuals who attend the event and stay overnight but do not use commercial accommodations. Instead, they might stay with friends or relatives. While they contribute to the local economy through spending on food, beverages, and other expenses, their impact is typically less than that of commercial overnight stayers due to the lack of expenditure on accommodation.



	Visitor to Luton
Total number of visitors to Luton	56,340
Day Visitors	44,452
Commercial Overnight Stayers	8,395
Non-Commercial Overnight Stayers	3,493

Overnight Stayers (Visitors to Luton)

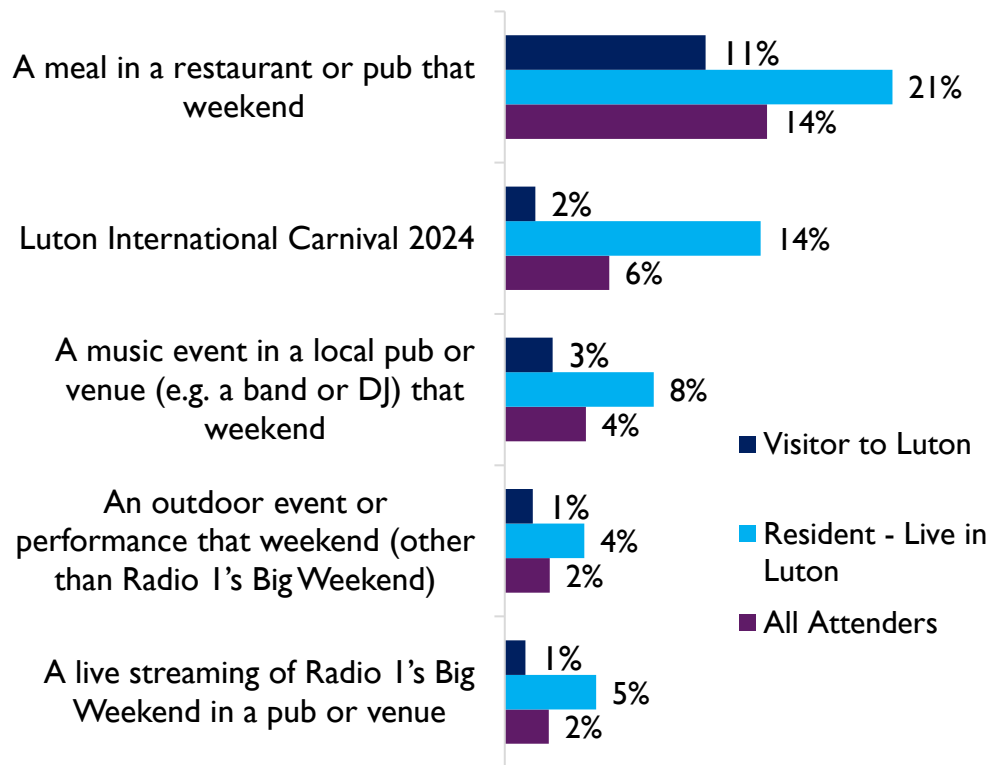


Average spent per person per night in Luton:

£95.84

Other activities in Luton

Q002. Did you attend any of the following during your time in Luton? (All Attendees)



The table below illustrates the impact of attendees at the Radio 1's Big Weekend on various activities in Luton over a specific weekend by highlighting the estimated number of actual activities participated in by both residents and visitors.

With a total of 56,340 attendances by visitors the data underscores the substantial contribution of tourism to the local economy. The influx of visitors increases revenue for local businesses and stimulates economic activity in hospitality, entertainment, and cultural events, thereby playing a crucial role in boosting Luton's economic vitality during such events.

Estimated number of actual activities participated in	Resident - Live in Luton	Visitor to Luton
A meal in a restaurant or pub that weekend	5485	5983
Luton International Carnival 2024	3612	903
A music event in a local pub or venue (e.g. a band or DJ) that weekend	2114	1411
A live streaming of Radio 1's Big Weekend in a pub or venue	1284	621
An outdoor event or performance that weekend (other than Radio 1's Big Weekend)	1124	847
Total number of unique attendees in category	26,757	56,340



Media Impacts

Luton

Example news coverage & social media posts...

Radio 1's Big Weekend: 'Luton is now officially cool'

Coldplay perform Luton Town tribute at Big Weekend

'Big Weekend will help us show off our town'

University students join BBC broadcasting team for Radio 1's Big Weekend

I laughed, I cried and I was aching all over by the end of it. Luton knows how to put on a truly unforgettable weekend!

Hundreds sign petition to keep 'legacy of Luton's Big Weekend going' after successful three-day festival

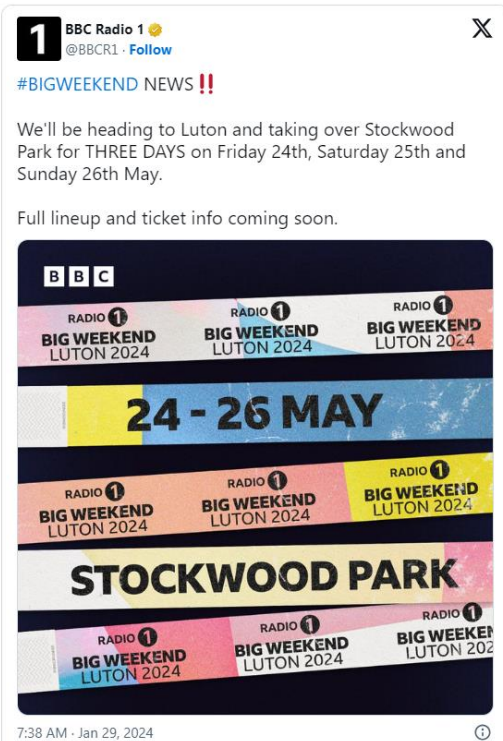
Big Weekend line-up is 'dream come true'

KidsFest set to arrive at The Mall Luton in celebration of Radio 1's Big Weekend

Radio 1's Big Weekend volunteers inspired by 2012 Olympics



Big Weekend artist 'grateful' for support in Luton



Example news coverage & social media posts...

