GIGXCHANGE

MONTHLY MARKET REPORT

THE GIGXCHANGE INDEX

What gigs actually pay.

The open benchmark for UK live music fees – 4,431 checked observations across thirteen cities, seven gig types and every band size. Free to read, free to cite, rebuilt nightly.

Issue 05 · August 2026

4,431	13	407	4 Sep
DATA POINTS	UK CITIES	RATES PUBLISHED	LAST REFRESH

GIGXCHANGE.APP/RATES

FOREWORD

Thirteen cities. One honest answer.

> For four issues this report ranked British cities against each other on wedding fees, and for four issues that ranking rested on a quiet fiction: a national rate card counted towards the country but not towards any city in it. We changed the model in August. Location-less evidence – national price lists, union minimums – now counts everywhere it applies, and the immediate consequence is that the league table collapses into a single band twenty-two pounds wide. That is not a worse number. It is the number we can actually defend.

4,431	**+141**	**407**	**£22**
OBSERVATIONS IN THE POOL	NET GROWTH SINCE THE JULY ISSUE	PUBLISHED CELLS, UP FROM 280	SPREAD ACROSS THE CITY LEAGUE

Source: GigXchange Index ingest telemetry, July-issue close (31 July 2026) to the 3 September 2026 refresh.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Issue 05 is about a model change and what it costs us in headlines – a flatter city table, a bigger grid of published rates, and a much clearer account of what we do and do not know about any given town.

HOW TO READ A RATE CELL

A single average would blend a festival headliner into a Sunday carvery slot, so we never print one. Each cell gives four points on the curve: p25 the budget end, p50 the typical fee – half pay less, half pay more – p75 a strong booking, p90 the premium tier. Price yourself against the curve, not a rumour.

01

SECTION ONE

Where the market settled in August

Every figure below is performer pay, in pounds – ticket money, door splits, gear hire and travel are refused at the database layer. Reading note, and it matters more this issue than any before it: n counts weighted samples applicable to a cell, not unique gigs booked in it. At national level that means an observation counted once per re-sighting and once per level it informs. At city level it now also includes evidence that applies everywhere – read the city league section before you take anything from a city n of a thousand.

UK MEDIANS BY GIG TYPE — 3-4 PIECE

USE CASE	P25	P50 (MEDIAN)	P75	P90	N
Wedding	£717	**£990**	£1,367	£1,880	1,588
Private party	£500	**£866**	£1,292	£1,808	525
Corporate event	£669	**£812**	£892	£1,082	6
Festival	£200	**£669**	£866	£892	5
Club (ticketed)	£450	**£600**	£1,463	£1,463	11
Pubs & bars	£250	**£350**	£600	£700	187

ANALYSIS Weddings still set the ceiling at £990, with private parties £124 behind at £866 – a wider gap than July showed, and the first issue in which the two function markets have not read as near-identical at this lineup size. Corporate lands at £812 and festivals at £669. The floor is pubs at £350, £25 under July: a real drift down rather than a quarantine artefact this time, since the rows removed in August came from the verified-report source, not from pub cells. Theatre drops out of this table entirely – the 3-4 piece theatre cell no longer clears the sample floor, so theatre now appears only at solo, and only on the heatmap overleaf.

HOW BAND SIZE MOVES THE MONEY — UK NATIONAL, WEDDINGS

BAND SIZE	P25	P50	P75	P90	N
Solo	£233	**£330**	£450	£600	108
Duo	£400	**£526**	£774	£1,079	186
3-4 piece	£717	**£990**	£1,367	£1,880	1,588
5+ piece	£1,130	**£1,489**	£1,907	£2,837	427

ANALYSIS Solo £330, duo £526, £990 for a 3-4 piece, £1,489 at five-plus. The duo-to-band cliff is the steepest step on the curve and it has got steeper: £464 this issue against £429 in July, the price of turning background music into an event. Per chair, something unusual has happened. A quartet works out at roughly £248 a musician and the five-plus median spread across six players comes to about £248 as well – the two are now level, where in July the bigger band still cost less per head. Read it as the van, the PA and the admin being shared efficiently at both sizes rather than as a bargain at either.

