


# MORE THAN MUSIC

**WHAT ARE UK MUSIC FESTIVALS  
DOING TO CREATE A BETTER WORLD?  
WE FOUND OUT.**



**BETTER NOT STOP**



**"THIS THOROUGH AND DATA DRIVEN  
REPORT SHOWS FESTIVAL ORGANISERS  
THAT THERE IS STRONG REASON FOR  
IMPROVING THEIR SUSTAINABILITY  
MEASURES ACROSS THE BOARD.**

**NOW IS THE TIME TO STEP UP AND RESPOND  
WITH CLEAR, ACTIONABLE INITIATIVES.**

**APPROACHING SUSTAINABILITY AS AN  
OPPORTUNITY RATHER THAN A PROBLEM  
WILL LEAD TO A STRONGER EVENTS  
INDUSTRY AND BETTER FESTIVALS FOR  
ALL"**

**ANDY SMITH**

**FROM THE FIELDS**

**BLUEDOT | KENDAL CALLING | CHRISTMAS AT BUTE PARK  
| OFF THE RECORD | ARTS BY THE SEA |**

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# OUR IMPACT REPORT

## WHO IS IT FOR?

Anyone and everyone!

We have written it with an eco-conscious reader in mind.

We want to showcase the amazing work the music festival sector is already doing, but ground it in some (quite honestly) alarming facts.

As you read this it will be obvious what we need to do to make our collective action bigger and bolder.

Consider how you (yes you!) can take positive action to make your music festival or festival experience this summer even more impactful.

## WHY DID WE WRITE THIS?

betternotstop is a sustainable impact agency, but more than that, all of us love spending our weekends at music festivals.

It really saddens us to not see everyone collectively stepping up to the climate emergency and sustainability.

There are pockets of greatness and numerous initiatives and organisations which are excelling: Music Declares Emergency; Key Change; Vision 2025; Attitude is Everything; the Association of Independent Festival to name just a few, but the key is to bring everyone along together.

- We wanted to shout about who is taking action to improve their environmental and social impact!
- There's a link between having a sustainable impact policy and enacting change - our research shows that music festivals who have Impact Policies create change. Simple as.
- Live events need to be grounded in something larger because consumer habits are changing. It is no longer acceptable to not be environmentally conscious.
- Sustainable impact goes above and beyond just the environment. Festival-goers care about a range of issues and music festivals must be supported to respond.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## BETTERNOTSTOP

betternotstop is a **sustainable impact agency** based in Manchester, UK. We are committed to empowering businesses to deliver positive, sustainable actions for the environment and society.

We achieve this by spotlighting great environmental and social impact initiatives already existing, such as in the festival sector and work alongside committed leaders to create lasting environmental change.

We have two decade's worth of experience working across all areas of the music industry, and are motivated to drive change in this area.

**Our vision is for music festivals to elevate their positive environmental and social impact on a local, national and international scale.**

**Our mission is to accelerate the ability of music festivals to implement effective sustainability measures and drive collaboration across the sector.**

We spend our working day helping businesses make responsible decisions about their processes, practices and actions.

We have a vested interest in supporting music festivals on their sustainability journey. We are also all huge music lovers and festival goers (yes, even right down to the team dog!). So for us, this report means more than business.

We know that music festivals need to step up and be change makers in the arena of responsible business, and as you will read, customers are expecting change.

We really care about making music festivals the best versions they can possibly be!

We hope you enjoying reading this as much as we did creating it,

Hannah and Sophie  
Team BNS

As well as conducting our own thorough research into the UK music festival industry, we have had incredible support and expertise from key industry organisations.

They have contributed their time and experience to ensure this report is comprehensive and thorough.

## THANK YOU ALL!



### FROM THE FIELDS

Award-winning curators, brand partnerships and activation experts, and marketers, From the Fields deliver a range of events across the creative sector delivering impact both socially and environmentally.



### GREEN BOX EVENTS

One of the UK's leading events waste management organisations who pioneer sustainable, innovative strategies for clean up at events across the UK.



### GREEN EVENTS CO.

As a bespoke event concessions management company with a clear commitment to sustainability, Green Events Co. supply and manage food, bar, and retail traders at some of the UK's largest events.



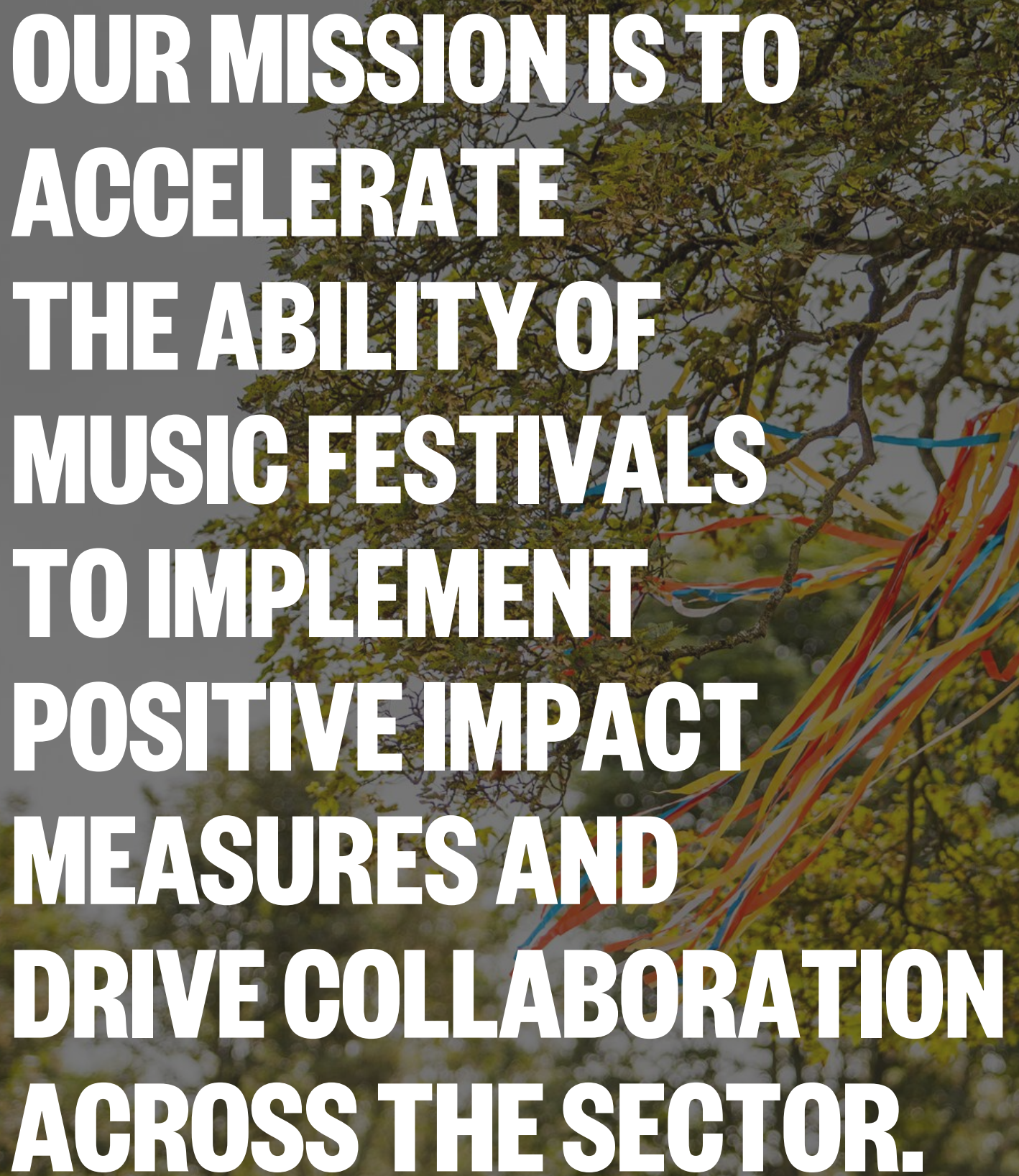
### KEY CHANGE

Key Change is a global network and movement striving for gender equality in the music industry. The organisation works with partners across 12 countries to deliver impact and positive change.

# 100 MUSIC FESTIVALS

BETTERNOTSTOP RESEARCHED 100 UK MUSIC FESTIVALS TO GATHER DATA FOR THIS REPORT

110 Above Festival  
All Points East  
AVA Festival  
Barn on the Farm Festival  
BBC Radio 1's Big Weekend  
Beat-Herder Festival  
Beautiful People  
Belladrum Tartan Heart Festival  
Black Deer Festival  
Bloodstock Open Air  
Bluedot Festival  
Boardmasters Festival  
Boomtown  
Boundary Brighton  
British Summer Time Hyde Park  
Camp Bestival  
Colourboxx Festival  
Creamfields (North and South)  
Deer Shed Festival  
Detonate Festival  
Deva Fest  
Dot to Dot Festival  
Down at the Abbey  
Download Festival  
Eden Festival  
El Dorado  
Elderflower Festival  
End of the Road Festival  
Fairport's Cropredy Convention  
Field Day Festival  
Fire in the Mountain Festival  
Garage Nation Outdoor Festival  
Glastonbury  
Gloworm Festival  
Gotwood Festival  
Green Gathering  
Green Man Festival  
Greenbelt Festival  
Isle of Wight Festival  
Jack Up the Summer  
Junction 2 Festival  
Kendal Calling Festival  
Kew the Music  
King's Jam Festival  
Latitude  
Live at Lydiard  
Liverpool Sound City  
London Re-mixed Festival  
Long Division Festival  
Lost Village Festival  
Love Saves the Day  
Love Trails Festival  
Lovebox  
Lytham Festival  
Made Festival  
MFor Festival  
Mighty Hoopla Festival  
MiNT Festival  
NASS Festival  
Neighbourhood Weekender  
Neverworld 2022  
Newsam Park  
Noisily Festival  
Nozstock Festival  
One Love Festival  
Parklife  
Party at the Palace  
Reading & Leeds Festivals  
Readipop Festival  
Rewind Festival Scotland  
Secret Garden Party  
Sensoria Festival  
Shambala Festival  
Shindig Festival  
Slamdunk Festival  
South West 4 Festival  
Southbound Festival  
Spring Gathering Festival  
Standon Calling  
Stendhal Festival  
Strawberries & Cream  
Sundown Festival  
Terminal V  
The British Country Music Festival  
The Downs Festival  
The Great Escape  
Scottish House and Disco  
Tramlines  
TRNSMT Festival  
Truck Festival  
UK Tech-Fest  
Underneath the Stars  
Victorious Festival  
We Are Festvl  
We Out Here Festival  
Wild Paths Festivals  
Wilderness  
Wireless Festival  
Womad Festival  
Y Not Festival  
Zen Fest



**OUR MISSION IS TO  
ACCELERATE  
THE ABILITY OF  
MUSIC FESTIVALS  
TO IMPLEMENT  
POSITIVE IMPACT  
MEASURES AND  
DRIVE COLLABORATION  
ACROSS THE SECTOR.**



# SUMMARY

## LET'S BE CLEAR. MUSIC FESTIVALS ARE INCREDIBLE!

They come in all shapes and sizes; big or small, inner city or green fields, dance or rock, old friends and new.

They support local communities by working closely with charities, employing local people, and bringing people together to celebrate all different types of music under one roof or sky!

But of course, music festivals have an impact on the planet.

We can't get away from the fact that they scar the natural landscape, disrupt wildlife, litter and pollute the environment and emit tonnes of carbon through generators, travel and trade.

So how can we ensure we attend and create events that care as much about the planet and people on it as we do?

We wanted to see exactly what positive actions music festivals are currently taking to reduce and limit their environmental impact and promote greater social change in their communities.