Big Weekend: How Luton bagged BBC's biggest music festival of the year

BBC Radio 1 launches outreach programme ahead of Big Weekend 2024 in Luton

Radio 1's Big Weekend coming to Luton

I went to Radio 1's Big Weekend in Luton and here's what happened

Radio 1 star excited to bring Radio 1's Big Weekend to Luton

Teen plays at Big Weekend after late call for musicians



Big Weekend...but what else? Five things about Luton



Luton will 'be put on the map'

Watch Luton airport staff break out into a dance routine as they get ready for the BBC Radio 1 Big Weekend

BBC Radio 1 Big Weekend shines spotlight on Luton talent

Radio 1's Big Weekend to show film by young Luton poets

Media Impacts – BBC Overview





The festival achieved substantial media impact across various platforms:

- **Television reach:** The festival's TV content was watched by over 3 million viewers, showcasing its broad appeal and substantial reach within the television audience.
- **Top performers on TV:** Coldplay led the TV viewership charts with an impressive average audience of close to 1 million viewers (963,000). Raye attracted nearly half a million viewers (450,000). Furthermore, Raye dominated the iPlayer platform as the top on-demand performer, achieving 155,000 streams.
- **Digital engagement:** The festival generated a remarkable 5.7 million stream requests on iPlayer and BBC Sounds. This digital footprint was particularly strong in Luton and the surrounding areas, indicating a significant uplift in local engagement.
- **Social media influence:** The BBC's social media posts about the festival achieved an extraordinary 100 million views. This highlights the festival's powerful presence and influence across social media platforms, amplifying its impact beyond traditional media.



Website and Social Media Impacts – Step Forward Luton

The Step Forward Luton team provided a snapshot of the social media impacts over the period 23rd May – 3rd June in comparison to the previous week. Total reach post the event: 785,700 with 46,563 engagements



- **Facebook:** Reach – 242,100 (+383%); Impressions – 743,000 (+352%); Engagements 16,200 (+716%); New followers 822 (+693%) 
- **TikTok:** Impressions - 464,000 (+1761%); Engagements - 25,172 (+1143%); New Followers – 700 (+629%) 
- **Instagram:** Reach – 12,600 (+361%); Engagements – 2100 (+450%); New Followers – 112 (+150%) 
- **X (Twitter):** Impressions 67,000; Engagements 3,091; New Followers 69 

The Step Forward Luton website was live from August 2023 featured three pages of information for attendees, information for event volunteers and travel information and received **38,000 visits**, and directed people towards other things to do in Luton while attending the Festival.



Website and Social Media Impacts – Luton Council

The Luton Council team provided a snapshot of the social media impacts over the period 23rd May – 3rd June in comparison to the previous week, and interaction via their website.

- **Facebook:** Reach – 356,800 (+403%); Visits – 36,200 (+172%); New followers 721 (+675%) 
- **Instagram:** Reach – 26,100 (+332%); Visits – 2700 (+442%); New Followers – 255 (+193%) 
- The Luton Council website featured information directed at residents and businesses about the impact of the event including details of road closures, traffic management and parking.
- The Radio 1 Big Weekend page was the most viewed on the Luton Council website news and events section with 43,460 views between 1st January and 1st August 2024, with a further 60,542 views on related content.



Kate Birch

Absolutely amazing to have this on our doorstep. I've seriously dreamt of going to the Radio 1's Big Weekend for sooo many years and to have it in our home town 🥳



Neil Gaye

It's amazing to see on TV tonight. I went to Stockwood Park yesterday.

Radio 1 have certainly put Luton in the spotlight this weekend.

It's upto you Luton Council to make this happen again next year or in two years time.

It's clear to see there is an appetite for it.

Proud of Luton this weekend. Thank you Radio 1, LBC and all the volunteers and emergency services. Great work.



Kev Connor

OMG.How amazing is Luton. I feel proud to be a Lutonian. A great weekend run very well ..

Social Media Impacts – Luton Rising

The Luton Rising team provided a snapshot of the social media impacts over the period 23rd May – 3rd June in comparison to the previous week.

- **Facebook:** Reach – 71,300 (+3,400%); Visits – 900 (+1,200%); New followers 54 (+1,700%)
- **X (Twitter) :** Impressions – 12,753; Engagements – 561 (+442%); New Followers – 12