01

SECTION ONE — CONTINUED

Gig type × band size heatmap

Every cell below is the UK national median (p50) in pounds — the scale underneath shows the bands. Dashes mark combinations with insufficient data to publish.

GIG TYPE	SOLO	DUO	3-4 PC	5+
Wedding	£330	£526	£990	£1,489
Private party	£313	£433†	£866	£675
Corporate	£385	£446†	£812†	£1,329
Festival	–	–	£669†	£1,560†
Club	£250†	£468†	£600	–
Pub & bar	£250	£375	£350	£525
Theatre	£175†	–	–	–

under £300 · £300+ · £600+ · £1,000+ · £1,500+

† fewer than ten underlying observations

ANALYSIS Weddings top the duo and 3-4 piece columns, but corporate leads at solo on £385 and the dearest tile we publish is festival five-plus at £1,560. Theatre solo is the cheapest at £175, pubs a rung above. Several cells here are bearings rather than benchmarks and carry the low-sample flag: club duo stands on three observations, club solo and corporate duo on four, festival 3-4 piece on five, theatre solo on six. Where a tile is flagged, treat it as a direction of travel and check the underlying n before quoting it.

HOW TO READ THIS

Pick your gig type (row) and band size (column) to see where the UK market sits. Then check the city league on the next page to see how your location shifts the number. The live calculator combines all three axes in real time.

£175
CHEAPEST — THEATRE SOLO

9×

£1,560
PRICIEST — FESTIVAL 5+

01

SECTION ONE — CONTINUED

The league that flattened

Thirteen UK cities publish a wedding 3-4 piece cell, running from Edinburgh at £1,067 to Manchester at £1,045. Twenty-two pounds separates top from bottom; in July it was five hundred and twenty-three.

CITY	P25	P50 (MEDIAN)	P75	P90	N
Edinburgh	£750	**£1,067**	£1,480	£1,997	1,062
Brighton	£750	**£1,065**	£1,467	£1,975	1,093
Cardiff	£750	**£1,065**	£1,472	£1,995	1,074
Glasgow	£750	**£1,065**	£1,480	£1,995	1,070
Leeds	£750	**£1,065**	£1,469	£1,995	1,084
Newcastle	£750	**£1,065**	£1,475	£1,995	1,060
Nottingham	£750	**£1,065**	£1,469	£1,995	1,068
Sheffield	£750	**£1,065**	£1,472	£1,995	1,094
Bristol	£750	**£1,064**	£1,465	£1,975	1,116
Birmingham	£750	**£1,057**	£1,465	£1,975	1,112
Liverpool	£750	**£1,057**	£1,465	£1,975	1,095
London	£745	**£1,053**	£1,447	£1,955	1,148
Manchester	£750	**£1,045**	£1,447	£1,975	1,136

WHY THE TABLE COMPRESSED

Roughly six in ten observations carry no city: national price lists and union minimums, which apply everywhere. Until August they counted towards the country and towards no city in it, so every city was built from a thinner, cheaper pool than the nation around it; from this issue such a row counts as evidence for every city. The same 1,052 rows sit behind all thirteen wedding cells. Because the blanket layer is shared and local rows skew dearer, every city median currently sits a little above the national £990; the national cell is the wider distribution, not a different market. Each cell records the split, so it stays measurable and removable.

COVERAGE OUTLOOK

Across the city grid, 176 of 299 cells have no local evidence and only 95 stand on three or more local rows. Separating this league again needs musicians reporting real fees at gigxchange.app/rates, city by city.

Scoring July's promises. The four cells promised since May (corporate for Nottingham and Sheffield, festival for Brighton and Edinburgh) print, but on zero local evidence: partial, not delivered. The 225-row quarantine: kept out. The 28th cadence: kept. Confirmed bookings: still open.

