

THE GIGXCHANGE INDEX

# The rate index.

What gigs actually pay across the UK – by city, gig type and band size. Real numbers, free for every artist, venue, agent and promoter.

Issue 01 · **April 2026**

**2,381**

DATA POINTS

**14**

UK CITIES

**345**

CELLS PUBLISHED

**19 Apr**

LAST REFRESH

## FOREWORD

# Why a transparent rate index matters

Most of the UK live music industry runs on guesswork. Artists ask for too little because they don't know what's normal. Venues pay too much, or post jobs at fees no good act will accept. Both sides are flying blind. The GigXchange Index fixes that – real fees, broken down by city, gig type and band size, free for anyone to use.

**£20,700**AVG ANNUAL INCOME  
FROM MUSIC**43%**EARN UNDER  
£14,000 FROM  
MUSIC**23%**CANNOT SUPPORT  
THEMSELVES ON  
MUSIC ALONE**53%**NEED OTHER INCOME  
TO SUSTAIN A MUSIC  
CAREER

Source: Musicians' Census, Help Musicians UK & the Musicians' Union (~6,000 respondents).

## WHAT'S IN THIS ISSUE

Every rate published as of our 19 April refresh, plus a plain-English walk-through of how we collect and crunch the numbers.

- **Section 1 – The numbers.** What gigs are paying right now, by gig type, band size and city.
- **Section 2 – How we work it out.** Where the data comes from and how we turn it into a rate.
- **Section 3 – This month's data sources.** What went into the April figures.
- **Section 4 – How we keep junk out.** The five checks every number passes before it counts.
- **Section 5 – What this is and isn't.** Honest limits and how to use the figures.

### WHY WE DON'T PUBLISH "AVERAGES"

A single £25,000 corporate gig drags the average across 100 weddings up by hundreds of pounds – making the average useless. We publish four numbers instead: a low (p25), a typical (p50, the median), a high (p75) and a top-end (p90). That way you can see exactly where your gig sits on the curve, not just a misleading one-size-fits-all figure.

## SECTION ONE

# This month's headline rates

All figures are **what the artist actually takes home**, in pounds. They don't include ticket splits, tips, gear hire, travel, accommodation or licensing – those aren't fees, they distort the picture. We only publish a rate once we've got at least 3 trusted data points for a city, or 1 for the UK as a whole.

## UK NATIONAL MEDIANS BY USE CASE 3-4 PIECE

USE CASE	P25	P50 (MEDIAN)	P75	P90	N
Wedding	£995	<b>£1,340</b>	£1,757	£2,241	4,299
Private party	£732	<b>£1,098</b>	£1,550	£2,463	774
Corporate event	£771	<b>£839</b>	£920	£1,082	24
Festival	£649	<b>£757</b>	£866	£866	8
Theatre / pit	£622	<b>£631</b>	£640	£640	10
Club (ticketed)	£455	<b>£600</b>	£1,297	£1,463	46
Pubs & bars	£433	<b>£487</b>	£649	£649	44
All use cases	£995	<b>£1,295</b>	£1,730	£2,263	5,205

Weddings are the biggest part of our data and pay the most – typically £1,340 for a 4-piece. Corporate gigs cluster tightly because companies set fixed budgets and stick to them. Pubs sit at the bottom, as you'd expect.

## WEDDING FEES BY BAND SIZE UK NATIONAL

BAND SIZE	P25	P50	P75	P90	N
Solo	£305	<b>£367</b>	£560	£650	202
Duo	£470	<b>£600</b>	£985	£1,540	507
3-4 piece	£995	<b>£1,340</b>	£1,757	£2,241	4,299
5+ piece	£1,595	<b>£2,000</b>	£2,570	£3,572	1,910

Each extra musician adds roughly £600-£700 to the typical fee. The biggest jump is going from a duo to a 3-4 piece – that's the leap from background music to a headline act with drums and bass, and the price reflects it (£740 more on average).