Volunteers

Feedback from Luton Rising Festival Makers



Luton
Rising

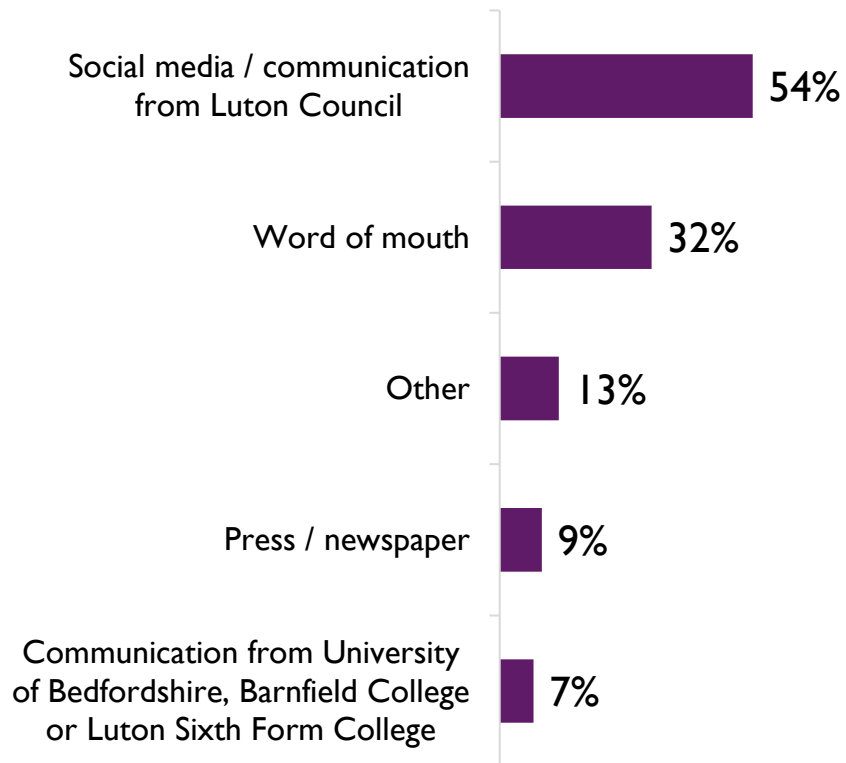
Our airport.
Our community.
Our planet.

Volunteer Statistics

- **284 individuals** volunteered at Radio 1's Big Weekend.
- A total of **496 shifts** were worked resulting in **3,372** volunteering hours.
- Social media (54%) and word of mouth (32%) were the most common ways volunteers found out about opportunity.
- The top reasons for choosing to volunteer at Radio 1's Big Weekend were to **be part of a big event (77%)** and to **engage with their community (71%)**.
- **72%** of volunteers expressed that they had acquired experience **beneficial for their future employment**.
- 8 in 10 (81%) volunteers indicated that volunteering at RIBW **improved their sense of pride in Luton**.
- An overwhelming **100% of volunteers feel proud to have been part of the event** and **100%** also had a great volunteering experience.
- **96%** believe the event helped improve perceptions of the town and **84%** feel more connected to their community after volunteering.

Luton Rising Festival Maker Marketing Channels

Q2. How did you become aware of the opportunity to be a Luton Rising Festival Maker Volunteer?



Social media and word of mouth were the most common ways volunteers found out about opportunity.



Reasons given for volunteering

Q3. Which of the following reasons best reflect why you decided to volunteer at Radio 1's Big Weekend in Luton?



The top reasons for choosing to volunteer at Radio 1's Big Weekend were to be part of a big event (77%) and to engage with their community (71%).

Other reasons included gaining teamwork experience (43%), dealing with the public (39%), increasing self-confidence (34%), and developing job-related skills (32%). Some volunteered to feel responsible (30%) or to join friends/relatives (25%).

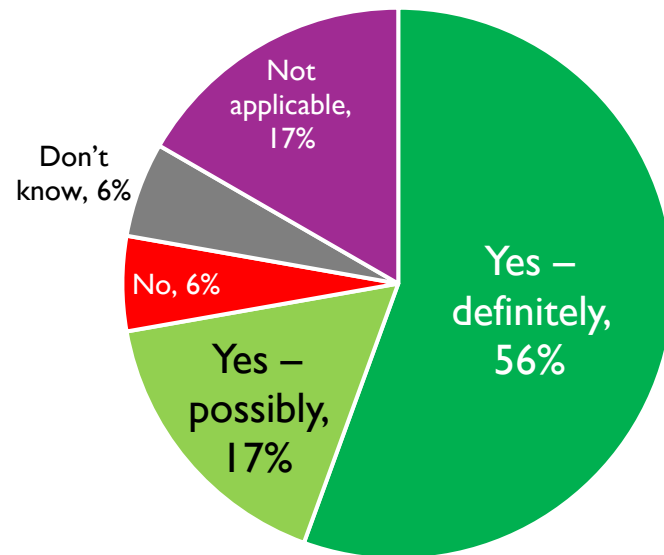
Any other reasons

- "To start volunteering and this seemed like a great event to start with!"
- "To have fun helping others."
- "This was a historical event and I wanted to be part of the growth and development of Luton."
- "Part of YPS, to support the young people of Luton."
- "Be involved in the big weekend."

