

THE GIGXCHANGE INDEX

What gigs **actually** **pay.**

The open benchmark for UK live music fees – 4,772 checked observations across thirteen cities, seven gig types and every band size. Free to read, free to cite, rebuilt nightly.

Issue 06 · September 2026

4,772

DATA POINTS

13

UK CITIES

412

RATES PUBLISHED

28 Sep

LAST REFRESH

FOREWORD

The 3-4 piece held. The pub duo did not.

All six 3-4 piece medians printed exactly what August printed – weddings £990, pubs £350 – the first evidence that the headline lineup has settled. The move was underneath it: the pub duo fell £50, to £325, as its sample grew from 45 to 66. Three smaller cells rose by £3 to £10, and the other eighteen national tiles did not move. It is also the first window in three with nothing to withdraw.

4,772OBSERVATIONS IN
THE POOL**+341**NET GROWTH SINCE
THE AUGUST ISSUE**213**ROWS THE RANGE
CHECK REFUSED**£14**SPREAD ACROSS THE
CITY LEAGUE

Source: GigXchange Index ingest telemetry. Growth is measured against the 3 September 2026 refresh the August issue published; intake and refusals are counted across the 28 August to 28 September window.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

The 3-4 piece held, the pub duo fell £50, the league narrowed again, and the most instructive number in the issue is not a fee – it is the count of rows we refused at the door.

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HOW TO READ A RATE CELL

There is no single right fee for a gig, so we never print one. Every cell gives you four points along the distribution instead: p25, where the cheaper quarter of the market sits; p50, the midpoint, with as many fees above it as below; p75, what a strong booking looks like; and p90, the premium end. Find yourself on that curve and argue from it.

SECTION ONE

Where the market settled in September

Everything below is money paid to performers, in pounds. Ticket income, door splits, gear hire and travel are refused by the database itself, not filtered out afterwards. One reading note that governs every n in this report: n counts weighted samples applicable to a cell, not unique gigs booked in it – each approved row counts once in every cell it informs, re-sightings never add to it, and at city level it also includes evidence that carries no location and therefore applies everywhere.

UK MEDIANS BY GIG TYPE 3-4 PIECE

USE CASE	P25	P50 (MEDIAN)	P75	P90	N
Wedding	£717	£990	£1,370	£1,880	1,605
Private party	£500	£866	£1,292	£1,792	529
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	£255	£350	£600	£750	274

ANALYSIS Six gig types clear the sample floor at this lineup size and all six print exactly the figure they printed in August. Weddings hold the ceiling at £990, private parties £124 behind at £866, corporate £812, festivals £669, ticketed clubs £600, and pubs hold the floor at £350. The wedding cell now stands on 1,605 weighted samples and the pub cell on 274, up from 187 – a 46 per cent deeper pub sample that moved the median not at all, which is the most reassuring sentence in this issue. What did move at the edges of the pub cell is its spread: p90 climbed from £700 to £750. Theatre still fails the floor at 3-4 piece and appears only at solo, 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	£533	£791	£1,100	188
3-4 piece	£717	£990	£1,370	£1,880	1,605
5+ piece	£1,130	£1,489	£1,907	£2,837	427

ANALYSIS Solo £330, duo £533, £990 for a 3-4 piece, £1,489 at five-plus. Three of those four are unchanged to the pound; the duo gained £7. The duo-to-band step is £457, a shade gentler than August's £464, and the quartet-to-five-plus step is steeper still at £499; both dwarf the £203 between solo and duo. Per chair the curve is almost flat – about £267 a head for a duo, £248 for a quartet, and between £248 and £298 across a five-plus lineup, depending whether it is five players or six. A bigger band is not a cheaper band per musician; it is the same band economics, repeated.

SECTION ONE – CONTINUED

01

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	£533	£990	£1,489
Private party	£323	£433†	£866	£675
Corporate	£388	£446†	£812†	£1,329
Festival	–	–	£669†	£1,560†
Club	£250†	£468†	£600	–
Pub & bar	£250	£325	£350	£525
Theatre	£175†	–	–	–

under £300

£300+

£600+

£1,000+

£1,500+

† fewer than ten underlying observations

ANALYSIS Read across rather than down and the market stops looking like one market. Corporate takes the solo column on £388, ahead of weddings at £330, a gap this issue can measure but not explain. The dearest tile we publish is festival five-plus at £1,560; the cheapest is theatre solo at £175, a rung below pubs. Eight tiles carry the low-sample dagger and should be read as bearings, not benchmarks: club duo rests on three observations, club solo and corporate duo on four, festival 3-4 piece on five, corporate 3-4 piece and theatre solo on six, and private-party duo and festival five-plus on nine each. Check the n before you quote any of them.

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

Thirteen cities, fourteen pounds apart

All thirteen cities with a wedding 3-4 piece cell now sit between £1,053 (Manchester) and £1,067 (Glasgow and Edinburgh). The table is fourteen pounds wide, down from twenty-two in August and five hundred and twenty-three in July.

