

TRG Arts Benchmark Report Reveals Recovery Pressures & Strategic Opportunities for the UK Performing Arts Sector in 2025

Major study tracks seven-year recovery of the UK performing arts sector, highlighting strong audience return and revenue recovery. However, uneven growth and declining real-terms income presents challenges for long-term sustainability.

April 2025 – A major new study tracking the performance of 177 UK arts organisations has revealed encouraging signs of sector recovery, yet cautions that headline figures may mask deeper financial fragility.

The 2025 benchmarking report **‘Raising the Curtain on Recovery’**, released today by international arts consultancy [TRG Arts](#), in partnership with [Data Culture Change](#), finds that while ticket sales and capacity achieved have surpassed pre-pandemic levels, inflation adjusted income and average ticket prices are in decline. Key indicators vary widely by type of venue, underscoring the uneven trajectory of recovery.

The report, based on data from the [Arts & Culture Benchmark](#), spans performance metrics from 2018 to 2024 and is one of the most detailed analyses of sector health in the UK to date. The findings underline the urgent need for sustainable pricing strategies and focused, data-driven planning; especially in smaller and mid-sized venues, which continue to lag behind larger institutions in the post-pandemic rebound.

These insights offer a valuable resource for organisations seeking to navigate the evolving arts and culture landscape.

Key Findings – United Kingdom

While audience demand is returning and the number of performances has surpassed pre-pandemic levels, recovery remains uneven. Larger venues are driving growth in ticket sales and occupancy, but inflation-adjusted revenue growth remains fragile, with pricing pressures and inflation-adjusted declines threatening long-term resilience.

- **Performance Supply:** The UK has surpassed pre-pandemic performance numbers, reaching 106% of 2018-2019 averages, but reducing slightly compared to 2023.
- **Ticket Sales:** Significant growth, up 4% on pre-pandemic averages, driven by large venues in major cities.
- **Capacity Achieved:** On average venues are now fuller than before the pandemic.
- **Inflation-Adjusted Ticket Revenue:** Despite full houses, inflation-adjusted box office revenue fell 1% compared to 2018–19.
- **Average Ticket Price (ATP):** Adjusted for inflation, the UK saw a 3% decline in the average price paid per ticket and have seen a steady decline since 2021.

While many indicators point to a successful rebound, the sector's financial resilience is under pressure. **Smaller and mid-sized organisations, in particular, face continued challenges** as inflation outpaces income growth, underscoring the need for careful pricing strategies and focused long-term planning.

"The findings in this report underscore both the progress and the persistent challenges in the UK performing arts sector," said [Jill S. Robinson](#), CEO of TRG Arts.

"The data makes it clear that recovery is not a uniform process, and there is no single solution. Organisations that are successfully rebounding are those actively adapting their pricing models, focusing on customer retention, and making strategic use of data to guide decision-making. A return to pre-pandemic success isn't just about selling tickets; it's about building long-term relationships with customers."

Robinson continued, "Our benchmark findings show that organisations must shift their focus from short-term fixes to long-term sustainability. This means investing in strategies that foster customer loyalty, ensuring pricing reflects both accessibility and financial health, and making data-driven decisions that support growth rather than just survival."

"We are in a moment of both challenge and opportunity," she concluded. "This report provides organisations with the insights they need to make more informed choices that will shape the future of the performing arts sector."

[David Brownlee](#), CEO of Data Culture Change, added: "The performing arts sectors in the UK has not only recovered but is now outpacing pre-pandemic levels in both supply and demand. Compared to other markets in this study, the UK is seeing the fastest growth, demonstrating the resilience of audiences and organisations alike.

"However, this recovery has not been evenly felt across the sector in the UK. Larger venues in major cities have benefited the most, while smaller venues in towns and regional centres continue to face significant challenges.

"At the same time, the financial pressures on the sector remain acute. In real terms, ticket prices have been falling over the past seven years, even as the costs of running venues and touring productions have continued to rise. If this trend continues, there is a real risk that financial sustainability will become a more urgent challenge, even if audience numbers continue to increase."

Accessing the Full Report

The full '**Raising the Curtain on Recovery**' Arts & Culture Benchmark report, is available for download: [UK Arts & Culture Benchmark Report - April 2025 | TRG Arts](#)

TRG Arts and Free Sector Resources

TRG Arts offers a range of [free resources for arts and cultural professionals](#) to ensure the field continues to thrive amidst uncertainty. These include:

- [The Arts & Culture Benchmark](#) – A powerful free tool for organisations to track and compare their customers and financial performance against industry peers, and their own historical performance.
- [Industry Research, Insights and Resources](#) – Regular articles, and actionable insights to equip teams with actionable knowledge and best practices.
- [Educational Webinars](#) – Practical strategies on audience and fundraising development, revenue growth, and long-term sustainability.

About the Arts & Culture Benchmark

The [Arts & Culture Benchmark](#), developed by TRG Arts, is one of the largest data benchmarking initiatives in the industry. Participating organisations receive free insights on their performance compared to historical trends and key customer segments.

Arts and culture organisations interested in joining can sign up here:

<https://trgarts.com/benchmark>

About TRG Arts

TRG Arts works with arts and cultural organisations globally to build resilience, grow revenue, and strengthen customer relationships. Through their consultancy services and data insight tools, TRG Arts empowers organisations to increase and embed customer loyalty best practices, optimise revenue and pricing strategies, and develop high-performing teams. With over 30 years of experience, they help organisations implement data-driven frameworks that drive long-term financial success. A thriving organisation fuels artistic innovation, enriching both the sector and the communities it serves. Visit <https://trgarts.com/>

About Data Culture Change

Data Culture Change (DCC) helps cultural organisations, practitioners, funders, and policymakers harness the power of data for a more resilient, inclusive and representative arts sector. Recognising that access to cultural opportunities is currently unequal, DCC believes that effective data use is a key tool to support meaningful change. By turning data into actionable insights, DCC supports organisations in

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becoming more reflective of the communities they serve. Visit
<https://dataculturechange.com/>

Media enquiries: Peter Ling - pling@trgarts.com