Skills gained from volunteering

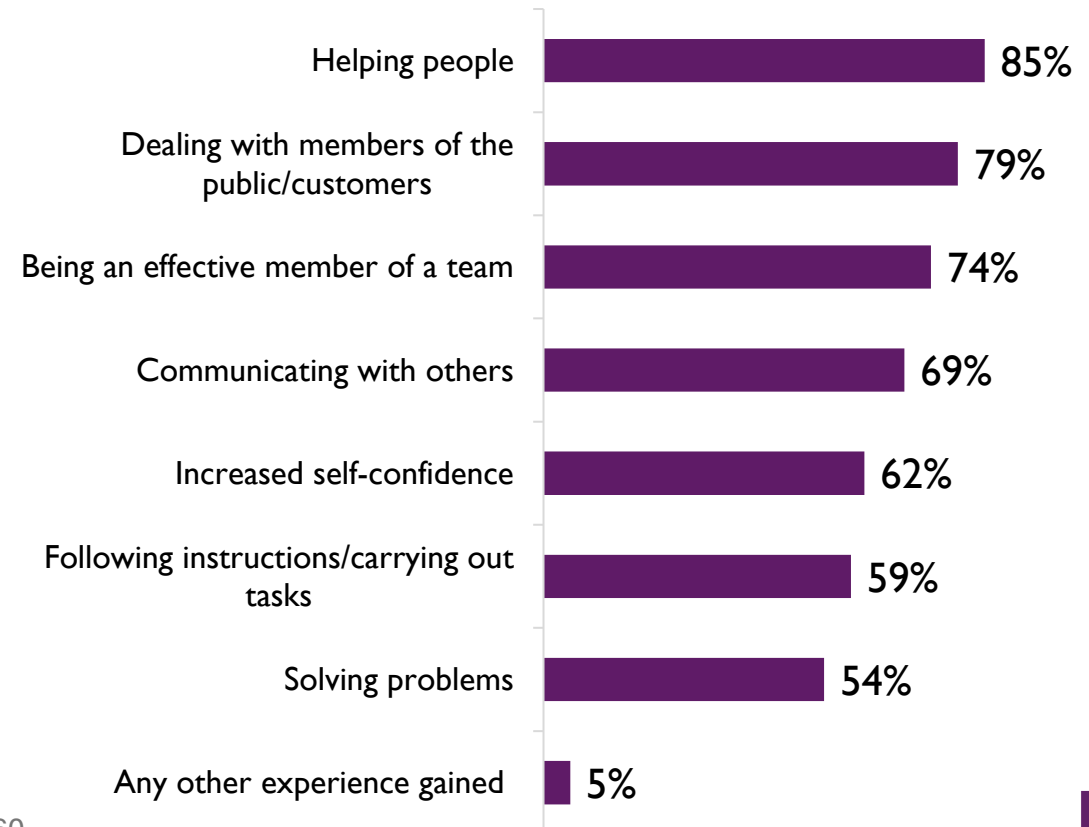
72% of volunteers expressed that they had acquired experience beneficial for their future employment. Among the key skills gained, 85% highlighted 'Helping people', while 79% noted improvements in 'Dealing with members of the public/customers'. Furthermore, 74% recognised their growth as 'effective team members', 69% reported enhanced communication skills, and 62% observed increased self-confidence.

Q6. Do you feel you gained any experience that will be helpful in future employment?



Source: Volunteer Survey (Base: 54)

Q7. Which of the following experiences do you think you have gained?



Source: Volunteer Survey (Base: 39)

Interview with Rebecca: Luton Rising Festival Maker

“The warmth and friendliness of the people in Luton left a lasting impression”

What motivated you to volunteer at Radio 1’s Big Weekend in Luton? “It provided a unique chance to gain work experience in event management and community engagement within the UK context... meeting people in Luton—whether fellow volunteers, attendees, or local residents—offered an opportunity to build networks, exchange ideas, and foster meaningful relationships. Finally, by volunteering, I actively participated in creating a memorable experience for festival-goers by being a festival maker myself.”

How did the experience of volunteering compare with your expectations? “I thoroughly enjoyed my time volunteering, and my expectations were fully met. Additionally, I had the chance to connect with the people of Luton, which holds great significance for me. After completing my master’s degree in development studies at the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex in Brighton, I’m eagerly anticipating my move to Luton.”

How prepared did you feel for the role? “We received ample training, attending sessions three times. Each training equipped us with essential skills to contribute to the event’s success. I particularly enjoyed learning about communication and emergency management. Additionally, we had morning briefings on the day(s) we volunteered.”

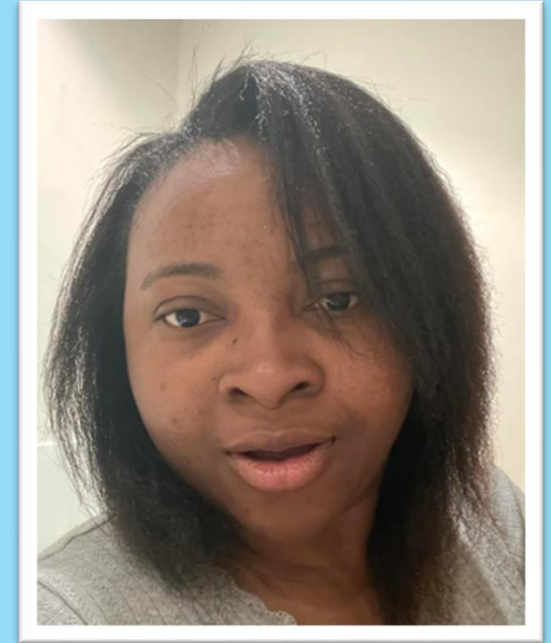
What was the best thing about volunteering? “One of the highlights of volunteering was guiding festival-goers who had lost their way or needed directions to the venue. Their smiles and laughter when I pointed them in the right direction using ‘the big blue finger,’ made the experience truly memorable.”

Do you think your role has helped you develop any job-related skills? “It allowed me to enhance job-related skills. These include effective communication through interactions with festival-goers, emergency management in handling unexpected situations, providing excellent customer service with a positive attitude, adaptability, and navigating event spaces based on my prior experience in events management and community engagement.”

Was there any particular aspect of volunteering that you feel will specifically help you in the future? “It provided me with a valuable opportunity to connect with local festival-goers and fellow volunteers who reside in the area. My goal is to work in climate action advocacy and community engagement, contributing to greener futures for all. The warm reception I experienced from Lutonians during volunteering has reinforced my eagerness to seek opportunities with the local council or organisations involved in climate action in Luton.”