01

SECTION ONE — CONTINUED

Two markets, one industry

WEDDING FEES BY BAND SIZE UK NATIONAL

Weddings remain the deepest cell in the Index and the ceiling of the market, though the August curve reads lower than July's across most of its length: £330 solo, £526 duo, £990 for the flagship 3-4 piece and £1,489 at five-plus. The 3-4 piece figure is £52 under July. Only the five-plus end rose meaningfully; solo moved £2. A deeper pool pulling the median toward the middle of the distribution explains more of that than any change in what couples are willing to pay.

BAND SIZE	P25	P50	P75	P90	N
Solo	£233	**£330**	£450	£600	108
Duo	£400	**£526**	£774	£1,079	186
3-4 piece	£717	**£990**	£1,367	£1,880	1,588
5+ piece	£1,130	**£1,489**	£1,907	£2,837	427

PUB & BAR FEES BY BAND SIZE UK NATIONAL

Pubs hold the floor at £350 for a 3-4 piece, £25 under July and the third consecutive issue in which this figure has fallen. Unlike July's drop, none of this one is an artefact of rows being withdrawn – the August withdrawal touched the verified-import source, which contributes almost nothing to pub cells. What the floor lacks in headline it returns in rhythm: repeat slots, a built-in crowd, minimal overheads. A month of steady residency nights can still out-earn a single wedding.

BAND SIZE	P25	P50	P75	P90	N
Solo	£150	**£250**	£310	£433	232
Duo	£300	**£375**	£500	£500	45
3-4 piece	£250	**£350**	£600	£700	187
5+	£400	**£525**	£1,125	£1,350	157

THE MOST LOCATION-PROOF GIG IN BRITAIN

Pub fees barely flex by city, because venue economics – door take, bar margin, a fixed entertainment budget – set the price everywhere and regional income scarcely registers. That was already our finding before this month's model change, which makes it the one part of the table August did not disturb.

SECTION TWO

02

How the figures are built

> From an observed fee to a percentile you can quote in a negotiation – the pipeline in plain English, including the two things that changed in August.

1 — WHAT WE COVER

UK live music only. A published cell is the meeting point of three axes: **where** (a canonical city, one of twelve UK regions, or the national baseline), **what kind of gig** (seven types, weddings to theatre/pit), and **how many musicians** (solo, duo, 3–4 piece, 5+). Each cell carries four percentiles – p25/p50/p75/p90 – never an average.

2 — WHERE THE DATA COMES FROM

The August pool draws on six sources: weekly re-scans of three UK booking agencies' public rate cards, Musicians' Union and Equity published minimums, a monthly panel of artist asking rates, externally sourced rate schedules checked on import, fees reported anonymously by gig-workers, and human-reviewed extractions from public pages. Venue budgets and the ticket-derived club model remain withdrawn after July's audit and contribute nothing. Every observation arrives tagged with source, gig type, band size, venue type and location – or, for six rows in ten, with no location at all, which is the fact the city league section is about.

3 — CITIES, AND WHAT A CITY CELL NOW MEANS

Publication happens at three levels: **city** (major UK metros, satellite towns folded into their hub – Hove counts as Brighton), **region** (the twelve official UK regions) and the **UK baseline**. What feeds a city changed this month: its own observations *plus* every observation carrying no location, because a national price list is a price charged in that city too. A city cell's sample size therefore now means **observations applicable to that city**, not observations collected in it, and each cell stores both counts. One consequence to state plainly: the three-observation floor now counts applicable rows, so a city cell can publish with no local evidence at all. 176 of 299 do. Region and national cells are untouched.

4 — REGIONAL ADJUSTMENTS

The adjustment layer blends ONS regional household income and family-spending data with public industry price benchmarks, tuned per gig type: corporate fees track regional wealth closely, wedding spend barely does, and pub fees hardly flex at all because venue economics set the ceiling everywhere. Adjustments only ever fill gaps – wherever real observations exist, they win outright.