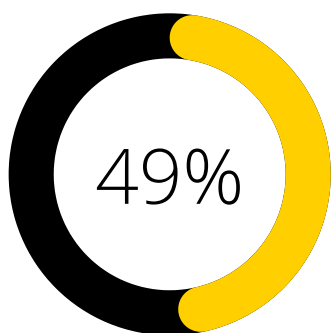
Our aim is to shine a spotlight on UK music festivals leading the charge, rather than focus on those who aren't up to scratch.

We wanted to show it's not all doom and gloom to hopefully inspire sector-wide change!

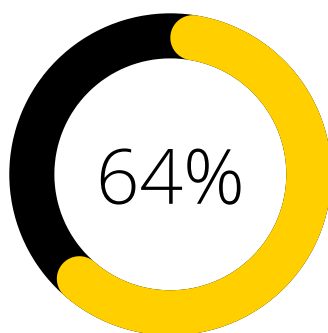
**More Than Music** explores why music festivals need to consider environmental and social sustainability across their operations.

We surveyed 100 UK music festivals and delved into their sustainability policies to see exactly what actions they were committed to.

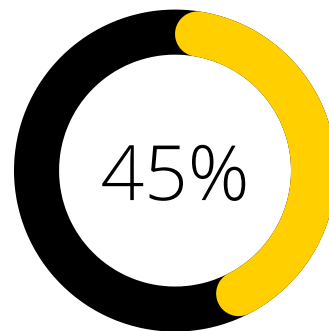
## THE GOOD AND THE BAD



LESS THAN HALF HAVE A PUBLICLY AVAILABLE SUSTAINABILITY POLICY



LESS THAN TWO THIRDS ARE DELIVERING ANY FORM OF SOCIAL IMPACT PROGRAMME



ONLY 45% HAVE CARBON OFFSETTING MEASURES IN PLACE

**Nearly two thirds of consumers surveyed stated that the environment is important to them.**

Over 70% of millennial music festival goers take positive actions to reduce their carbon footprint during the event, we start to see why the figures matter so much more. (1)

The environment needs everyone - businesses and individuals - to take responsibility for their own actions.

Festival goers expect music festivals to make positive changes and it makes good business sense for music festivals to listen.

(1) Mintel: Raving Mad: UK Music Festival Attendance at Highest Level in Four Years; August 2019; <https://tinyurl.com/md5tm5s2>



**THE LIVE EVENTS INDUSTRY IS ONE OF THE BIGGEST AND MOST INFLUENTIAL, IT'S IMPORTANT THAT WE USE THIS TO LEAD BY EXAMPLE AND DO OUR PART IN GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY AS A SECTOR.**

**REPORTS LIKE THIS ARE IMPORTANT AS THEY SHOW US WHAT WE COULD BE DOING BETTER, ALLOWING US TO REGROUP AND MOVE FORWARD EFFECTIVELY TOGETHER.**

**JASON ARGYLE, GREEN EVENTS COMPANY**

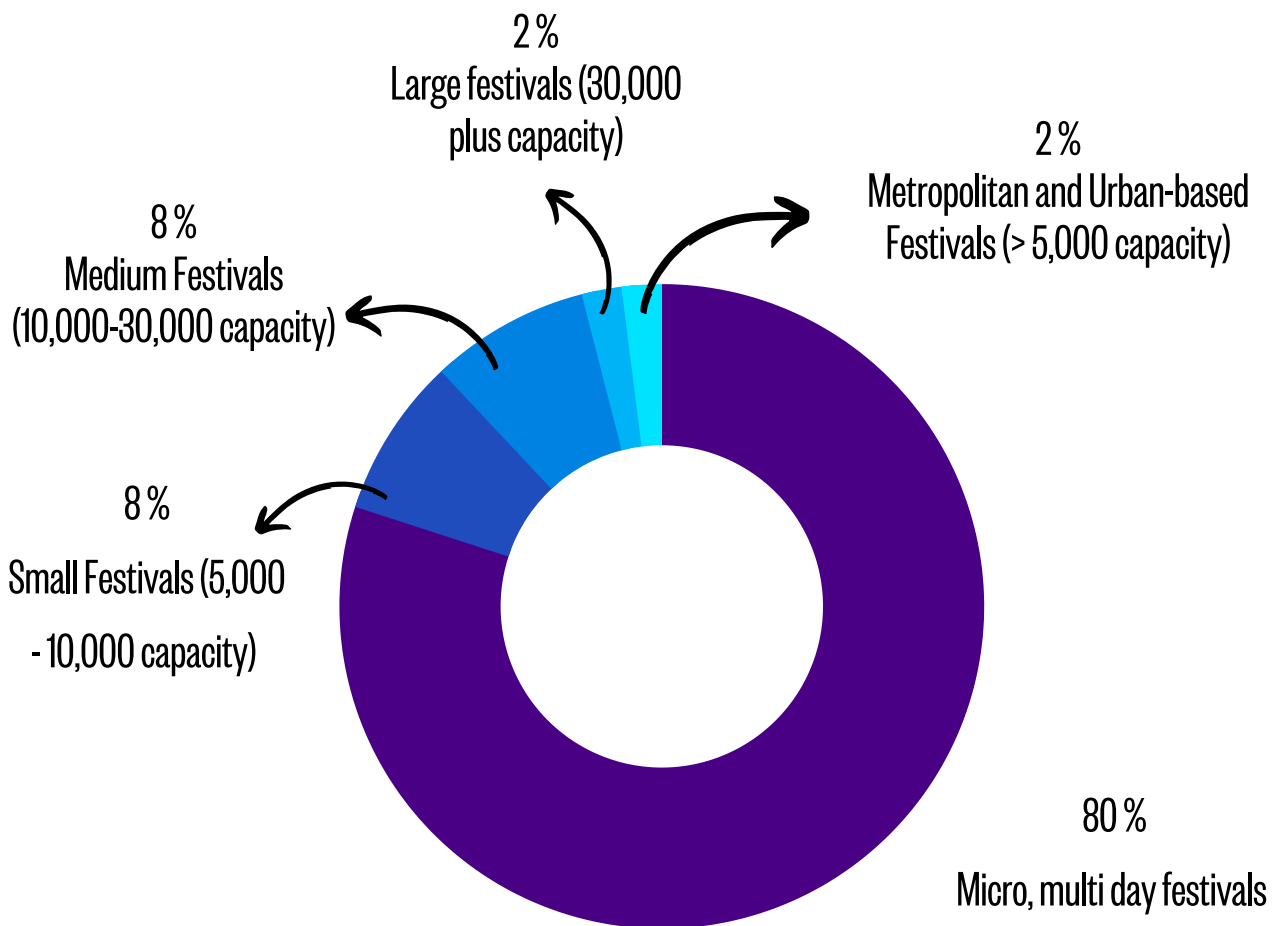
# INTRODUCTION

## STATE OF THE NATION

The UK music festival scene is rich, colourful and lively.

The music festival sector supports 85,000 jobs and generates an estimated £1.76 billion GVA (2) for the UK annually, 10 % of which directly benefiting local businesses and economies. (3, 4, 5)

There are an estimated 975 festivals in the UK, the pie chart below shows this breakdown.



(2) GVA - or Gross Value Added - is basically the monetary value music festivals provide the UK economy.

(3) UK Music's 'Music by Numbers' 2020 report; <https://tinyurl.com/yaafwjft>

(4) Carey & Chambers, 'Valuing Live Entertainment', June 2020; <https://tinyurl.com/52xt33a6>

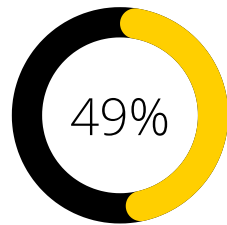
(5) Association of Independent Festivals (AIF) 10 year report; 2018; <https://tinyurl.com/4d3t34ac>

(6) UK Parliament; The Future of UK Music Festivals' DCMS Select Committee Enquiry; <https://tinyurl.com/2fb75eza>

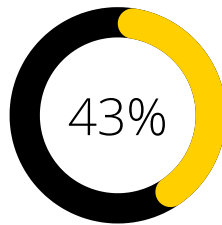
# WHO ATTENDS UK FESTIVALS?

Over five million people in the UK went to a music festival in 2019!(7)

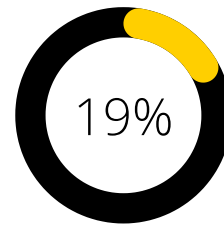
**That's over 7% of the UK population!**



Generation Z  
16-19 (8)



Millennial  
20-39 (8)



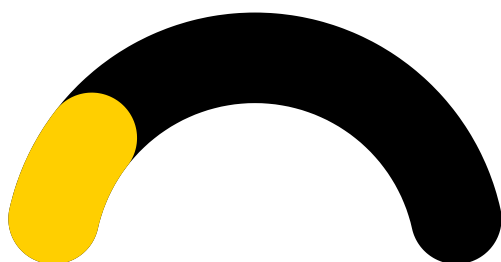
Generation X  
40-54 (8)

## So why are so many people giving up their weekends to stomp around muddy fields in wellies?

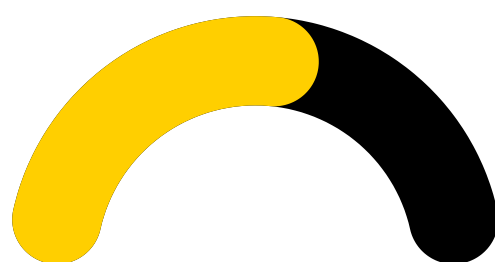
Research shows that the most popular reason people attend a music festival or concert is to see a particular artist or band (45%);

Increasingly often however, people are motivated by the social elements of festivals. Folk want to spend time with their friends and family (41 %) and meet new people (19%).(8)

In fact, a whopping six in ten festival-goers would prioritise going to a music festival over a UK staycation, and nearly six in ten would rather attend a festival than head over to Europe for a weekend away.(8)



Over a quarter of UK adults went  
to at least one festival in 2018/19  
(8)



60% of festivals attendees are there to spend time  
with their friends and family, and meet new people  
(8)

(7) Music concert and festival attendance in the United Kingdom (UK) from 2012 to 2019; Statista;  
<https://tinyurl.com/psrnzjct>  
(8) Mintel: Raving Mad: UK Music Festival Attendance at Highest Level in Four Years; August 2019;  
<https://tinyurl.com/md5tm5s2>

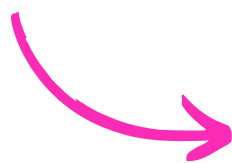


## FESTIVAL GOERS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Ok, so we know people are super keen to hang out with their friends listening to some great music, but do they care about how they experience that at a festival?

**Well yes actually!**

- 62% of music festival-goers say waste reduction is very important to them (9)
- Almost two thirds said being eco-friendly was important (9)
- Six out of 10 of concert and music festival attendees take positive actions to reduce their carbon footprint during the event (10)

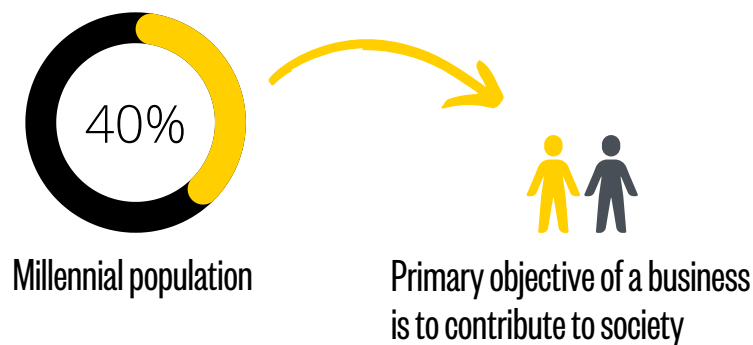


Rises to seven out of 10 for millennials!