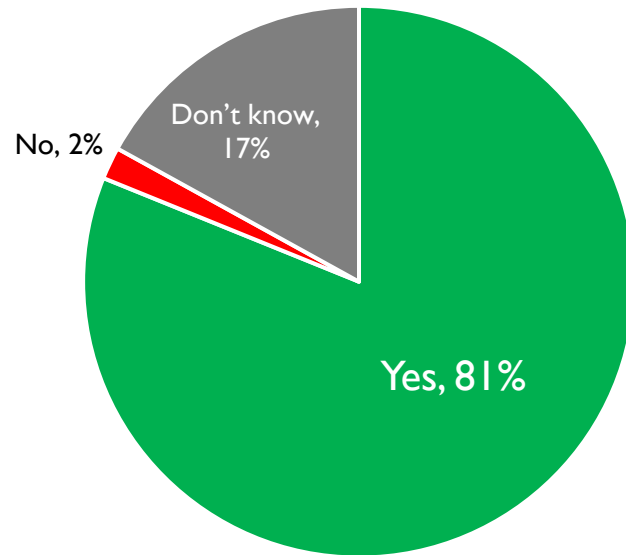
Is there any advice you would give to other people who were considering volunteering in the future? “Volunteering is a wonderful experience. Having volunteered for various projects, programs and events in Nigeria, I appreciate how it fosters community engagement and connections with people. If you’re open to learning, meeting new individuals, engaging in conversations, and gaining fresh perspectives, I encourage you to sign up for volunteering at any program or event.”

What impact do you think hosting Radio 1’s Big Weekend has had on Luton’s image overall? “The event showcased Luton’s capacity to host large-scale gatherings, celebrate music, and engage with diverse audiences. Moreover, the positive impact on local businesses, tourism, and community spirit has contributed to reshaping perceptions of Luton. It’s exciting to witness how such events can elevate a city’s profile and foster a sense of pride among its residents.”



Pride in Luton

Q8a. Has volunteering at Radio 1 Big Weekend improved your sense of pride in Luton?



8 in 10 volunteers indicated that volunteering at RIBW improved their sense of pride in Luton.

Pride in community and event success: Many volunteers expressed a deep sense of pride in both the community and the success of the event. *"The whole event was an amazing success for Luton and I feel proud to have been a part of that."*

Strengthening of community bonds: The event brought people together, fostering new friendships and reinforcing a sense of community: *"Wonderful seeing friendships being made between the volunteers and assuming roles and working as a team."*

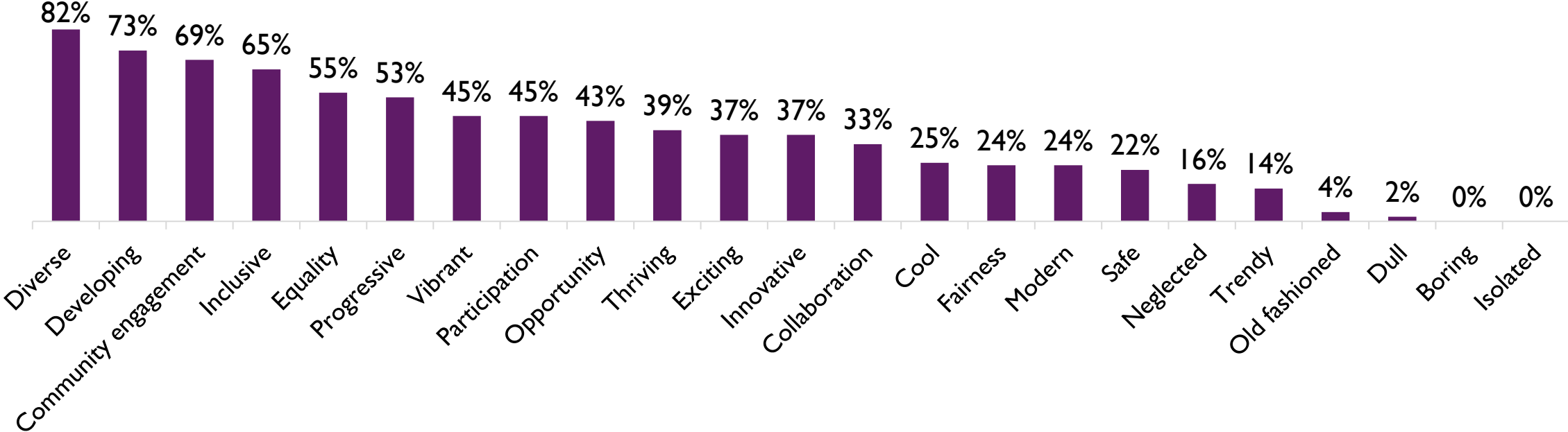
Positive perceptions of Luton: There is a strong emphasis on how the event helped improve the perception of Luton, highlighting its positive aspects and countering negative stereotypes. *"It has shown that Luton can also hold amazing festivals, and there are positive things that happen in Luton."*

Personal contribution: Volunteers felt personally fulfilled by contributing to the event and experiencing the positive outcomes firsthand: *"It was nice to be part of a positive experience in Luton rather than just hearing all the negative press about it."*

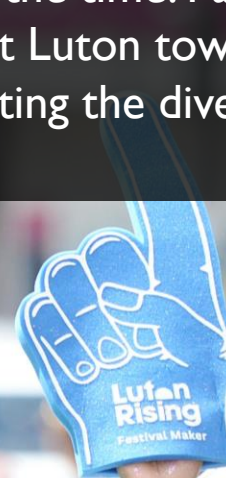
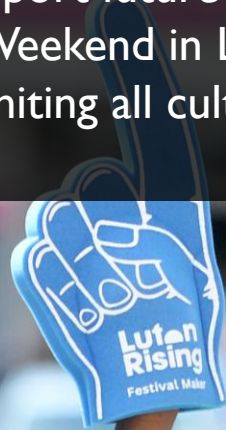
Luton Images Perceptions

Q12. Which of the following words or phrases apply to Luton?