CITY	P25	P50 (MEDIAN)	P75	P90	N
Edinburgh	£750	£1,067	£1,492	£2,000	1,079
Glasgow	£750	£1,067	£1,492	£2,000	1,087
Brighton	£750	£1,065	£1,476	£1,995	1,110
Bristol	£750	£1,065	£1,469	£1,975	1,133
Cardiff	£750	£1,065	£1,480	£1,997	1,091
Leeds	£750	£1,065	£1,480	£2,000	1,101
Newcastle	£750	£1,065	£1,481	£2,000	1,077
Nottingham	£750	£1,065	£1,480	£1,997	1,085
Sheffield	£750	£1,065	£1,480	£1,997	1,111
Birmingham	£750	£1,064	£1,469	£1,978	1,129
Liverpool	£750	£1,057	£1,472	£1,995	1,112
London	£745	£1,057	£1,450	£1,975	1,165
Manchester	£750	£1,053	£1,465	£1,975	1,153

THE CITIES WE KNOW BEST ARE THE CHEAPEST

The same 1,069 location-less rows (national price lists and union minimums, median £1,079) sit behind all thirteen cells, and each city adds only its own 8 to 96 local rows, so every city lands near £1,065. The national cell holds all 536 located rows instead, and their median is £850, which is why it prints £990, below every city. Within the league the ordering is uncomfortable: Manchester is last on 84 local rows and London joint second-last on 96, our two deepest local samples, while Edinburgh and Glasgow top it on ten and eighteen. A hypothesis, not a result.

COVERAGE OUTLOOK

The grid publishes 299 city cells. 174 rest on no local observations at all – two fewer than August – and 99 now stand on three or more, up from 95.

Scoring August's commitments. The 225-row quarantine: still held out. Confirmed platform bookings: still zero rows, still open. Venue budgets: still zero. The one thing August asked for outright – musicians reporting real fees, city by city – drew none this window, and the league compressed instead.

SECTION ONE – CONTINUED

Two markets, one industry

WEDDING FEES BY BAND SIZE **UK NATIONAL**

Weddings remain the deepest cell in the Index and the dearest 3-4 piece booking, and in September they remain almost exactly what they were: £330 solo, £533 duo, £990 for the flagship 3-4 piece and £1,489 at five-plus. The 3-4 piece cell absorbed seventeen more weighted samples without shifting a pound, and the five-plus figure has now printed identically for two issues running. The duo is the only movement on the wedding curve, £526 to £533, and on 188 samples that is noise rather than news.

BAND SIZE	P25	P50	P75	P90	N
Solo	£233	£330	£450	£600	108
Duo	£400	£533	£791	£1,100	188
3-4 piece	£717	£990	£1,370	£1,880	1,605
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, ending a three-issue slide at that lineup. This is the first pub figure in the series that has been tested properly; the cell's sample went from 187 weighted samples to 274 across the window and the median did not move. The upper end did – p90 rose from £700 to £750 – which says the better pub bookings are pulling away from the typical one rather than the typical one improving. The duo went the other way: £375 to £325, its lower quartile down from £300 to £250, on a sample that grew from 45 to 66. The new rows priced pub duos below the old ones; whether that is a market moving or a cell finding its level, one month cannot say, and October will report it again.

BAND SIZE	P25	P50	P75	P90	N
Solo	£162	£250	£325	£425	370
Duo	£250	£325	£500	£500	66
3-4 piece	£255	£350	£600	£750	274
5+	£400	£525	£1,125	£1,350	223

WHY THE MODEL BARELY MOVES A PUB FEE BY CITY

City barely enters the pub number. Door take, bar margin and a fixed entertainment budget are the same arithmetic in every town, and regional income scarcely registers. We reported that before August's model change and again after it. That is a setting in the model, not a measurement. What September did test was depth: a 45 per cent deeper 3-4 piece sample left the median untouched.

SECTION TWO

02

How the figures are built

From an observed fee to a percentile you can quote in a negotiation. Nothing in this pipeline changed in September – after two months of model work, that is the point of printing it again.

1 – WHAT WE COVER

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

2 – WHERE THE DATA COMES FROM

Six sources are approved to feed the pool; two of them, the artist panel and the agency scans, supplied the September rows. They are: 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 since July's audit and contribute nothing. Each observation arrives tagged with source, gig type, band size, venue type and location – or, for 54 per cent of them, with no location at all.

3 – CITIES, AND WHAT A CITY CELL MEANS

Publication happens at three levels: **city** (major UK metros, with satellite towns folded into their hub – Hove counts as Brighton), **region** (the twelve official UK regions) and the **UK baseline**. Since August a city is fed by its own observations *plus* every observation carrying no location, on the reasoning that a national price list is a price being charged in that city too. So a city cell's sample size means **observations applicable to that city**, not observations collected in it, and each cell stores both counts separately. The consequence to state plainly is that the three-observation floor counts applicable rows, so a city cell can publish with no local evidence whatsoever. 174 of 299 do. Region and national cells are unaffected.

4 – REGIONAL ADJUSTMENTS

Where evidence is thin, an 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 only reaches that ceiling 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 three rows in four 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. **Not one of these ceilings has changed since 8 August** – the September numbers are the August model, run on a deeper pool.