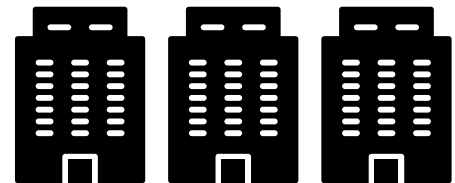
# MUSIC FESTIVALS ARE BUSINESSES, AND BUSINESS NEEDS TO BE MORE SUSTAINABLE.

The average age of a music festival attendee is 37 - a 'Millennial'.<sup>(11)</sup> Millennials now make up more than 40% of all UK consumers.<sup>(12)</sup>

Nearly half of millennials believe that the primary objective of a business shouldn't be profit driven. Instead, they believe that contributing positively to society (social and environmental) should be the overarching goal.<sup>(13)</sup>



However, research shows that less than a third of UK businesses have strategies in place to reach net-zero and deliver on carbon-reduction targets.<sup>(14)</sup>



## SO WHAT?

### Music festivals are in danger of losing customer appeal.

By creating, sharing and implementing positive impact policies music festivals can be profitable and deliver benefits to society.

In fact, making it easier for attendees to make sustainable choices creates a new way for them to connect and make stronger connections with their audience.

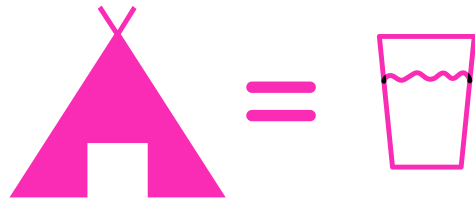
<sup>(11)</sup> Ticketmaster: State of Play Report; The Festival Go-er; June 2019; <https://tinyurl.com/ycxvwkzc>  
<sup>(12)</sup> Green Biz: 10 sustainability and social impact trends that we're watching; February 2021; <https://tinyurl.com/2p88ydzu>  
<sup>(13)</sup> Deloitte: The Deloitte Global 2021 Millennial and Gen Z Survey; 2021: <https://tinyurl.com/42bxjmtn>  
<sup>(14)</sup> Edie: Net Zero Strategies; January 2022; <https://tinyurl.com/6fdnpwkd>

## RESPONSIBLE ACTIONS

When you think of music festival waste, your first thought is most likely tents.

**Each year, nearly HALF of all tents are left.(15)**

Unfortunately, the urban myth that most of these go to worthy causes simply isn't true, often they aren't in good enough quality for charities to reuse them.



An average tent weighs 3.5kg and is mostly made of plastic,

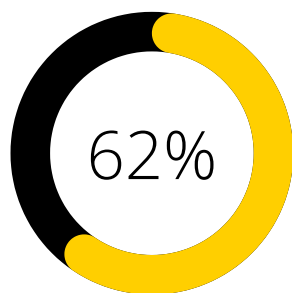
Equivalent to 250 pint cups.(15)

Now imagine almost a quarter of a million tents being cleaned up at events across the UK every Summer.(15)

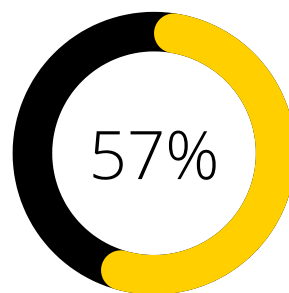
## SHOCKING ISN'T IT.

So how can we encourage people to change their behaviour to something more positive?

A recent TicketMaster customer survey revealed that almost two thirds of music festival-goers say having waste reduction initiatives at music festivals is very important to them, with a further 57 % saying being eco-friendly was important. (16)



Waste reduction is important



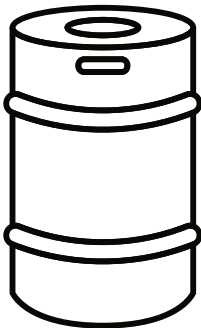
Being eco-friendly is important



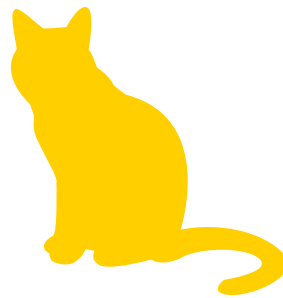


UK festivals produce **upwards of 23,500 tonnes of rubbish** every year and **create over 24,000 tons of carbon emissions.**(17)

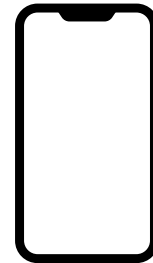
**23,500 tonnes of rubbish is equivalent to:**



**x 384,000  
KEGS**



**x 5.28 million  
CATS**



**x 124 million  
iPhone 11's**

This waste includes:

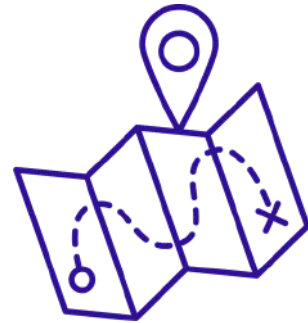
- Camping equipment like chairs, sleeping bags and tents
- Food and drink serve-ware like cups, cans, plates and cutlery
- Cigarette ends

## TRAVEL DOESN'T HELP!

Festival goers are committed folk and will travel hundreds of miles for their favourite events. As a result, **up to 80 % of a festival's carbon footprint is audience travel.**(18)

Recent research by Clean Scene also showed the huge impact artists have on the overall carbon footprint of music festivals.

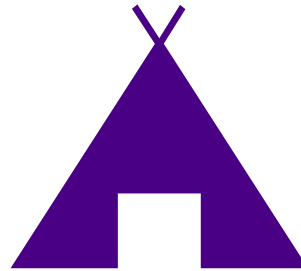
They found that the world's top 1000 touring DJs took a total of 51,000 flights in 2019.(19)



This used 3,200,000 litres of fuel, and emitting 35,000,000 kg of CO<sub>2</sub>.(19)



Equivalent to  
powering 8000  
festivals for three  
days!



The average carbon footprint of a touring DJ is more than 17 times higher than the recommended personal carbon budget of approximately 2 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>.

These standout statistics are shocking, but they are solely for touring DJs.(19)

Now multiply them by all the other music genres to get a real picture of the overall footprint of the music industry...

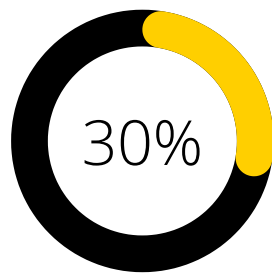
(18) The Show Must Go On; 2015; <https://tinyurl.com/2ndczjv8>

(19) Clean Scene Report; March 2021; <https://cleanscene.club/report.pdf>

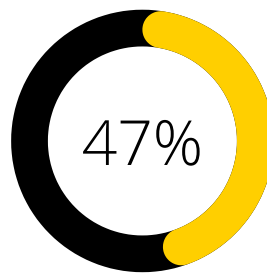
# SUSTAINABILITY IS MORE THAN JUST ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT.

Almost a third of people consider how diverse a music festival's line up is before booking.

Half of festival goers think festival organisers have a responsibility to ensure the lineup is as diverse as possible, it is clear that social impact is a key metric for the success of a music festival.(20)



Consider the diversity of the lineup before booking




Diversity is the festival organiser's responsibility

## Social impact means the overall effect of your actions on society.

Having a positive social impact can encompass a variety of things:

- Donating to charity
- Championing representation of communities
- Creating an access for all culture
- Supporting local, national, and international causes
- Hiring from disadvantaged groups groups (such as young care leavers, ex-offenders and mothers returning to work)
- Paying at least the Real Living Wage

Initiatives like Key Change; Attitude is Everything; Music Declares Emergency; Beggars Group; Black Lives in Music and many more are working across the music festival sector and the industry more widely to drive positive change.



**“THE MUSIC INDUSTRY  
HAS THE OPPORTUNITY  
TO LEAD HERE. IT CAN  
BECOME THE EXEMPLAR  
OF A GREEN RECOVERY  
AND HELP THE PUBLIC  
TO UNDERSTAND AND  
SUPPORT WHAT THAT  
IDEA MEANS.”**

LEWIS JAMIESON, A SPOKESMAN FOR MUSIC DECLARES EMERGENCY (21)

(21) The Guardian: Music industry confronts climate crisis as gigs resume; Adam Corner; April 2021;  
<https://tinyurl.com/5af72sv4>

# OUR FINDINGS

<b>CAMPSITES</b>	<b>.....22</b>
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<b>SOCIAL IMPACT</b>	<b>.....50</b>



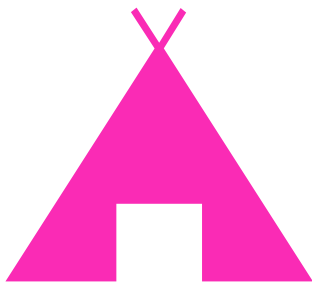
# CAMPSITES

## TAKE YOUR TENT HOME.

We certainly don't need to tell you that campsites are one of the biggest culprits of waste and litter at music festivals.

Approximately 250,000 tents are left behind each year and it is a common myth that the majority of them get recycled.(23)

Sadly, at least half will go to landfill and this figure rises to 90% for some festivals.(24)



250,000 tents left  
behind every year



Between 50 - 90% sent to landfill

Key items left behind on campsites include:

- Camping equipment including blow-up mattresses, tent pegs, roll mats, sleeping bags, air bed pumps, chairs, and tent poles / bags
- Food and drinks including cans, plastic bottles, drinks cartons, glass bottles, disposable cutlery and serverware, canned food and dry food
- Personal items including hygiene products, clothes, shower gels, deodorants, hair accessories, and wet wipes
- Promotional freebies including pop up tents, sunglasses, and food and drinks

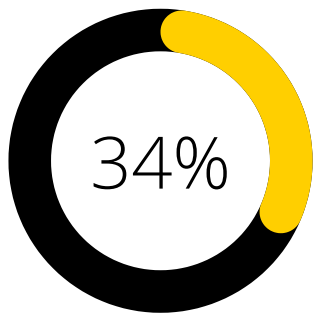
(23) UK Parliament; The Future of UK Music Festivals' DCMS Select Committee Enquiry;  
<https://tinyurl.com/2fb75eza>

(24) Green Box Events Data

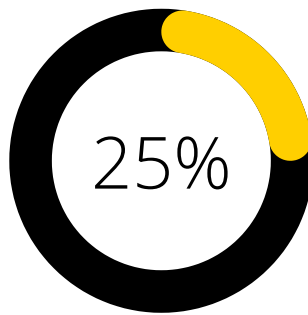
Of the 100 festivals surveyed, not all are camping festivals. 43 festivals offered on site camping, 57 did not have camping facilities.

**betternotstop research revealed that:**

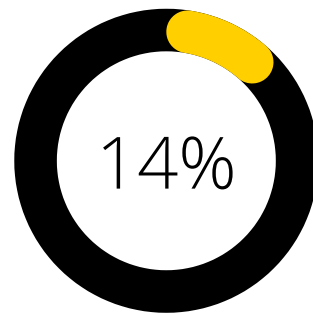
- Only a third explicitly mention single use tents and taking positive action to limit their use on festival campsites
- A quarter have initiatives for hiring pre-used or pre-erected tents in their campsites
- Just 14% music festivals have partnerships with charities collecting tents directly from the festival campsites - meaning, when you \*think\* you are being generous and leaving your tent for a deserving soul, it's more than likely going straight from that muddy field to landfill.



Are limiting single use tents



Offer hired tents



Partner with charities collecting tents

With almost 250,000 tents being cleaned up on Monday mornings, it paints a pretty grim picture.(25)

However, it's not all doom and gloom!

The Association of Independent Festival's Take Your Tent Home initiative is committed to working with campers, festivals and the supply chain to eliminate single use plastics - including single use tents - from festival sites.(26)



Another highly impactful initiative some festivals are running is a dedicated Zero Waste Camp.