SECTION TWO — CONTINUED

02

Weights, gates and cadence

5 — MAX SHARE OF A CELL: HOW MUCH ANY ONE SOURCE CAN OWN

No single source may own a cell. Each source class can claim at most a fixed **share** of any published percentile, and it reaches that ceiling only as it earns credibility with volume – so a handful of rows can never dominate a cell, and a flood of rate cards cannot either. The column below is that ceiling, not a per-row score, and the nine ceilings sum to exactly 1.00: rate cards are four rows in five and still cannot hold more than a tenth of any cell, while confirmed bookings and venue budgets hold quota they have no rows to spend. Earlier issues printed a per-observation trust weight; that table described a model this series no longer runs, and this issue corrects it – the same ceilings, and only those, appear against the source mix in Section Three.

SOURCE	MAX SHARE OF A CELL	WHY
Anonymous public submission	0.20	A fee someone was actually paid
Verified rate import	0.18	Rate schedules checked on import
Confirmed GigXchange booking	0.15	Cleared transaction; no rows yet
Artist profile asking rate	0.13	Monthly stated-rate panel
MU / Equity recommended rate	0.10	Union floor, not market-clearing
Agency published rate card	0.10	Four rows in five, capped at a tenth
Venue gig budget	0.09	Quota held; the source is empty
Web-extracted rate	0.05	Public-page, human-reviewed
Ticket-derived club estimate	0.00	Shadow mode; never published

6 — ONE GRID, EVERY CITY

The second August change is duller and just as important. Each city used to get whatever grid its own data happened to support – one answered eleven questions, another six – so the cities with least evidence offered fewest answers – the exact failure the model exists to fix. Every city now publishes the same 23 cells, which is why the count reads 407 against July's 280.

7 — REFRESH CADENCE

Cells rebuild nightly at 05:00 UTC; agency rate cards re-scan on Mondays; the artist panel snapshots on the 28th; approved submissions flow in daily. Each rebuild is archived, not overwritten, which is what makes issue-on-issue comparison possible. This is the first issue on the settled cadence, so its window runs from the July issue's close on 31 July to 28 August – four weeks, not a calendar month. Growth is stated for that window; the cells are the 3 September refresh.

8 — HONEST SCOPE

A record of **what the UK market paid or asked** across the observation window – nothing more. Not a price recommendation, not a regulated benchmark, not financial advice. A legitimate gig can sit outside every range we print.

SECTION THREE

03

What changed in the August dataset

The pool stands at **4,431 approved observations**, a net 141 on the July issue. The four-week window did the work: 288 rows approved, one cleared from review, 156 withdrawn – a net 133, to 4,423 – with eight more arriving before the 3 September refresh this issue is built from. The table below is the source mix at that window close.

SOURCE	OBSERVATIONS	SHARE	MAX SHARE	NOTES
Agency rate cards	3,496	79.0%	0.10	Weekly re-scan: 3 UK agencies; 636 re-sights to 28 August
Artist profile rates	536	12.1%	0.13	Monthly panel; 201 snapshots on 28 August
Web-extracted rates	173	3.9%	0.05	Pulled from public pages, human-reviewed
MU / Equity recommended	143	3.2%	0.10	Union floors, refreshed annually
Verified rate imports	39	0.9%	0.18	160 seed rows withdrawn 8 August; 39 rows remain
Anonymous submissions	36	0.8%	0.20	Public form; rate-limited and reviewed

THE LAST OF THE SEED DATA

On 8 August a sweep of the verified rate-import source found 160 rows that were never observations at all – auto-generated seed records sitting in a source we publish. All are withdrawn – 156 of them had reached print, the other four were still awaiting review. Nine more went the same day: six agency extractions between £2,437 and £11,091 with no city attached, and three artist-panel entries including a £500,150 pub gig. This is the same class of fault July reported and, we believe, the end of it: the sweep now covers every source, not the two July caught. The visible effect is in the source table: the verified-import class now stands on the 39 rows that remain. Every number July published stays as published. We correct forward.