## SECTION ONE – CONTINUED

## Wedding fees by city

Top 12 cities for a 3-4 piece wedding band, ranked by typical fee. Smaller cities we don't have enough data for yet show the regional or UK figure when you look them up.

CITY	P25	P50 (MEDIAN)	P75	P90	N
Edinburgh	£1,678	<b>£1,779</b>	£2,638	£2,744	50
Glasgow	£965	<b>£1,678</b>	£2,493	£2,972	75
Cardiff	£1,330	<b>£1,480</b>	£1,845	£2,183	110
Brighton	£1,154	<b>£1,424</b>	£1,658	£1,880	150
Leeds	£1,095	<b>£1,366</b>	£1,880	£2,155	160
London	£865	<b>£1,355</b>	£1,796	£2,444	445
Bristol	£1,170	<b>£1,295</b>	£1,685	£1,715	285
Sheffield	£995	<b>£1,281</b>	£1,933	£2,329	210
Manchester	£995	<b>£1,240</b>	£1,485	£1,729	410
Birmingham	£890	<b>£1,195</b>	£1,416	£2,000	285
Liverpool	£995	<b>£1,160</b>	£1,225	£1,275	215
Newcastle	£985	<b>£995</b>	£1,045	£1,225	40

### WHAT THIS TELLS US

Scotland leads the country: Edinburgh (£1,779) and Glasgow (£1,678) are the top two cities – something that's not widely talked about. London has the widest range of any city – from £865 for a small register-office wedding up to £2,444 for a high-end Mayfair function. Newcastle has the tightest range of any major city, which usually means we have less data there but the gigs we know about pay consistently.

### WHAT WE COVER

We currently publish rates for 14 cities. The top 12 by data volume are listed above. Smaller towns and cities fall back to the regional or UK figure for now. We're aiming to cover all 20 of the UK's biggest metro areas by autumn 2026.

## SECTION TWO

# How we work it out

A plain-English walk through how we collect, clean and crunch the data behind every figure in this report.

## § 1 – WHAT WE COVER

We cover the UK only. Every rate we publish is a combination of three things: the **city** (or region, or UK overall if we don't have enough city data), the **type of gig** (we currently track seven: weddings, corporate events, private parties, pubs & bars, ticketed clubs, festivals and theatre/pit work), and the **band size** (solo, duo, 3-4 piece, or 5+). For every combination we show four numbers: a low (p25), a typical (p50), a high (p75) and a top-end (p90). We never publish an "average" – see the foreword for why.

## § 2 – WHERE THE DATA COMES FROM

We pull data from nine sources: gigs booked through the GigXchange platform; rates artists tell us they got after the gig; Musicians' Union and Equity recommended rates; public agency rate cards (we check Encore and Alive Network every week); cost-explainer articles published by industry sites; the asking rates on artists' profiles; the budgets venues set when they post a job; anonymous submissions from the public; and (coming soon) musicians' forum posts. Each one carries a tag for where it came from, what kind of gig it was, what kind of act, what kind of venue and what genre – so we can sort it correctly without forcing a fit.

## SECTION TWO – CONTINUED

## § 3 – WHY SOME SOURCES COUNT MORE THAN OTHERS

Not every data point is equal. A confirmed booking – money actually changed hands – is worth a lot more to us than a price scraped off a website. So we give every source a **weight** from 0 to 1, and the higher-weight ones have a bigger say in the final number. Here's the league table:

SOURCE	WEIGHT	WHY
Confirmed GigXchange booking	1.00	Real money, real gig – the gold standard
Artist confirmed it after the gig	0.85	Reported by an artist and then verified
MU or Equity recommended rate	0.60	Trusted floor, but not what the market pays
Agency rate card	0.48	Asking price – includes agency commission
Venue's posted budget	0.25	What they hope to pay, before negotiation
Anonymous public submission	0.16	Useful, but unverified
Artist's profile asking rate	0.16	What they hope to get, not what they get

## SECTION TWO – CONTINUED

## § 4 – HOW WE HANDLE CITIES WITH LESS DATA

We publish at three levels: **city** (we track 20 major UK cities and normalise nearby places – Hove counts as Brighton, Oldbury as Birmingham); **region** (the 12 official UK regions); and **UK overall**. We need at least 3 data points before we'll show a city or region figure; the UK figure can publish from 1. When you look up a city we don't have enough data for, we automatically fall back: city first, then region, then the UK figure with a regional adjustment.