These can be more expensive to operate due to the extra planning required, however, once implemented ultimately save costs on litter picking teams and resources required to clean the site post event. These campsites are leading the way for other campers in terms of personal responsibility and positive action.

This is where attendees make a commitment to recycle properly and leave no trace in their campsite.

From our 100-music festival sample, just two music festivals have dedicated Zero Waste Camps.

Another ingenious way music festivals are encouraging their campers to take their tents home is by gameifying the whole experience.

Herefordshire music festival Nozstock: The Hidden Valley, are trail blazers here - they run competitions for their campers and award prizes for the 'best dressed' tents and the tidiest campsites.

Prizes include merchandise, trophies and free festival tickets! A great idea right!?

## BOOMTOWN



In 2019, Boomtown had its very first zero waste campsite.

The Hampshire-based festival saw a whopping 90% reduction in tents left compared to 2018 levels!

## DOWNLOAD FESTIVAL



The hugely successful Download Eco Campsite has been operating since 2018 and has next to no tents left after the festival.

With campers asked to sign a charter confirming they will recycle responsibly; take all their equipment home with them; and be respectful of the site's natural surroundings, Download have ensured tent waste on the site is falling year-on-year.





**A 75% CARBON REDUCTION CAN BE ACHIEVED BY RENTING A PRE-PITCHED TENT AND TRAVELLING BY TRAIN INSTEAD OF PURCHASING A SINGLE-USE 'FESTIVAL' TENT AND ARRIVING IN A CAR.**

**IF SCALED, THIS COULD HAVE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON THE CARBON COST OF A FESTIVAL.**

**REBECCA HEAPS, TENTSHARE FOUNDER**



**TENTSHARE**  
Earn . Save . Share

# WASTE AND LITTER

## REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE.

First and foremost, the items left behind after a music festival will vary depending on the music festival demographic; festival type; and the music genre.

As will the amounts of waste left over at the festival site.

Music festivals are highly conscious of their waste footprint for a few reasons:

- Shocking images of festival sites littered with rubbish are commonplace in the media over the summer months - this isn't good for the environment or a festival's reputation
- Landowners dislike the state their land is left in - litter can be extremely harmful for local plants and wildlife
- Many festival organisers care deeply about the impact of their festivals and implement lots of initiatives to reduce the overall waste tonnage - the goal is to reduce waste overall, but ensure as much is recycled as possible!
- Cost! The more there is to clean up, the more it costs to do so. Hiring sites for longer periods to ensure they are left spotless as well as paying to dispose of leftover waste is costly.

## PLASTICS

Plastics make up a range of resources used on music festival sites, including onsite equipment, in bars, at food concessions and tents.<sup>(29)</sup>

Government estimates suggest that England alone uses 1.1 billion single-use plates and 4.25 billion items of single-use cutlery — most of which are plastic, per year.<sup>(30)</sup>

Only 10% are recycled upon disposal.

Music festival sites have a responsibility to take action to combat this single-use culture.

<sup>(29)</sup> Association of Independent Festivals: Take Your Tent Home; <https://aiforg.com/initiatives/take-your-tent-home/>  
<sup>(30)</sup> UK Government; Plans unveiled to ban single-use plastics; November 2021; <https://tinyurl.com/2y8mx2d2>



**I WAS PART OF THE SALVAGE TEAM AT LEEDS FESTIVAL AND IT BLEW ME AWAY JUST HOW MUCH WASTE WAS LEFT.**

**THERE WERE LORRIES FULL OF USABLE ITEMS!**

**FESTIVALS TOUCH A LOT OF PEOPLE, FROM SUPPLIERS TO ATTENDEES AND THERE'S SO MUCH POTENTIAL IN THIS RIPPLE EFFECT TO DRIVE POSITIVE CHANGE BOTH IN THE INDUSTRY AND THE AREAS LOCAL TO THE FESTIVAL SITE.**

**I'M EXCITED TO SEE HOW FESTIVALS CHOOSE TO GROW THEIR IMPACT IN THE YEARS TO COME, JUST BECAUSE THE MUSIC ONLY LASTS A WEEKEND DOESN'T MEAN THAT THEIR IMPACT CAN'T BE LONGER LASTING.**

**LOUISA BURMAN, SOCIAL IMPACT CONSULTANT**

*Burman*

# RECYCLING

Lots of music festivals have various types of recycling points on site (The Green Gathering Festival has 14!!), and are working hard to limit their overall amount of waste produced.(31)

Sadly however, less than one in five festivals bettternotstop surveyed are working towards sending zero waste to landfill, or have already achieved that.



## NOISILY FESTIVAL

Noisily Festival, a 5,000 capacity underground music festival based in Leicestershire, recycled 96.8% of all waste on site in 2019 which is almost identical to the figure from 2018, even with a few hundred more guests on site. (32)

The festival works hard to achieve their 'zero waste to landfill' commitment by implementing initiatives like:

- Bars not serving anything in plastic bottles, which results in 400kg increase in glass use.
- The production offices avoided buying plastic stationery, opting for wooden items like clipboards, both sustainable and recyclable.
- The crew all bringing their own refillable water bottles, cups, plates and cutlery to reduce onsite waste.

(31) The Green Gathering; <http://www.greengathering.org.uk/howgreen/>

(32) Noisily Festival; <https://noisilyfestival.com/info/sustainability/>

## WRISTBANDS

Once you leave the site, wristbands can become a big source of waste.

Whilst there will be many of you who wear your wristbands proudly all summer (got to get that tan line!) many wristbands are discarded.

Music festivals like Bluedot are acting responsibly and ensuring that their wristbands are made entirely from recycled plastics with bamboo clasps.(33)

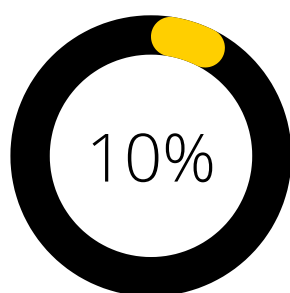
Although it might seem like a small gesture, it massively cuts down on the plastic content of the festival.

Other initiatives music festivals are championing which have an overall positive impact on sustainability are compost toilets (mentioned in 6 / 100 policies) and converting to biodegradable glitter (10 / 100 policies).

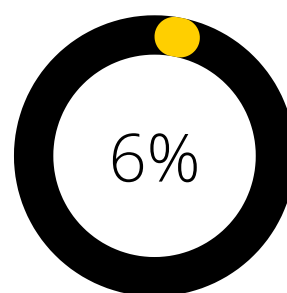
Six of the 100 festivals betternotstop surveyed have a dedicated litter bond policy.

How this works is festival-goers are asked to commit to an eco bond - usually costing between £5 to £20 - and if they bring a bag of waste or recycling to the collection points, they will be reimbursed the amount of their eco bond.

Anecdotally, these eco bonds have between a 35 to 45 % success rate, however the funds from any unclaimed bonds are often set aside for additional litter clearing operations, or charity donations for environmental causes.



Only using biodegradable glitter



Compostable toilets

# CASE STUDY



Nozstock Festival have introduced a refundable eco bond scheme for their festival goers.

With every ticket purchased, a £5 eco bond is applied, which can be re-claimed when you bring a full bag of rubbish or recycling to the eco bond exchange and sort it in our recycling centre.

In 2017, the scheme enabled Nozstock to sort and separate 40% of their waste into the appropriate recycling facilities!(34)





# 43.1%

**OF AUDIENCES SAID THAT THEY HAD CHANGED THEIR BEHAVIOUR AS A RESULT OF GREEN INITIATIVES OR IDEAS THEY HAD DISCOVERED AT FESTIVALS**

Bucks New University; A Greener Festival - Research Study



# FOOD AND DRINK

## FOOD IS A HUGE PART OF A FESTIVAL EXPERIENCE.

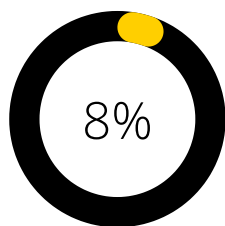
Food and drink traders naturally want to provide customers with the highest quality possible.

This can include choosing produce which is organic; sourced locally (within a 50 mile radius); arrives in plastic-free packaging; or is served using biodegradable serveware.

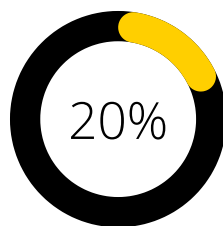
Given the importance of food to the festival experience, traders are highly influential when it comes to delivering sustainable, responsible food and drink to music festival goers.

Our research from 100 music festivals showed that:

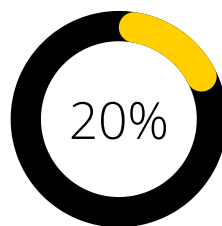
- Less than one in ten festivals mention their traders offer vegetarian or vegan options
- Only 20% of music festivals reference compostable or biodegradable cutlery and serveware in their sustainable impact policies
- Just one in five music festivals surveyed have a formal ban on plastic straws
- Less than a quarter of festivals have a reusable cup / bottles scheme, or encourage their audience to bring a water bottle to the event



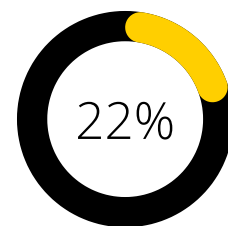
Vegetarian or vegan options



Compostable or biodegradable cutlery and serveware



Ban on plastic straws



Reusable cups or bottle schemes



## FOOD AND DRINK OPTIONS

It is a well-known truth that globally we need to cut down on the amount of meat we consume. Our eating habits at music festivals are no different.

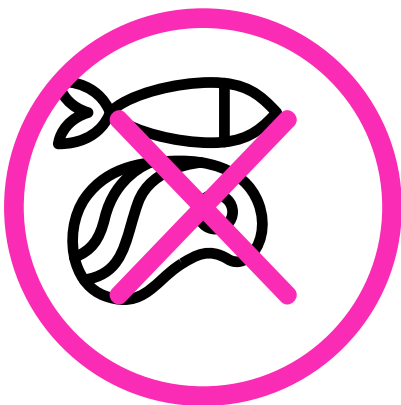
Food traders are taking the lead in reducing the emissions footprint of their customers.(35)

By offering more vegetarian and vegan options at their stalls, this cuts down on meat and fish-related carbon emissions.

This is also a similar situation for the use of plant-based milks - like oat, soy, almond or coconut - compared with traditional cows milk.

Recent research shows that greenhouse gas emissions used in the production of plant-based milks are lower than for dairy milk.(35) Music festival traders are responding to this by increasing their range for the more environmentally conscious consumer.

### SHAMBALA FESTIVAL



Shambala Festival is a leader in responsible food trading.

As of 2016, the music festival has been meat and fish free.

This has reduced the Festival's greenhouse gas emissions by an estimated 100 tonnes!

Being meat and fish free has reduced the overall emissions of the festival created by the agricultural industry, but Shambala is also reducing its refrigerator use....

Because they use less diesel from generators as there isn't a need for any meat to be chilled!

(35) BBC Article; Climate change: Do I need to stop eating meat?; November 2021; <https://tinyurl.com/26xvfxtc>

(36) Shambala Festival; <https://www.shambalafestival.org/essential-info/sustainability/food-drink/>

## FOOD WASTE

Many music festivals and concessions organisers have policies in place for their traders which focus on reducing food waste.

This can include requiring traders to offer smaller sized portions to avoid excess food being thrown away by customers and ensuring food waste bins are available on site.

Other initiatives that music festivals like Bluedot and Green Gathering are doing is collecting leftover food and distributing it to local groups who can make use of the leftovers.(37)(38)

Initiatives like 8th Plate and Open Kitchen MCR are great examples of organisations repurposing food waste for the benefit of local communities.

## PACKAGING

We are all trying to cut down on single-use plastics, recycle more, and limit the amount of materials we send to landfill.