The chart highlights volunteers' positive perceptions of Luton, with "Diverse" (82%), "Developing" (73%), and "Community engagement" (69%) being the top associations. Other positive terms like "Inclusive," "Equality," and "Vibrant" also received strong recognition.

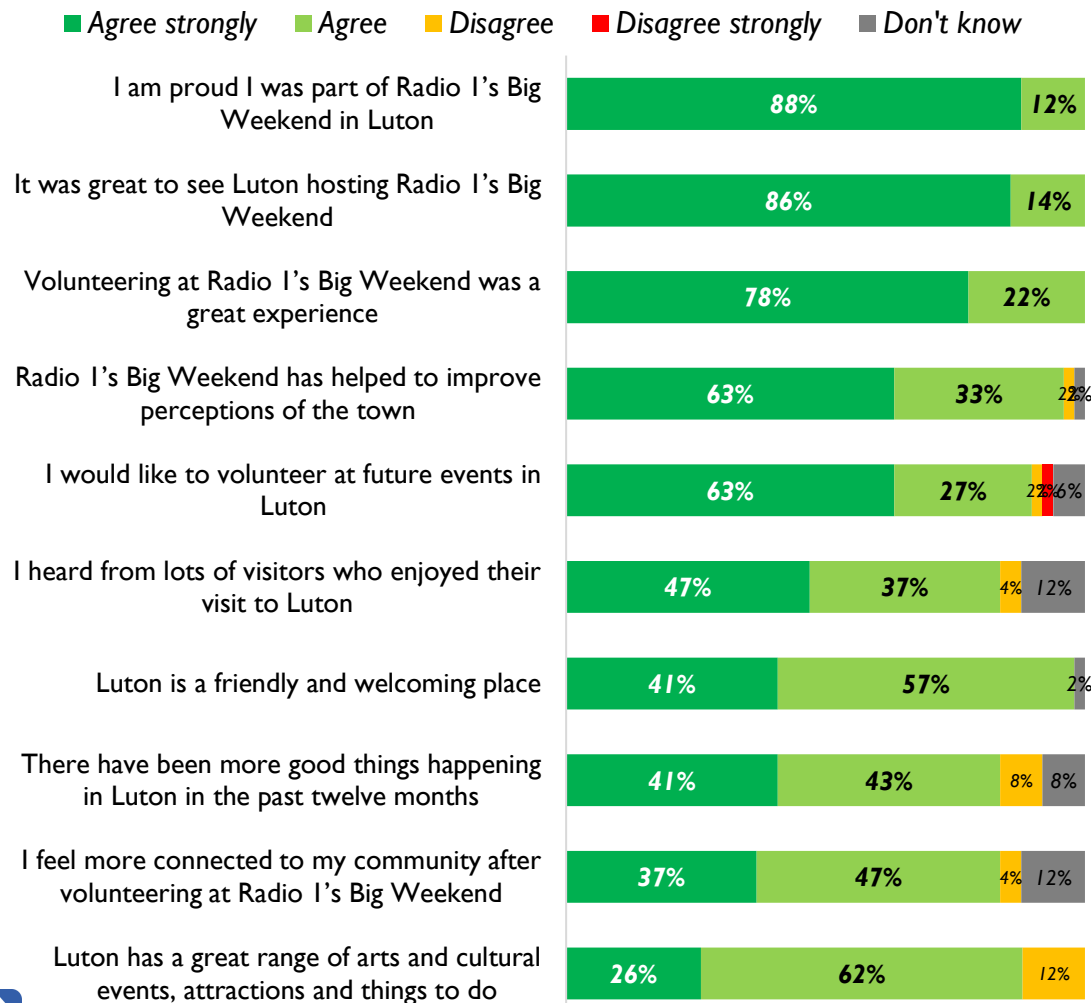


“I was in my element because I wanted to show everyone how beautiful my town is. I adopted this town as my home over 16 years ago. I chose to raise my family here. I would love the world to see Luton through my eyes. I now feel like an Ambassador for Luton. I hope there shall be more fabulous events in Luton. I also hope to support future events if I have the time. I am very proud and honoured to have been part of the Radio 1 Big Weekend in Luton. I glad that Luton town is becoming more progressive and inclusive. Involving and uniting all cultures in celebrating the diversity of this thriving town.” (Luton Rising Festival Maker)



Volunteers Attitudes towards Luton

Q22. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



Radio 1's Big Weekend had an extremely positive impact on the volunteers. The vast majority expressed pride, enjoyed their experience, and felt that the event improved both the town's image and their sense of community connection. High levels of agreement across various statements underscore the event's success and its beneficial effects on Luton's community and cultural life.

An overwhelming 100% of volunteers feel proud to have been part of the event, with 100% also having had a great volunteering experience and enjoying seeing Luton host the event.

Additionally, 98% agree that Luton is a friendly and welcoming place, and 96% believe the event helped improve perceptions of the town. A significant 90% are interested in volunteering at future events, while 88% agree that Luton offers a great range of arts and cultural events.

Furthermore, 84% heard positive feedback from visitors, feel more connected to their community after volunteering, and believe more good things have been happening in Luton over the past twelve months.