## § 5 – HOW WE ADJUST PRICES BY REGION

If we don't have enough data for your specific city, we apply a regional adjustment to the UK figure. The adjustment is built from official income and spending data (ONS regional household income, family spending on entertainment) blended with industry surveys (Alive Network's wedding price table, Bark.com regional averages). The blend changes by gig type: weddings are 100% based on industry data (luxury spend doesn't follow income closely); corporate is mostly ONS data (budgets do follow income); pubs barely vary by region (the venue's costs dominate). If we have actual city or regional data, we always use that – adjustments only fill in the gaps.

## SECTION TWO – CONTINUED

## § 6 – HOW WE KEEP JUNK OUT

Every data point passes through five checks before it counts. We require key fields (amount, source, gig type) to be there. We only accept the nine sources listed in §2. We reject anything that isn't an artist fee – ticket prices, gear hire, licensing and door splits don't go in. We sanity-check the amount per musician per hour against bounds we set for each gig type (so a £25 wedding band or a £25,000 pub solo gets thrown out). And we deduplicate so we don't count the same gig twice. Anything we reject is logged so we can audit it. For ticketed club gigs we also model the revenue split: guarantee, capacity, ticket price and the band's cut, then take the higher of the guarantee or our 65%-sellout estimate.

## § 7 – HOW OFTEN WE UPDATE

Every figure rebuilds overnight at 5am UK time. Agency rate cards are re-scraped every Monday morning. Approved public submissions feed in daily. We tag each scrape with the week it was taken, so we keep a history rather than overwriting – that's what lets us track price changes over time in future issues. Every figure shows when it was last refreshed and how many data points it's based on.

## § 8 – THE HONEST CAVEATS

The GigXchange Index is a record of **what people have actually been paid, asked, or budgeted** in the UK live music market. It's not a recommendation of what to charge, it's not a regulated benchmark, and it's not financial advice. Your gig might legitimately fall outside any of the figures shown. Free to use under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 licence – share it, build on it, just credit *GigXchange Index*, [gigxchange.app/rates](https://gigxchange.app/rates).

## SECTION THREE

# What's in this month's data

This issue is built from **2,381 data points**, broken down below. The mix is heavy on agency rate cards right now because we scrape them weekly and they're high-volume – but they only count for 0.48 of full weight. As the GigXchange platform grows, confirmed bookings (which count for 1.00) will take over as the dominant source.

SOURCE	OBSERVATIONS	SHARE	AVG W × C	NOTES
Agency rate cards	2,076	87.2%	0.48	Weekly scrape – Encore, Alive Network
Performer profile rates	162	6.8%	0.16	Artist-declared <a href="#">min_fee</a> / <a href="#">max_fee</a>
MU / Equity recommended	103	4.3%	0.53	Annually refreshed; authoritative floor
Venue gig budgets	40	1.7%	0.50	Captured at booking-request stage
Confirmed bookings	0	–	1.00	First confirmed bookings expected May 2026
Post-event submissions	0	–	0.85	Verified leg of the contributor pipeline
Anonymous submissions	0	–	0.16	Public form – held pending admin review

## WHY THIS MIX WORKS FOR NOW

Agency rate cards dominate by count but only count for 0.48 weight each, so the weighted picture is much more balanced than the raw numbers suggest. MU/Equity rates anchor the lower end. Gig budgets give us a useful read on what venues are willing to pay. As soon as confirmed bookings (weight 1.00) start flowing through GigXchange in May, they'll quickly become the loudest voice in the data – which is exactly the design.