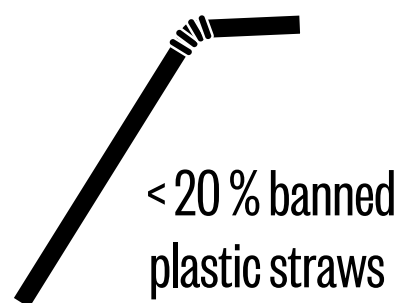
Walking round a music festival you will see traders are serving customers in reusable cups, on cardboard trays, with wooden cutlery.

However, our research showed that only 20 % of music festivals reference compostable / biodegradable cutlery and serveware in their sustainable impact policies.

We also noted that fewer than 20 % of music festivals surveyed have a formal ban on plastic straws.

Given the importance of traders to festivals, it is essential they are committed to the sustainable ambitions at the core of the event.

By writing policies around sustainable packaging into a festival's environmental commitments, traders will be supported to reduce the overall impact of their packaging.



(37) Bluedot Festival; <https://discoverthebluedot.com/info/sustainability/>  
(38) The Green Gathering; <http://www.greengathering.org.uk/howgreen/>

## MUSIC FESTIVALS MUST SUPPORT TRADERS

Whilst it is the responsibility of the trader to implement environmentally responsible actions, music festivals must support traders to do so.

Some of the greatest barriers traders face when it comes to implementing sustainable actions into their daily operations at music festivals include:

- **Long-term planning** → Music festivals need to write their sustainability ambitions into their long-term plan so that traders can map out how they will meet these aims. Some festivals can be vague with their asks or be indecisive which makes it hard for traders to plan their activities in advance.
- **Financial support for implementing initiatives** → it can be costly to implement activities like installing solar panels on stalls to reduce dependence on generators. Festivals can help by creating a dedicated innovation fund through which traders can apply to, to help cover the costs of converting to a cleaner energy source. Whilst it is an up front cost for the music festival, as the reliance on generators decreases, so will the high cost of fuel.

### GREEN EVENTS COMPANY



Green Event Company is a concessions management company who supply and manage all requirements for food, bar and retail traders at events across the UK and internationally.

With decades worth of experience in festival catering, the team have high standards for their traders.

Before a trader is placed at a festival, they are required to sign an environmental pledge which details a list of commitments they will undertake throughout the festival.

This ensures responsible decision making is embedded throughout trader operations. The GEC team are committed to ensuring their traders meet these commitments.(39)

# WATER

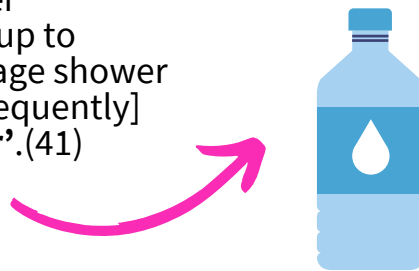
Water is often brought to music festival sites in large water tankers and is used across the festival for water refill stations, shower blocks, by food and drink traders, and crew and staff.

It can be costly and environmentally unfriendly to transport so many gallons of water to the middle of a field, however, there is a school of thought which states that festival goers actually use less water over a festival weekend (assuming they are camping).(40)

## How I hear you ask!

Well there are a few reasons... Firstly, it is quite a commitment to queue up for (often) hours to get that four minutes of lukewarm water. Plus, it can be seen as a colossal waste of your hard earned leisure time, and even as a breaking of the social contract amongst your friends to 'let loose and be free' (#freethearpit!).

Research from the University of Manchester concluded that 'at a four-day festival with up to 150,000 attendees - and assuming an average shower uses 62 litres of water [not showering as frequently] could save up to **37 million litres of water**'.(41)



**37 Million!**

Dr Alison Browne commented how this water saving activity is actually a mark of our social influences, rather than motivated by hygiene reasons:

**“Our ideas about cleanliness are actually social, and can shift stubborn practices when we connect with new social situations, or encounter different infrastructures.”**

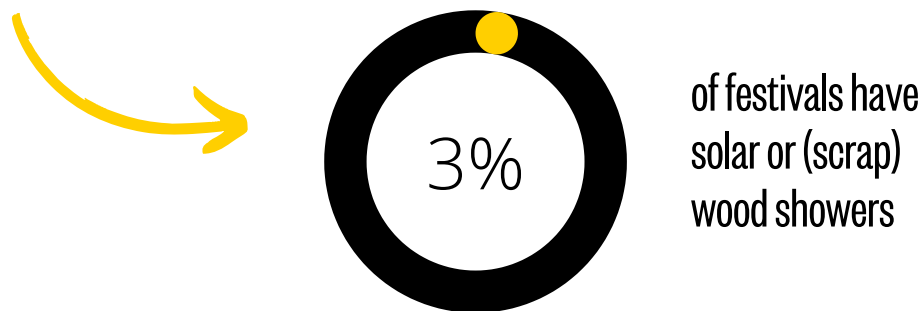
Basically, at music festivals there is no societal pressure to be squeaky clean, so we ultimately use less shower water and so have a reduced impact on the environment!

(40) Festival Pro; Essential Water Supplies for Music Festivals; Andy Robertson; <https://tinyurl.com/4dfaf3r6>

(41) The Northern Quota; Music festivals save 37m litres of water meaning people live more sustainably claims study; Matt Hartless; July 2019; <https://tinyurl.com/3f4z72j3>

Aside from the shower schedules, lots of festivals encourage their audience to consider their water usage throughout the weekend by adopting some of the following initiatives:

- Asking their audience to bring reusable cups and water bottles to help eliminate single-use plastic water bottles on site
- Only providing water to customers, artists, and crew in aluminium cans and cardboard containers
- Investing in their shower facilities to enable solar power / (scrap) wood powered heated showers



- Changing their shower schedule to make it more efficient in terms of water use and energy consumption - this includes shutting certain blocks at non-peak times meaning lights are off and water isn't heated
- Where possible, using mains water not tankered water to reduce transportation costs - this isn't possible for some festivals but should be encouraged where appropriate!
- Being conscious of the chemicals used on site - The Noisily Festival team only use 100% Paraben and SLS-free washing up liquid, kitchen cleaner and personal care products such as shampoo and soap in all areas of site, including the showers.<sup>(42)</sup><sup>(43)</sup> The site team and traders are considering the full water cycle.

<sup>(42)</sup> SLS - Sodium Lauryl Sulphate. An environmentally harmful chemical.  
<sup>(43)</sup> Noisily Festival; <https://noisilyfestival.com/info/sustainability/>

## UNITED UTILITIES



United Utilities is a large water company based in the north-west of England, and will donate 15,000 reusable, metal water bottles to **Kendal Calling** and **Bluedot** audiences in 2022.

The bottles are given free to festival goers and can be refilled on site.<sup>(44)</sup> This massively reduces the amount of single use plastics at music festivals and supports the wellbeing of attendees by helping them to keep hydrated!

## FRANK WATER



Frank Water is a Bristol-based charity which strives to provide safe water, toilets and good hygiene to marginalised communities across the world.

Since 2010, the charity has been working with music festivals to provide festival goers with water refills (using reusable cups to minimise plastic waste!), which in turn raises awareness and funds for their invaluable international projects. Their invaluable work is supporting communities across the world and engaging a diverse audience in the UK.



**CALL TO ACTION:** Write achievable actions into your Impact Policy that traders can take to reduce their overall environmental impact and increase their social impact.

<sup>(44)</sup> United Utilities; <https://www.unitedutilities.com/corporate/responsibility/environment/>  
<sup>(45)</sup> Frank Water; <https://www.frankwater.com/what-we-do/refill-services/refill-for-festivals/>



**UNITED UTILITIES RELY ON THE ENVIRONMENT AS ONE OF OUR KEY RESOURCES SO IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE DO WHAT WE CAN TO PROTECT AND ENHANCE ITS VALUE. WE ARE INCREDIBLY PROUD OF OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH KENDAL CALLING AND BLUEDOT.**

**THROUGH THE PARTNERSHIP, WE AIM TO ENCOURAGE FESTIVAL GOERS TO TAKE OUR REUSABLE WATER BOTTLES AND REDUCE THEIR DEPENDENCY ON SINGLE USE PLASTIC BOTTLES.**

**IT'S A REALLY SIMPLE CONCEPT WITH A REALLY BIG RESULT AND WE HOPE THAT PEOPLE TAKE THEIR BOTTLES HOME, CONTINUE TO STAY HYDRATED AND DO THEIR BIT TO HELP REDUCE PLASTIC WASTE.**

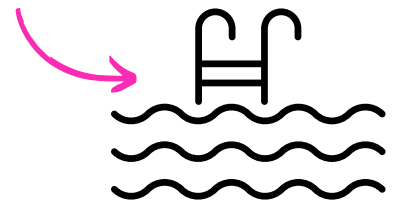
**IAN MCCOY, STAKEHOLDER MANAGER, UNITED UTILITIES**

# ENERGY

## POWER USAGE CAN REPRESENT UP TO 70% OF AN EVENT'S CARBON FOOTPRINT (EXCLUDING AUDIENCE TRAVEL)!

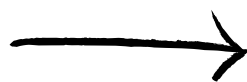
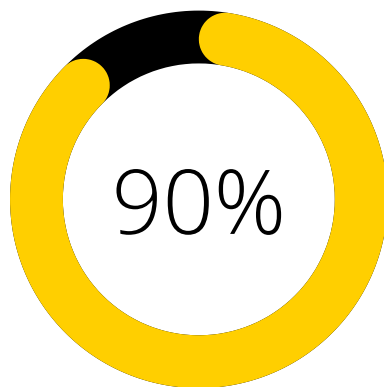
In fact, research undertaken by the industry think-do tank Powerful Thinking found that the UK festival community 'uses in excess of 12 million litres of diesel annually', which in context is almost as much as filling 5 Olympic-sized swimming pools!(46)

And given diesel generators only convert on average 35 % of fuel to electricity when running at full capacity anyways, it's clear to see there is a lot of energy wasted across the industry.(47)



Powerful Thinking also discovered that 90 % of audiences believe it is the responsibility of the festival organisers to take action to reduce their energy consumption.(46)

Ultimately, it's a big problem and festival go-ers are expecting event organisers to take drastic action to reduce their overall carbon footprint!



**Drastic action  
needed!**

Audience's believe that Festival organiser's responsibility is to take action to reduce energy consumption





## **POWER IN THE INDUSTRY**

The UK music festival landscape is split between inner-city, urban park festivals (think Manchester's Parklife or Love Saves the Day in Bristol) and greenfield festivals (Elderflower Fields or Glastonbury).

Music festivals that are in remote areas often tend to be off grid and so are heavily dependent on imported power, rather than connecting to pre-established energy grids.

In order to run the lights, sound systems, bar and food refrigerators etc., festivals tend to rely on diesel generators.

## **OFF-GRID EVENTS ARE RELIANT ON FOSSIL FUELS TO OPERATE SUCCESSFULLY.**

But music festivals are making strides to reduce the impact of their power consumption on the environment.

- Lots of festivals have converted their lighting to the more efficient and environmentally friendly LED bulbs
- More and more festivals are investing in on-site energy solutions like solar power and battery storage (basically storing excess energy produced from renewable sources like solar energy, and storing it in batteries on site until it is needed).

# 50% OF MUSIC FESTIVAL ATTENDEES WOULD WELCOME A HIGHER TICKET PRICE IF THE FESTIVAL TOOK MORE ACTION TO REDUCE ITS ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT.