DEDUPLICATION AND RE-SIGHTING

A listing still on an agency's site next Monday tells you its price is holding, but it must never vote twice. When the weekly scan recognises a listing it already holds it bumps a sighting counter instead of inserting a twin: 636 re-sights in the week to 28 August, none widening the sample. The monthly artist panel added 201 snapshots on 28 August, the largest single in-take of the window.

EXTERNAL REFERENCES USED FOR REGIONAL ADJUSTMENTS

- ONS regional household income and family-spending data (latest releases).
- Music Venue Trust grassroots venue occupancy and capacity data (2025 survey).
- Public 2026 UK wedding and function-band price benchmarks.
- Help Musicians / Musicians' Union – Musicians' Census (~6,000 respondents).

SECTION FOUR

04

How we keep junk out

Every observation faces the same gates whatever its source, and every rejection is logged with its reason – the audit trail is part of the product. Two issues running we have used this section to report faults in our own machinery rather than in the market. That is deliberate: an index that only ever reports good news about itself is not worth citing.

CHECK 1

Has the basics

No amount, no source, no gig type – no entry. Incomplete rows are refused at the door, not patched later.

CHECK 2

From a known source

Only the vetted source list may write to the index, through a single ingest funnel. A new feed earns its place via a share review first.

CHECK 3

Is an artist fee

The database layer itself refuses ticket money, gear hire, licensing and door splits. Only pay to performers counts.

CHECK 4

Passes the range check

Per-musician-per-hour bounds, set per gig type. Restored in July after ten weeks quietly out of the pipeline, it has since turned away 169 rows on implausible amounts and 29 more for a gig type it did not recognise.

CHECK 5

Not a duplicate

Every observation is fingerprinted. A re-scanned listing bumps a sighting counter; it never becomes a second row.

BONUS CHECK

Is not our own test data

Extended this month from the two sources July fixed to all six. Any row traceable to a seed or test account is refused at intake, and the check fails closed when it cannot tell – which is how August's 160 were found rather than missed.

ANONYMOUS SUBMISSIONS

Anyone who has played or booked a UK gig can report the fee at gigxchange.app/rates – no account needed. Submissions are rate-limited, sanity-checked and human-reviewed before they touch a cell. Three approved reports unlock every cell and trend line for 30 days.

05

SECTION FIVE

What this report is and isn't

WHAT IT *IS*

A transparent record of fees paid or asked on UK gigs, with every cell showing its sample size, sources and refresh date – and, from this issue, showing how much of that sample was collected locally and how much applies nationally, so a reader can tell the difference between a city we know and a city we are estimating.

WHAT IT *ISN'T*

- **Not a recommended price.** We publish where the market sits, not where you should sit in it. Undercut or exceed any figure here with a clear conscience.
- **Not an official benchmark.** No industry body endorses or regulates these figures. Independence is the point.
- **Not financial advice.** Evidence in, decision yours.
- **Not a city guide, yet.** Where a city cell carries no local rows it is the national answer wearing a city name. The cell says so; read it before you quote it.

WHAT'S STILL MISSING

- Local evidence, above everything else. 176 of the 299 city cells we publish rest on no local observations at all, and only 95 stand on three or more. The blanket layer makes those cells answerable; it does not make them local.
- Confirmed platform bookings – the reference signal – still contribute zero rows. The bookings we hold remain dominated by our own test accounts, and August was spent removing exactly that kind of data, not adding more of it.
- Venue budgets restart from nothing: the first genuine venue budget the index ingests will be the first row in that source.
- Theatre has thinned to a single national cell this month, and the club picture stays directional at three and four observations per cell.
- No genre-level cells yet – every observation carries the tags, and publication is waiting on volume, not engineering.

FREE TO USE

HELP SHAPE THE NEXT ISSUE

This issue is a long way of saying we do not yet know enough about your town. Eight local observations stand behind Newcastle's wedding figure; ten behind Edinburgh's. A handful of real fees would move either. Report yours anonymously at gigxchange.app/rates – sixty seconds, no signup – and three reports unlock full granular access for 30 days.