Perceptions of Luton

96% of volunteers believe RIBW helped improve perceptions of the town.

Positive change in perception of Luton: The event helped to challenge and change negative perceptions of Luton, showing it as a welcoming and capable town, contrary to its perceived poor reputation in the media.

Community and volunteer involvement: There was significant community involvement and volunteer support, demonstrating local pride and willingness to contribute to the event's success.

Successful large-scale event hosting: The successful organisation and execution of the event showcased Luton's ability to host large, well-organised events, attracting visitors and demonstrating the town's potential.

Increased visitor engagement: The event drew many visitors to Luton, some for the first time, allowing them to experience the town positively and potentially return in the future.

Positive media and social media coverage: The event generated positive reviews and coverage on social media and other media platforms, contributing to a more favourable image of Luton.

“There's a misconception that Luton is a dangerous place to avoid - sadly it is the minority.... I think a lot of people were pleasantly surprised at the weekend and may even be brave enough to venture back should we have the right event taking place.”

“People have seen that we can deliver a really successful large scale event and also seen real Luton people pulling together to contribute to this.”

“From what I have seen on social media the festival was a raging success and virtually trouble free. The visitors spoke well of Luton and how welcome they felt. Hats off to the Bedfordshire constabulary for handing out freebies safety alarms. We handed out free ponchos. Overall I have heard only positive reviews.”

“Luton is often referred to negatively as not being a desirable place to live but this event will hopefully associate Luton with the huge success of the big weekend.”

Strong connections to community

84% feel more connected to their community after volunteering.

Community and volunteer engagement: The event fostered a strong sense of community and teamwork among volunteers.

Diverse interactions: Volunteers had the opportunity to meet and interact with people they wouldn't normally encounter, enriching their understanding and appreciation of Luton's diversity.

Emotional connection: There was a deep sense of pride and emotional connection to Luton, highlighted by moments like Chris Martin's performance and the shared experience of being part of a significant local event.

Confidence building: The event boosted confidence among volunteers, providing them with opportunities to engage more with the community, speak to new people, and feel appreciated and welcomed.

Future opportunities and continued involvement: Many volunteers expressed a willingness to engage in future events and activities, motivated by the positive experiences and connections made during the event.

“I was volunteering with people from different areas in Luton, most of them, not work related, so, I heard different perceptions of Luton, and made me appreciate more what Luton is about, diversity and people willing and longing to change our town for the better”

“The team spirit was so lovely. I felt appreciated and welcomed. I feel encouraged to make myself available for more opportunities in my career and volunteering”

“The volunteers were from various age groups and multi-cultural sections of the community. The togetherness among the festival goers was very clear to see”

“Yes I was very proud when Chris Martin sang his ode to Luton .It was an emotion moment. Luton is my adopted Town. I choose to live here”

“It was great to be involved and I feel that I would probably volunteer at events in the future if I'm available”

Positive feedback from visitors

84% heard positive feedback from visitors to Luton

Widespread positive feedback: Volunteers consistently heard from attendees that they had a great time at the event, with many expressing their enjoyment and satisfaction both during and after the event.

Social media confirmation: Many volunteers noted that social media was abuzz with positive comments and reviews about the event, further confirming the enthusiastic feedback they received directly from visitors.

Community pride and support: Volunteers reported a strong sense of community pride and support, with visitors appreciating the welcoming atmosphere and the effort put in by the locals to ensure a successful event.

Effective event organisation: Feedback from visitors often included praise for the smooth organisation and management of the event.

Broad visitor engagement: Volunteers heard from a diverse range of visitors, including those from outside Luton, who were impressed by the event and the town. This broad engagement helped reinforce the positive impact the event had on changing perceptions of Luton.

“Attendees and volunteers had lots of good things to say with joy in their voices when recounting and sharing their experiences from the day before.”

“During and after the concert on Sunday the visitors were talking about how much Luton accommodated them.”

“The number of posts with lovely comments, incredibly pics. I have heard from friends that live in different counties; how great it was.”

“Social media comments, and people who I spoke to at the events all said they were enjoying their visit to Luton.”

“Everyone I have spoken to about the event has said how much they enjoyed it and how well they think the event was organised and managed.”

“Because on lots of media outlets people are commenting how great the festival was, and how great the volunteers were also.”

Interview with Louise: Luton Rising Festival Maker

“Thanks for the opportunity. I will forever be able to say: ‘I was there’...”

What motivated you to volunteer at Radio 1’s Big Weekend in Luton? “I knew that if an event this size in Luton was to be a success the town would need some help on the day. What better way to help than give up some of my time because I live in the town. It was an easy decision and I like helping people. I also wanted to help be part of a pivotal moment in Luton’s story. I believe that there are a lot of preconceived ideas about Luton, not all good and I wanted to in some way dispel those thoughts.”

How did the experience of volunteering compare with your expectations? “Whilst it was a good experience for me, I think I missed out on some of the atmosphere that was present in the town centre. This was simply down to where we were deployed and how many of us there were at each "station". Some volunteers were clearly better than others in what was asked of them.”

How prepared did you feel for the role? “I knew exactly what to expect and what was expected of me. The training was useful though and a good reminder of the do’s and don’ts of volunteering. I also met a few volunteers in the training that I went onto volunteer with, and it was nice to see a few familiar faces on the day.”