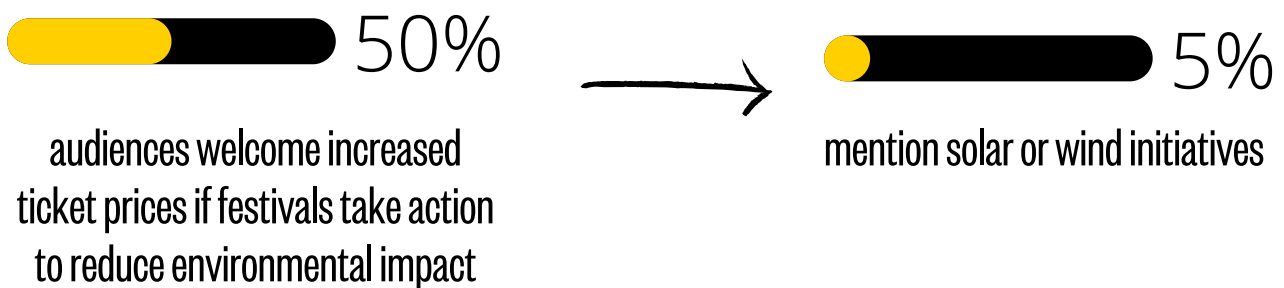
Including reducing its reliance on diesel energy sources and investing in renewable alternatives.(48)

However, our research showed that only 5 / 100 music festivals surveyed mentioned solar or wind power initiatives in their sustainability policies.

Empirical evidence we collected from industry sources said this may be due to a few reasons:

- The high investment costs required to install the necessary infrastructure for solar and wind power
- Fairness to traders - not all traders can afford to install solar panels on their stalls so should not be penalised by festivals for not having them (i.e. traders with panels receiving a discount on pitch fees)
- Lack of long term commitment to the site - if site contracts are yearly then the festival is unlikely to invest in long-term infrastructure projects, whereas if there is a more stable guarantee of site tenancy, the organisers can commit to developing more permanent infrastructure, like renewable energy production.

So perhaps we will see a greater investment in infrastructure and a switch to more long-term thinking in the future...



Further steps festivals can take to reduce their energy consumption and overall carbon footprint include:

- Considering the whole cycle of a festival - clean energy tariffs for your office through to mains power on site
- Data Collection - Look at how power is currently being managed and consumed and look to make changes based on that
- Explore different types of energy production - Solar, reprocessed waste vegetable oil biofuel (WVO), wind power etc

## POWERFUL THINKING



Powerful Thinking is a 'think-do tank' which unites festivals, suppliers and environmental organisations across the music industry to explore ways to reduce the costs and carbon through increased efficiency and alternatives.

They then share findings to promote lower carbon industry.

## SHAMBALA FESTIVAL



Shambala Festival has made massive strides to limit its impact on the environment.

They have reduced their emissions footprint by almost 90 % and power the entire festival using 100% renewable power!

Shambala has achieved this by using a blend of waste vegetable oil generators, solar, and hybrid units on site.

They also use energy efficient equipment and LED lighting; and introducing energy tariffs for the traders to encourage greater individual responsibility for energy consumption.

# RESOURCES

## MATERIAL AND RESOURCE USE.

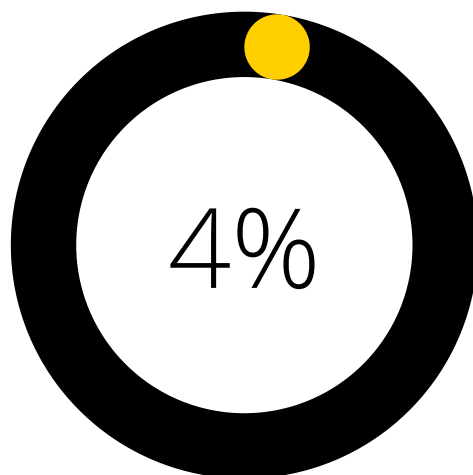
How music festivals use materials and resources is a fairly underdeveloped area in terms of responsible decision making and sustainability.

Some festivals reuse their decor year-on-year; make showpieces from reclaimed or recycled materials; ensure the chemicals used are non-toxic or harmful to the environment; and sustainably source their event merchandise.

Festivals can also ensure their onsite materials are sustainable and responsibly sourced.

betternotstop research showed that only 4 out of 100 music festivals surveyed make reference to the sustainable sourcing of merchandise - ethically sourced cotton for instance - in their sustainability policies.

Given branding and having attendees represent your festival publicly by wearing merchandise is so essential to the ongoing success of music festivals, needless to say, we were disappointed by this statistic!



FESTIVALS MAKE REFERENCE  
TO SUSTAINABLY SOURCED  
MERCHANDISE

However, artists are beginning to take more responsibility for their merchandise. The 1975 are repurposing their old tour merchandise and reprinting it with new designs to cut down on the amount of waste.(51)

By using old merchandise they have reduced their waste sent to landfill and encouraged their audience to rethink their own clothing waste - win win!



## WILD PATHS FESTIVAL

*WILD PATHS*

Wild Paths Festival, together with sustainable apparel brand No Encore, is the first UK music festival to launch an entire merchandise collection from secondhand and vintage garments!

A massive step which will see the music festival cut down on waste; bring a new lease of life to preworn clothes; and create individual pieces of merchandise for their customers.(52)

(51) NME: The 1975 take step into sustainable fashion as they repurpose old merchandise; Nick Reilly; August 2019; <https://tinyurl.com/43mbtur7>

(52) No Encore: Wild Paths Festival; <https://tinyurl.com/2nr6hrev>



**BEING SUSTAINABLE AND MAKING CHANGE HAPPEN ISN'T EASY. SOME FESTIVALS ARE DOING IT WELL, OTHERS DON'T KNOW WHERE TO START. ACHIEVING THESE GOALS ISN'T ABOUT COMMERCIAL ONE-UPMANSHIP CREATING WINNERS AND LOSERS OR INDUSTRY HEROES. IT'S ABOUT COLLABORATION AND SHARING.**

**ONLY THROUGH WORKING TOGETHER, SHARING THE DATA AND HAVING THE TOOLS TO SEE IMPROVEMENTS CAN WE MAKE THE BIGGEST IMPACT.**

**KIERON ROBERTS, FOUNDER ANDANOTHERDAY**

ANDANOTHERDAY IS AN INNOVATION AGENCY WHO BUILD DIGITAL PRODUCTS FOR PURPOSEFUL ORGANISATIONS TO HELP THEM SOLVE PROBLEMS AND COMMUNICATE THEIR MESSAGE TO A WIDER AUDIENCE.



# TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT

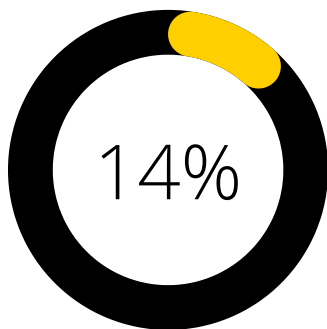
**BETWEEN 63% - 80 % OF A FESTIVAL'S CARBON FOOTPRINT IS AUDIENCE TRAVEL.(53)**

Music festivals are responding to this by encouraging festival goers to travel by public transport where possible and enabling their audiences to make more sustainable choices like coach travel.

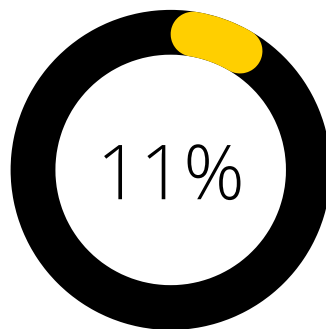
Our research into the 100 festivals surveyed revealed that:

- Less than 15% of festivals suggested in their Impact Policies that festival goers use public transport to travel to and from the festival
- One in ten suggested attendees lift share with friends or through specific sites (like Liftshare)
- Just eight festivals encouraged people to cycle to their festivals, with most of those using Red Fox Cycling to facilitate attendees travelling safely to and from the festival.\*

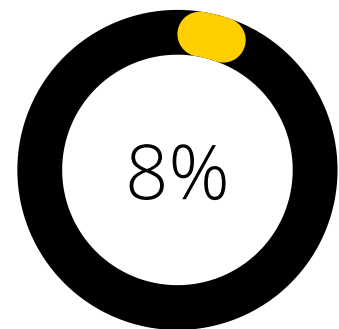
\*It is important to note that cycling to some festivals is easier than others, based primarily on the location of the festival site. However, we would love to see more music festivals taking steps to encourage bike use, be that travelling to and from the festival, or whilst on site!



Mention public transport in Impact Policies



Mention sharing lifts in Impact Policies



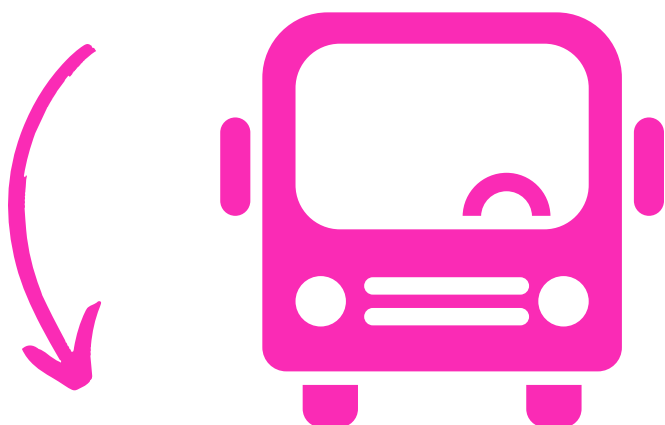
Mention cycling in Impact Policies

For other modes of travel, many festivals offer add ons which include a coach pass to and from the festival, often from various locations across the country.

Research suggests that travelling to a music festival by coach is between 4 to 6 times more environmentally friendly than using your car.(54)

The two main companies the 100 music festivals surveyed tended to use are Tuned in Travel and Big Green Coach (although there are many more local companies that are supporting festival goers travel to UK events!).

Both companies offset their customers' carbon footprint, with Big Green Coach committing to protect 5 sq feet of Amazonian Rainforest for 10 years, for every one of their customers!



Other carbon offsetting measures that UK music festivals have adopted include:

- **A carpark 'tax'** - attendees who drive to music festivals are charged to park their car to encourage the use of public transport
- **A single car occupancy 'tax'** - festival go-ers who arrive at the festival by themselves are charged extra to encourage lift sharing
- **Leaving the car park over the weekend 'tax'** - if you want to leave the festival site over the weekend to nip into the local town, you will be charged extra to return back to the carpark
- **Voluntary car parking donations** - music festivals may ask you to contribute towards a carbon offsetting charity if you use the car park



## ECOLIBRIUM



Established in 2015, the climate awareness charity Ecolibrium is taking positive action to reduce the travel impacts of music festivals.

They do this by raising awareness of travel-related carbon emissions and by investing in international climate solutions.<sup>(55)</sup>

Numerous music festivals - including Kendal Calling, Black Deer and All Points East - support the essential work of Ecolibrium by donating directly to the charity, and by raising awareness of the essential role music festival travel plays in the future of our climate.

Ecolibrium invests in forest protection, ecosystem regeneration and supports local communities suffering adverse climate effects.

## BOARDMASTERS FESTIVAL



Boardmasters Festival is a leader of responsible environmental action, particularly with their travel policy.<sup>(56)</sup>

The Festival encourages its 53,000 attendees to travel to Newquay by public transport or coach (23 pick up locations across the UK!)

They also encourage the use car sharing options like Go Car Share.

ALL cars must pay a fee of £20 which is donated to the Festival's charity partner Stand for Trees.

There is also a car park re-entry charge for those attendees leaving and returning to the site during the festival weekend.

This positive action encourages use of the shuttle bus service and (ideally!) deters car use during the festival. However, with all proceeds going into the Boardmasters Foundation, their charities ultimately see the benefits.