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	Three rows in four, 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

Each city publishes the same 23-cell grid, so the cities with the least evidence no longer answer the fewest questions – the failure this model exists to correct. The count now reads 412 cells: 299 city, 91 regional and 22 national. The regional layer is where the thinness shows most honestly. London and the North West publish twelve cells each; Northern Ireland publishes two.

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. Every rebuild is archived rather than overwritten, which is what makes issue-on-issue comparison possible at all. This issue's window runs from 28 August to 28 September and its figures are the 28 September 05:00 UTC refresh. Growth is stated for that window, in absolute counts.

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 perfectly legitimate gig can sit outside every range printed here. Free to reuse under CC BY 4.0.

SECTION THREE

03

What changed in the September dataset

The pool stands at **4,772 approved observations**. Across the window 550 new rows were approved – 511 from the artist panel, 39 from the agency scans – and not a single row was withdrawn, rejected after approval, or sent back for review. Two hundred and nine of those 550 had already landed inside the 3 September refresh the August issue was published from, so the growth this issue can claim against it is the remaining 341. The 225-row quarantine July opened is unchanged and still out of the pool. The table below is the live mix at the 28 September refresh.

SOURCE	OBSERVATIONS	SHARE	MAX SHARE	NOTES
Agency rate cards	3,535	74.1%	0.10	Weekly re-scan: 3 UK agencies; 632 re-sights across the window
Artist profile rates	846	17.7%	0.13	Monthly panel; 310 snapshots on 28 September
Web-extracted rates	173	3.6%	0.05	Pulled from public pages, human-reviewed
MU / Equity recommended	143	3.0%	0.10	Union floors, refreshed annually
Verified rate imports	39	0.8%	0.18	Unchanged since August's 160-row withdrawal
Anonymous submissions	36	0.8%	0.20	Public form; no new reports this window

MORE THAN A QUARTER NEVER GOT IN

While 550 rows were being approved, the range check was turning away 213 more at the door – 148 artist-panel entries and 65 agency extractions whose per-musician-per-hour arithmetic fell outside the bounds set for their gig type. That is 28 per cent of everything presented this window refused before it could vote (62 per cent of the agency rows offered), and not one row had to be corrected after the fact. Unlike the 160-row August sweep of rows already in print, the gate caught these on the way in. Cumulatively the range check has now refused 391 rows since it was restored in July.

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: 632 re-sights across the window, 560 of them in the final week, none of them widening the sample. The window spans two monthly artist-panel snapshots, 201 rates on 28 August and 310 on 28 September – the panel's largest intake in the series, and more than half of everything the window admitted.

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).

04

SECTION FOUR

How we keep junk out

Every observation faces the same gates whatever its source, and every refusal is logged with a reason – the audit trail is part of the product, not an internal convenience. For two issues running this section reported faults in our own machinery. This month it reports the machinery working, which is a duller read and a better one.

CHECK 1**Has the basics**

No amount, no source, no gig type – no entry. Incomplete rows are refused at the door rather than patched later.

CHECK 2**From a known source**

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

CHECK 3**Is an artist fee**

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

BONUS CHECK**Passes the range check**

Per-musician-per-hour bounds, set per gig type. It refused 213 rows this window and 391 since it was restored in July – every refusal logged this window came from this gate.

CHECK 5**Not a duplicate**

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

CHECK 6**Is not our own test data**

Extended in August from two sources 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. It found nothing to refuse this month.

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 reports unlock every cell and trend line for 30 days. The form took none this window, and the city league stayed fourteen pounds wide.

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, its sources and its refresh date – and, since August, recording how much of that sample was collected locally against how much applies nationally, quoted here for the cities this issue discusses, so a reader can tell a city we know from 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. That independence is the point of them.
- **Not financial advice.** Evidence in, decision yours.
- **Not a city guide, yet.** A fourteen-pound spread across thirteen cities is not a discovery about Britain. It is a description of how little local evidence we hold, and the cells say so.

WHAT'S STILL MISSING

- Local evidence, ahead of everything else. 174 of the 299 city cells rest on no local observations at all, and only 99 stand on three or more. The blanket layer makes those cells answerable; it does not make them local.
- Confirmed platform bookings – the reference signal – contribute zero rows for a fifth consecutive issue, leaving their 0.15 ceiling unspent.
- Venue budgets restart from nothing; the first genuine venue budget the index ingests will be the first row in that source.
- Theatre remains a single national cell, and the club picture stays directional on three and four observations at solo and duo.
- No genre-level cells yet. Every observation carries the tags; publication is waiting on volume, not engineering.

FREE TO USE

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HELP SHAPE THE NEXT ISSUE

Eight local observations stand behind Newcastle's wedding figure and ten behind Edinburgh's. A handful of real fees would move either one, and this month the form received none. Report yours anonymously at gigxchange.app/rates – sixty seconds, no signup – and three reports unlock full granular access for 30 days.

GIGXCHANGE

THE UK'S PEER-TO-PEER LIVE MUSIC
MARKETPLACE

One real fee beats a hundred listings — **report yours.**

[GIGXCHANGE.APP/RATES](https://gigxchange.app/rates) • 60 SECONDS • NO SIGNUP