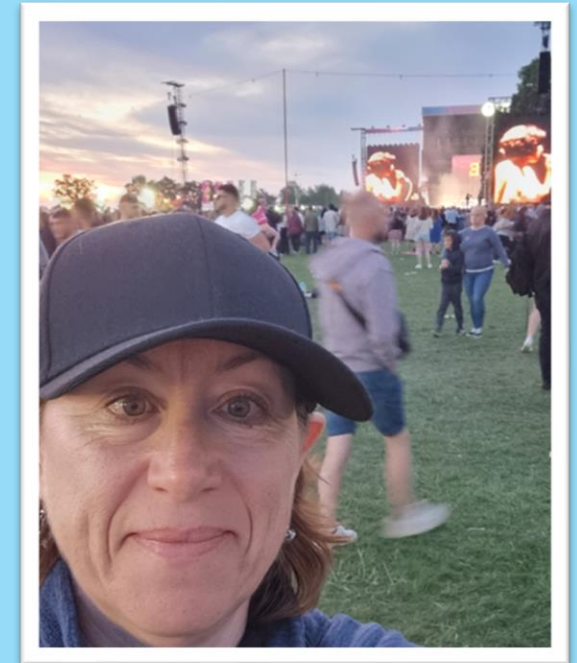
What was the best thing about volunteering? “It gave me a sense of pride to be part of Luton and this event. I was amazed at how friendly all the visitors were to me, especially so when they said "Thank You". It was nice to operate alongside the police, who were friendly and quite happy we were there. It was nice that we were given entrance tickets to the event too! Although that isn’t why I volunteered.”

Do you think your role has helped you develop any job-related skills? “Yes, for sure, the event reminded me that we all have different capabilities, needs and wants and we need to be respectful of that in all areas of our lives, both in work and play. We also need to use different ways to communicate and to listen to others.”

Was there any particular aspect of volunteering that you feel will specifically help you in the future? “Helping others is a very nice distraction and it can be quite therapeutic. Volunteering makes you stop thinking about yourself for periods of time. We can be too self-critical too often and this can be draining. Volunteering helps you put things into perspective and see that there are people worse off than yourself and you have it in your power to do something about it.”

Is there any advice you would give to other people who were considering volunteering in the future? “The advice I would give is to find a local group or a person that you are reasonably familiar with and get involved on a small scale so you can "learn the ropes" and build your confidence to do bigger, further and longer. Buddy up with someone else so you can share the experience with.”

What impact do you think hosting Radio 1’s Big Weekend has had on Luton’s image overall? “Smashed it! We demonstrated that there is more to Luton than the M1 and an airport. Luton has undoubtedly raised its profile for all the right reasons and improved its image unmeasurably.”



Volunteer Demographic Profile

Gender of respondents

Female	68%
Male	28%
Prefer to self-describe	0%
Prefer not to say	4%

Age Range of respondents

16-24	12%
25-34	16%
35-44	12%
45-54	20%
55-64	24%
64-74	8%
75+	0%
Prefer not to say	6%

Ethnicity of respondents

White: British	39%
African or African British	12%
Asian or Asian British	10%
Caribbean or Caribbean British	8%
White: Other	6%
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	6%
Black or Black British	6%
Other Ethnic Group	4%
White: Other British	2%
Chinese or Chinese British	2%
Prefer not to say	4%

Employment Status of respondents

Employed full time	39%
Not employed, and seeking work	14%
Employed part-time	10%
Currently at school	8%
Retired	8%
Currently at college	8%
Not employed due to caring responsibilities	6%
Self-employed	4%
Not employed due to health reasons	4%
Prefer not to say	2%
Currently at university	2%

Health and Disability Status of Respondents

None	63%
A long-term illness, disease or condition	12%
A mental health condition	8%
A physical disability	6%
A learning disability	4%
Neurodivergence	2%
Prefer not to say	16%

Appendix: Radio 1's Outreach Programme in Luton

Hosted by BBC Radio 1's Life Hacks presenters Lauren Layfield and Shanequa Paris. Over 110 young people participated in a series of panel sessions across four days at the University of Bedfordshire and Lewsey Sports Centre in Luton. The sessions ran from Sunday, 12th May, to Wednesday, 15th May,

The overarching theme for the discussions was 'health,' and local experts were invited to share their knowledge and insights. Each panel focused on a specific aspect of health, with Sunday covering mental health, Monday addressing financial health, Tuesday dedicated to physical health, and Wednesday focusing on personal safety. These topics were chosen based on the needs and interests of the young audience.

As part of a research project leading up to the panels, Cardinal Newman High School, Luton Sixth Form College, Stockwood Park Academy, Lealands High School, and The Chalk Hills Academy participated in gathering input from over 60 young people aged 11-18. This research allowed the team to hear directly from young people about the issues most relevant to them. The discussions during the panels were tailored around the insights gathered, ensuring that the sessions addressed the key concerns of the youth in Luton.

Following each day's panel, a special live BBC Radio 1 Life Hacks show aired, based on the discussions. These live shows drew significant interest, achieving the second-highest audience figures since the show began.

Looking ahead, there are plans to continue this engagement with Luton's young community. Cardinal Newman, Luton Sixth Form, and the University of Bedfordshire are set to partner for a BBC Careers Day in Luton early next year. This event will form part of the Radio 1 Big Weekend outreach legacy and will aim to provide students with valuable career development opportunities. This future collaboration reflects the ongoing commitment to supporting young people in Luton through meaningful engagement and learning opportunities.



Lauren Layfield and Shanequa Paris, hosts of Radio 1's Life Hacks

Luton

**STEP
FORWARD
LUTON**

**Luton
Rising** Our airport.
Our community.
Our planet.



Evaluation of Luton's Hosting of Radio 1's Big Weekend 2024