<sup>(55)</sup> Ecolibrium; <https://ecolibrium.earth/>

<sup>(56)</sup> Boardmasters Festival; <https://www.boardmasterscommunity.com/sustainability>

# SOCIAL IMPACT

## MUSIC AND SOCIETY, SOCIETY AND MUSIC.

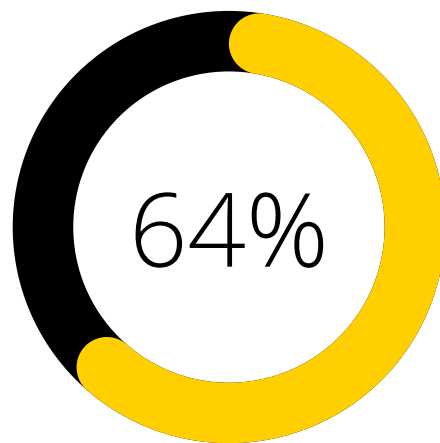
Both are synonymous with each other - we all know the importance of music in communities, and vice versa.

But there can be some disconnect between the societal benefits of music festivals when there's a group of strangers, caked in mud, karaoke-ing at the top of their voices at 2 am... Or at least, that's what some people would say!

### Music festivals and communities

Overall, music festivals are beacons of good when it comes to donating to charity and supporting the local community.

Our research found that almost **two thirds of festivals** have charity partnerships, are donating directly to local and global causes, or have their own charitable foundations established to **directly support communities**.



Festivals support charities



**FESTIVALS ARE THE PERFECT PLACE TO TRIAL INNOVATIVE, FORWARD THINKING SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES WHICH HAVE REAL WORLD IMPACTS.**

**CREATIVITY STEMS FROM THE RELAXED ATMOSPHERE CULTIVATED AT FESTIVALS WHICH GIVES US THE PERFECT OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE THE LEAD IN EMBEDDING SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY INTO SOCIETY**

**ANDY FRYERS, SUSTAINABILITY DIRECTOR HAY FESTIVAL**



**HAY  
FESTIVAL**

Of the charities music festivals are donating tens of thousands of pounds to each year, there is a HUGE mix.

### Climate change charities

- Devafest donate money from their shuttle buses directly to local tree planting charity Mersey Forest (57)
- End of the Road Festival support the Trees for Life initiative (58)

### Local initiatives

- Generous Kendal Calling festival go-ers have raised upwards of £200,000 for various charities over its 15 year history, including Alder Hey Children's Charity and Hospice at Home (59)
- Wilderness festival go-ers support the Oxford Food Hub helping to feed communities and protect the environment (60)

### Access to opportunities

- Fire in the Mountain support low income households with pay forward ticket options for their audience which encourages accessibility for all (61)

### Social Justice

- Bloodstock festival champions its core values of community, inclusivity and acceptance, and works closely with the Sophie Lancaster Foundation to encourage tolerance (62)
- The WOMAD Foundation enables local charity groups to deliver tangible action to those in need, across a range of causes (63)



(57) Devafest Festival: <https://devafest.co.uk/find-us/>

(58) End of the Road: <https://endoftheroadfestival.com/information/environmental-initiatives/>

(59) Kendal Calling: <https://www.kendalcalling.co.uk/information/charity>

(60) Wilderness Festival: <https://www.wildernessfestival.com/programme/oxford-food-bank/>

(61) Fire in the Mountain: <http://www.fireinthemountain.co.uk/event-info#tickets>

(62) Bloodstock Festival: <https://www.bloodstock.uk.com/events/boa-2017/stages/sophie-lancaster-stage>

(63) WOMAD Festival: <https://womadfoundation.org/>

## ELDERFLOWER FIELDS FESTIVAL

The logo for Elderflower Fields Festival features the words "Elderflower Fields" in a white, cursive script font, with "THE FAMILY FESTIVAL" in a smaller, white, sans-serif font below it, all set against a green rectangular background.

Elderflower festival has gone above and beyond to support its local community.(64)

They work alongside the University of Brighton's Green Growth Platform to support students to undertake environmental assessments on the festival for their dissertation.

This provides opportunities for young people to learn more about sustainability in the industry.

## GREEN GATHERING

The logo for Green Gathering consists of the words "GREEN" and "GATHERING" in a bold, green, sans-serif font, with a stylized green sun icon featuring a face in the center between the two words.

In 2022, Green Gathering will launch a 'Not Just Net Zero' campaign to raise awareness that carbon counting and offsetting isn't sufficient to mitigate climate change.(65)

The Festival is determined to demonstrate its commitment to the environment and inspire their audience about getting involved in the climate conversation.

(64) Elderflower Fields Festival: <https://south.elderflowerfields.co.uk/sustainability/>

(65) Green Gathering: <http://www.greengathering.org.uk/howgreen/>

# MUSIC FESTIVALS AND REPRESENTATION.

First up, what do we mean by representation?

Well, for betternotstop, representation is how various aspects of society are presented to an audience.

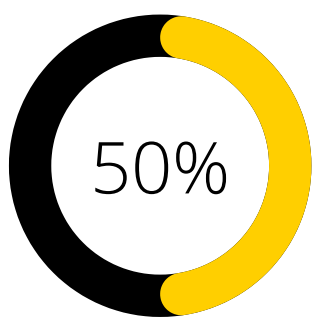
This includes gender, age, ethnicity, and sexuality, and many other characteristics. We have explored several elements of representation in this report, although it is important to note that we were not able to cover them all.

We also need to remember that this includes fair pay for everyone involved in the event.

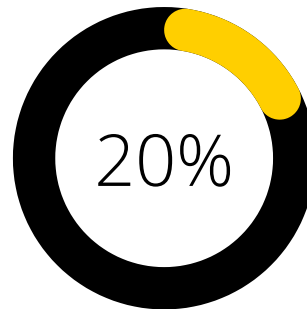
## WOMEN IN MUSIC

Almost half of all music degree students in the UK are female, but women represent only 20 % of musicians signed to record labels and 15% of music festival headliners.(66)

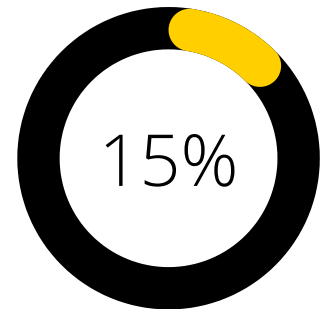
Some music festivals have faced public backlash spearheaded by organisations like female:pressure and social media accounts like @lineupswithoutmales, and are consequently taking actions to improve female representation.(67)



UK music degree students are female



Musicians signed to record labels



Female music festival headliners

(66) BBC: Directory of female musicians could end gender imbalance at festivals; Mark Savage; November 2020; <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-55044539>

(67) The Guardian; 'It's a statement of exclusion': music festivals return to UK but lineups still lack women: March 2021; <https://tinyurl.com/4jppwj2k>



Initiatives like Key Change - a global network made up of partners from 12 different countries - is striving to achieve gender equality throughout the music industry.

The programme which launched in 2017 works with the music industry to help implement tangible change to promote gender balance.

They have over 560 signatories of industry organisations committed to achieving 50:50 representation in all areas of their operations, including festival lineups.

To understand this topic further, we spoke to Key Change directly. They said:

- “What gets measured gets done” - basically, music festivals need to publicly commit to creating a gender balanced line up because only then will positive actions happen. By signing the Key Change pledge, they will be accountable to the public and to Key Change for ensuring their lineup is equal, but more importantly, they will be supported to create the change
- Set realistic goals for your music festival line up - radical change would be great, but it takes time to build up to 50:50 representation. Set stretch goals to achieve your representation targets.
- Targets at every level - make sure you aren't just focusing on one part of your line up; representation on smaller stages is just as important as the main stage!



50:50 gender representation

Music festivals need to consider the gender representation of their organising team.

A recent report by The Annenberg Inclusion Initiative showed that of the 4,060 music executives surveyed, women made up 35.3 percent of C-suite executives. (69)

This paralleled with almost 50 % of women making up the UK industry workforce means that there is a huge disconnect between women staying in the music industry long enough to have senior roles in industry.

It's essential music festivals live their intentions by supporting gender equality throughout their operations - think of a Brighton Stick of Rock, if you slice the music festival organisation through the middle, it must be representative, across all areas.

## STANDON CALLING

# STANDON CALLING

In 2022, Standon Calling became the first UK music festival to achieve a 50-50 gender split in their line up.

After signing the Key Change pledge in 2018, the team has worked with a range of promoters, agents, artists and many more to ensure fair representation across their festival.(70)

Alex Trenchard, Festival Organiser noted that the festival has:

"4000 under-13s at Standon Calling and it's important to us... that girls and young women can see themselves through other women represented on stage."(70)

(69) The Annenberg Institute; Inclusion in the Music Business; 2021; <https://tinyurl.com/3yc94mx4>  
(70) Here's How Standon Calling Became The First Major UK Festival To Achieve A 50/50 Gender Split The Clash; March 2022; <https://tinyurl.com/yd4bskhv>



## ETHNICITY AND MUSIC.

Diversity of talent, style and experience is key to the success of music in the UK. There are numerous talented individuals, bands, crew members, representing a host of communities, working in the industry.

However, racism and discrimination exists at all levels within the UK music festival sector.

UK Music published a Workforce Diversity Survey report in 2020 which concluded that (71):

- Just 6.4 % of people in top music industry jobs identify as Black or Black British
- Less than one in twenty identify as Asian or Asian British

Reasons for this underrepresentation in the industry are highly nuanced, but does include a lack of access to opportunities, hard-to-access funding, inadequate recognition for under-represented talent, dedicated space for talent to develop, and creatives being pigeon holed into certain roles.

Organisations like Black Lives in Music and the Black Music Coalition are working alongside music industry organisations to help groups take positive action to increase ethnic representation across all fields.(72)(73)

### KING'S JAM FESTIVAL



Gloucestershire-based King's Jam Festival is dedicated to supporting music of black origin and culture.(74)

They are leaders of change in their local community by championing local and national talent and providing a platform and ultimately increasing representation and diversity.

(71) UK Music: Workforce Diversity Survey; 2020; <https://tinyurl.com/2tkcdxr6>

(72) Black Lives in Music; <https://blim.org.uk/>

(73) Black Music Coalition; <https://www.blackmusiccoalition.co.uk/>

(74) King's Jam Festival; <https://www.kingsjamfestival.com/>

## ACCESS FOR ALL.

Building access opportunities for an inclusive audience experience is key for the continued success of music festivals.

According to government statistics, 3.6 million disabled people attend a live music event each year.(75)

Steps music festivals are taking to support access for everybody include:

- Appropriate provision of toilet facilities on site
- Dedicated car park access
- Have designated viewing areas for easier access
- Ensure there is a dedicated team to support individuals on site
- Early and inclusive planning to ensure access requirements are considered and met
- Support for individuals affected by lighting e.g. strobe, lasers
- Dedicated quiet zones for those affected by excessive noise

## ATTITUDE IS EVERYTHING



Attitude is Everything improves Deaf and disabled people's access to live music by working in partnership with audiences, artists and the music industry.(76)

## CAMP BESTIVAL



The Festival provides a range of initiatives to support the inclusion of people requiring additional support, including an accessible campsite and dedicated sensory zones.(77)

(75) FestivalPro: Access For All At Music Festivals; Andy Robertson; <https://tinyurl.com/2p8jrdat>

(76) Attitude is Everything: <http://www.attitudeiseverything.org.uk/>

(77) Camp Bestival: <https://tinyurl.com/8zzmcsar>



# KENDAL CALLING

## SUSTAINABLE IMPACT POLICY

Located in the Lake District National Park, the summer festival welcomes 30,000 Kendal Callers to the Lowther Deer Park every year.

With over 250 artists spread across 13 stages, the festival site is home to a medley of wildlife, farm animals, people, insects, plants and wild flowers.

Kendal Calling's mission is to minimise the environmental impact of the festival whilst amplifying initiatives which create positive social impact before, during and after the festival.