## HOW WE AVOID DOUBLE-COUNTING

Every data point carries a unique reference ID. If we re-scrape the same agency rate card next week, our system spots it and tags it as a fresh weekly snapshot rather than counting it twice. This is what lets us track how rates change over time in future monthly issues.

## OUTSIDE DATA WE USE FOR REGIONAL ADJUSTMENTS

- ONS Regional Gross Disposable Household Income, 2023 release.
- ONS Family Spending Survey – recreation-and-culture expenditure share, latest release.
- Alive Network 2026 published wedding-band regional price table.
- Bark.com regional pricing averages, accessed Q1 2026.
- Help Musicians UK / Musicians' Union – Musicians' Census (~6,000 respondents).

## SECTION FOUR

# How we keep junk out

Every data point – no matter where it came from – passes through five checks before we use it. Anything that fails is logged with a reason, so we can audit it later. Nothing gets silently dropped.

**CHECK 1****Has the basics**

The amount, currency, source and gig type all have to be filled in. Anything missing key info gets rejected.

**CHECK 2****From a known source**

Only the nine sources we've vetted are allowed in. This stops dodgy or untested data feeds slipping through.

**CHECK 3****Is an artist fee**

Only money paid to the artist counts. Ticket sales, gear hire, licensing and door splits all get blocked by the database itself.

**CHECK 4****Passes the smell test**

We've set sensible bounds per musician per hour for each gig type. A £25 wedding band or a £25,000 pub solo gets thrown out automatically.

**CHECK 5****Not a duplicate**

Each data point has a unique fingerprint. If we see the same one twice, we ignore the second copy.

**BONUS CHECK****Ticketed gig sanity check**

For ticketed clubs, we model the maths: guarantee, venue capacity, ticket price and the band's cut, then we take whichever is bigger – guarantee, or 65% of a sellout – and check the reported fee against it.

**ANONYMOUS SUBMISSIONS**

You can submit a rate at [gigxchange.app/rates](https://gigxchange.app/rates). We rate-limit submissions to stop spam, and every one goes into a queue for a human to approve before it's used. Once approved it counts at weight 0.15. If we later confirm it against a real booking, we upgrade it to weight 0.85.

## SECTION FIVE

# What this is – and isn't

## WHAT IT IS

A record of fees that have actually been charged, asked, or budgeted on UK gigs. Real numbers, not invented or modelled. Every figure shows where it came from, how many data points it's based on, and when it was last refreshed.

## WHAT IT ISN'T

- **Not a recommended price.** We don't tell anyone what to charge or pay. Your gig might legitimately fall outside any of these figures.
- **Not an official benchmark.** We're independent – no regulator, no industry body sets these numbers.
- **Not financial advice.** Pricing is your call. We give you the information; the decision is yours.
- **Not the whole market.** A lot of UK gig fees are negotiated privately and never get published anywhere. We can only show you what's visible.

## WHAT'S STILL MISSING THIS ISSUE

- We've got 14 of the 20 biggest UK cities so far. Smaller ones use the regional or UK figure for now.
- No confirmed bookings in the data yet – those are our highest-quality source and should land in the May issue.
- Festival, theatre and corporate gigs are based on under 50 data points each – usable, but expect them to firm up over the next few months as we extend our scrapes.
- No genre-specific figures yet (folk vs. rock vs. soul etc.). We capture genre on every data point – we'll publish it once we have enough to be reliable.

## FREE TO USE

This report, the live figures at [gigxchange.app/rates](https://gigxchange.app/rates), and all the underlying data are published under **Creative Commons (CC BY 4.0)**. Free to share, adapt and build on – including commercially – as long as you credit "*GigXchange Index, gigxchange.app/rates*".

## HELP US MAKE THE NEXT ISSUE BETTER

Every gig you've done is a data point we need. Submit three anonymously and you unlock every figure and price trend for 30 days. No email, no signup. [gigxchange.app/rates](https://gigxchange.app/rates).