### LEAVE NOTHING BUT MEMORIES CAMPAIGN

- 2022 is the launch of Kendal Calling's Leave Nothing But Memories litter campaign! The Team are focusing on reducing litter over the weekend and inspiring festival goers to act responsibly and leave no trace
- There is a Clean Up Hour - 10:00 to 11:00 every day - as part of the festival line up which will help and encourage festival goers to tidy their campsites
- In 2015, Kendal Calling co-founded carbon offsetting charity Ecolibrium and continue to donate 100% of all carbon-balancing donations made through the ticket buying process which is invested in projects that create clean, renewable energy
- The festival only uses reusable cups! Bottled water is also not sold anywhere on site - instead aluminium cans or cardboard containers are used (United Utilities have also donated 10,000 reusable water bottles)
- We have a site-wide policy to help reduce overnight energy usage - all the shops and bars will turn off their lights and equipment overnight (apart from things that need constant power, like fridges) and record how much energy they have saved
- The Festival is a proud signatory of the Key Change Pledge and is working closely with equal representation charity Brighter Sound to achieve 50:50 gender representation
- Food and drinks outlets have signed up to the Kendal Calling Traders' Pledge - a commitment to the Festival's sustainability initiatives across the site
- Every artist is asked to sign the Kendal Calling Artist Pledge to demonstrate a commitment to reducing their environmental footprint throughout the festival



# HOW TO TAKE ACTION!

## THERE IS A LOT TO TAKE IN!

Boy that was a lot to take in right?! As you can see, there is so much to be optimistic about in terms of environmental sustainability and social impact of UK music festivals.

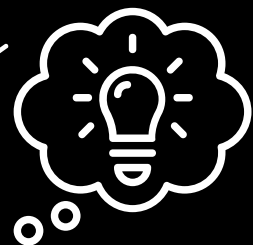
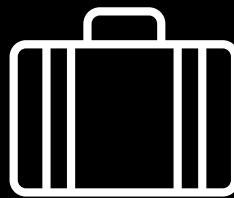
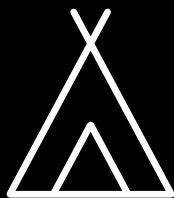
Consumers have made it clear they are expecting festival organisers and the supply chain to take responsible, ethical decisions which limit the overall environmental impact and further societal change.

And rightly so, music festival organisers are responding to this by implementing a range of initiatives designed to achieve these goals.

So whether you are an experienced festival organiser or a waist-deep in mud festival go-er, what actions can you take to improve sustainability and impact at UK music festivals?

## FIVE THINGS FESTIVAL GOERS CAN DO

- **Take your tent home!**
- **Consider your travel**
- **Use resources consciously**
- **Ask festivals how they're contributing - send emails, tweets, DMs - your voice is powerful!**
- **Make responsible decisions before, during and after festivals**



# HOW TO TAKE ACTION!

## MUSIC FESTIVAL ORGANISERS

### **Step 1: Work with a sustainability impact agency!\***

We are here to help you work out exactly what is important to you and your festival - from reducing campsite litter to increasing your charitable impact - so you have a clear action plan for how to achieve your goals. Impact agencies will help you baseline your current efforts; devise innovative new strategies; and coordinate key stakeholders.

### **Step 2: Plan your goals**

You've taken the time to really consider what actions you can take to make your festival the best it can be, but now comes the hard part of actually putting words into practice. Be thorough and work to incorporate your initiatives into the early planning stages. Your colleagues and supply chain will find it easier to adopt your initiatives if they are given time to work them into their own plans for the year.

### **Step 3: Commit to your policy!**

Making a difference requires dedication. Once you've picked your key policies to focus on, embed them into all your activities. For example, if a policy is to eliminate single use plastic bottles then you need to ensure that's the case across site - artists, site crew, suppliers, and traders must use aluminium cans, cardboard cartons or their own bottles for water, it can't just be the festival go-ers who eliminate plastic. Consistency and commitment is key.

### **Step 4: Communicate your impacts**

Great! You have created your sustainability impact policy! But no one knows about it, not even your own team. Getting your stakeholders on board is essential; consider how you communicate your policy differently to your audience versus your Board of Directors, as they'll likely be motivated by different things.

And don't forget to capitalise on your assets! This could be an active audience or beautiful surroundings; whatever it is, make sure you use it in your impact campaign.

### **Step 5: Collaborate**

Organisations like Ecolibrium, Powerful Thinking, Black Lives in Music and initiatives like Key Change, Drastic on Plastic, and Vision 2025 are invaluable in terms of information sharing. Only together can we drive positive change in the industry.

**\*(Shameless self promotion but honestly, we really can help!)**

# WANT SUPPORT? GET IN TOUCH



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**FOUNDER  
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**SOPHIE ZIENKIEWICZ**

**EVENT IMPACT OFFICER  
SOPHIE@BETTERNOTSTOP.COM**

# USEFUL LINKS

Because we want everyone to be in a position where they can make positive changes to their festival experience whatever their involvement, we have highlighted a few key resources you might find interesting. Our goal is for festivals to be more sustainable and these resources may help you with that.

## SUSTAINABILITY TOOLS

Betternotstop Festival Guidelines  
<http://www.betternotstop.com/festivals>

Vision2025  
<https://www.vision2025.org.uk>

Julie's Bicycle Environmental Policy and Action Plan Guidelines:  
<http://www.betternotstop.com/resources/environmental-policy-guidelines>

General Tips for 'Greening' your Festival:  
Visit Betternotstops Youtube Channel 'betternotstop'

ISO 20121 Sustainable Event Management (certification): <http://www.bsigroup.com/en-GB/iso-20121-sustainable-events-management/>

A Greener Festival Awards: [www.agreenerfestival.com](http://www.agreenerfestival.com)

## FOOD

Sustain Good Food for Festivals Guide:  
<http://www.sustainweb.org/publications/?id=243>

## ENERGY

Powerful Thinking Supplier Guide: <http://www.powerful-thinking.org.uk/resources/suppliers/>

Powerful Thinking Festival Fuel Tool: <http://www.powerful-thinking.org.uk/resources/fuel-tool/>

Powerful Thinking Fact Sheets: <http://www.powerful-thinking.org.uk/resources/fact-sheets/>

Energy Saving Trust Recommended Products: <http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/Take-action/Find-Energy-Saving-Trust-Recommended-products>

Carbon Trust Technology and Energy Management Publications:  
<http://www.carbontrust.com/resources/guides/energy-efficiency/technology-and-energy-management-publications>

White Light Green Guide Advice on low-carbon lighting design and technology:  
<http://www.whitelight.ltd.uk/greenguide>

# USEFUL LINKS

## RESOURCES AND SUPPLIERS

Julie's Bicycle Green Supplier Database:  
<http://www.juliesbicycle.com/resources/jb-green-database/suppliers>

WRAP Resource Management Plan (RMP) Tool:  
<http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/sustainable-event-management>

## TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT

Ecolibrium: <https://ecolibrium.earth/>

## SOCIETY

Friday Figures: <https://www.keychange.eu/about-us/news-feed-articles/category/Stats>

Your Guide to Music and the SDGs: <https://www.keychange.eu/about-us/news-feed-articles/friday-figures-16-jul>

Women in Control: <https://www.womeninctrl.com/seatatthetable/>

Live DMA: <https://www.live-dma.eu/resource-platform/>  
<https://www.rollingstone.com/culture-council/articles/leaders-address-gender-inequality-music-industry-1252067/>  
<https://assets.uscannenberg.org/docs/aii-inclusion-music-industry-2021-06-14.pdf>  
<https://sosmusicmedia.com/music-that-matters/female-representation-in-the-music-industry-matters-too>



# DEFINITIONS

## TYPES OF MUSIC FESTIVALS

Micro multi-day greenfield music festival < 5,000 capacity  
Small multi-day greenfield music festival 5,000-10,000 capacity  
Medium multi-day greenfield music festival 10,000 – 30,000 capacity  
Large multi-day greenfield music festival 30,000+ capacity  
Urban large-scale metropolitan / park festival (non-camping)  
Urban Multi venue festival  
Outdoor concert series (22)

## SUSTAINABILITY

Taking conscious and proactive actions that do not harm people, the planet, or profit and have a positive impact on your operations.

## SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT POLICY

A series of commitments that a festival has taken to make its practices and processes more sustainable, with a positive social and environmental impact. It is often made public and has metrics associated with the actions, to monitor progress.

*betternotstop definition:* If there is a section on the festival's website / social media which includes more than three sustainability actions, then we have concluded the festival has a sustainability / impact policy. Some policies are more comprehensive than others. Only publicly available policies have been reviewed.

## CHARITY DONATIONS

*betternotstop definition:* If a festival has donated money from a portion of ticket sales, bulk donations, via their own Charitable Foundation etc.. This was taken from dedicated sections on festival websites or relevant news articles.

## CARBON OFFSETTING MEASURES

A music festival has taken action to offset its carbon footprint by donating to an offsetting charity, e.g. Ecolibrium, or has arranged in-house measures to offset, e.g. planting trees on site.

# PROCESS

## STEP 1: CHOOSING WHO TO RESEARCH

There are an estimated 975 festivals in the UK, ranging from music festivals, large greenfield events and smaller local festivals. 80 % are micro, multi-day festivals; 8 % are small; and 8 % are medium sized music festivals.

We focused solely on music festivals (as described above) and a sample of 100 of those operating in the UK in 2022. We used the Association of Independent Festival's (AIF) online directory and the eFestivals website to identify our representative sample of the UK music festival industry.

These sites we considered reputable and unbiased meaning the sample of 100 festivals chosen represented an accurate cross section of UK music festivals.

N.b. We wanted to focus on shining a light on those festivals making great strides in sustainable impact, which will hopefully encourage those not currently giving it their all to make positive changes.

Our aim is not to shame individuals, but to encourage change via positive action.

## STEP 2: GATHER PUBLICLY AVAILABLE DATA

Online research was conducted to gather publicly available information about each of the 100 festivals. This included data about the size and type of festival, plus information about three main categories: their sustainability policy, charity donations, and carbon balancing measures.

We considered that if they are doing good stuff, they would be shouting about it - so if there was searchable evidence, we counted this in our data.

As well as gathering information directly from the music festivals themselves, we also analysed consumer trend and behaviour reports to better understand the behaviour and traits of your average festival-goer.

We realised that to make a compelling case for festivals to care more deeply about having a sustainable impact, we needed to ground it in relevant, more worldly data.

# PROCESS

## STEP 3: ANALYSE THE DATA

We analysed the data we gathered from each music festival across three categories:

- Social Impact (charitable giving; access opportunities etc.)
- Environmental and social impact (sustainability / impact policies)
  - Pre, during and post event actions music festivals are taking to amplify their environmental and social impact
- Government Legislation (carbon offsetting)
  - The UK Net Zero strategy sets out policies and proposals for decarbonising all sectors of the UK economy to meet our net zero target by 2050.

If a music festival had publicly available information about their sustainability and impact actions i.e. a page on their website or social media posts detailing their policies etc. further analysis was done. More detailed research gave us an indication about the specifics of the areas the music festival was focusing on.

## STEP 4: SUPPLEMENT WITH INDUSTRY INSIDER DATA

To add further validity to the publicly available data, specialist organisations were asked to contribute their expertise to the report. They provided reports, statistics, anecdotal experience and much more to help give colour to the research and build a better picture of the UK music festival industry. Their input is either directly in the report, or as case studies.

## STEP 5: DRAW CONCLUSIONS

Once all our high quality data had been gathered, our conclusions were drawn about sustainability in the UK music festival sector. This report is the result of that.

### IMPORTANT:

Our research was based on publicly available information. There may be great initiatives that festivals are taking which haven't been included in their policies, so if that's the case, we apologise for missing them. All the data is accurate to the best of our abilities, given what was available at the time (March 2022).