

# Festival trends in Northern Ireland

June 2023



# Introduction

- We conducted some desk research into emerging trends in how people are attending festivals and found some interesting results.
- We pulled some data from Tableau about 5 Northern Ireland based festivals to get a more detailed snapshot of trends closer to home.

# Desk research findings

# Cost of living and inflation

- Rising cost of living is impacting audience behaviour in terms of booking/attending.
- Last-minute booking: This trend began in the pandemic, but is ongoing– 40% report that they are still booking more last-minute than they used to according to the [Cultural Participation Monitor report from The Audience Agency](#)
- Those least affected by the cost-of-living crisis are most likely to prebook.
- 60% reported that the cost-of-living crisis deters them from attending. 50% reported still attending fewer events than pre-pandemic.



# How can inflation impact festival planning

- Rapidly rising rates of inflation can affect overhead costs and supplier/contractor service costs.
- [FestivalPro](#) advise that costs can rise between time of booking and the event itself – organisers should take a proactive approach to negotiating with third-parties when setting contract terms.
- Organisers are advised to consider inflation/cost of living when pricing/releasing tickets.
- Release too early/lower price – risk losing revenue due to inflation.
- Release too late/higher prices – can affect sales.



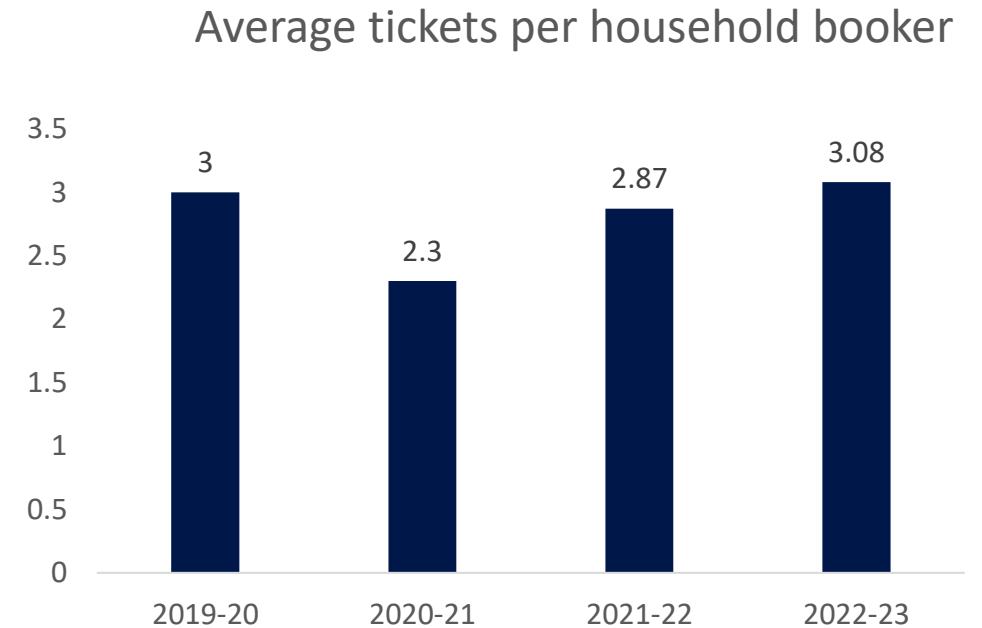
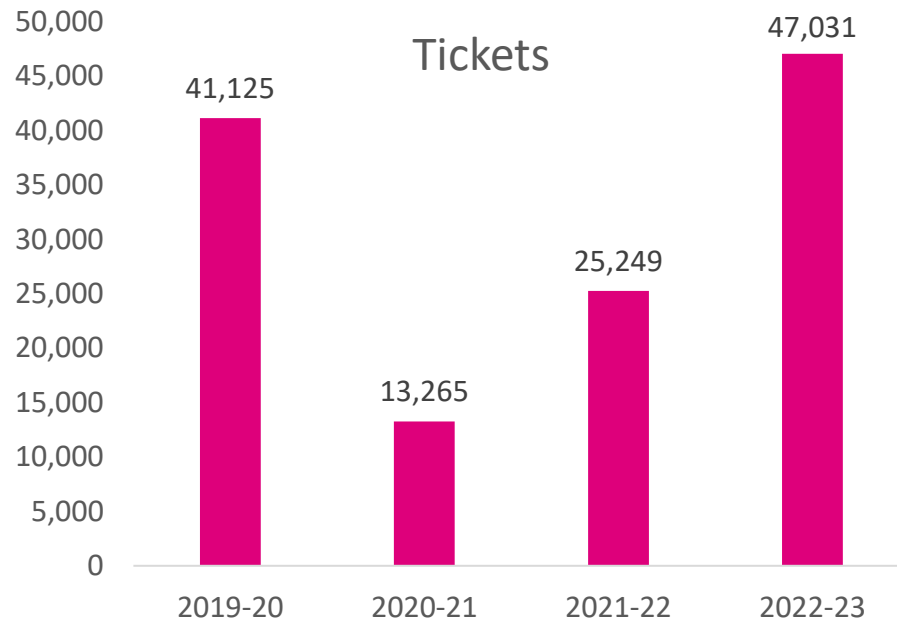
# Northern Ireland festival data from Tableau

# We looked at ticketing data in Northern Ireland

- Data pulled by financial year (1<sup>st</sup> April – 31<sup>st</sup> March)
- Organisations included:
  - Cathedral Quarter Arts Festival
  - Out to Lunch Festival
  - EastSide Arts Festival
  - Open House Festival
  - Belfast Children's Festival

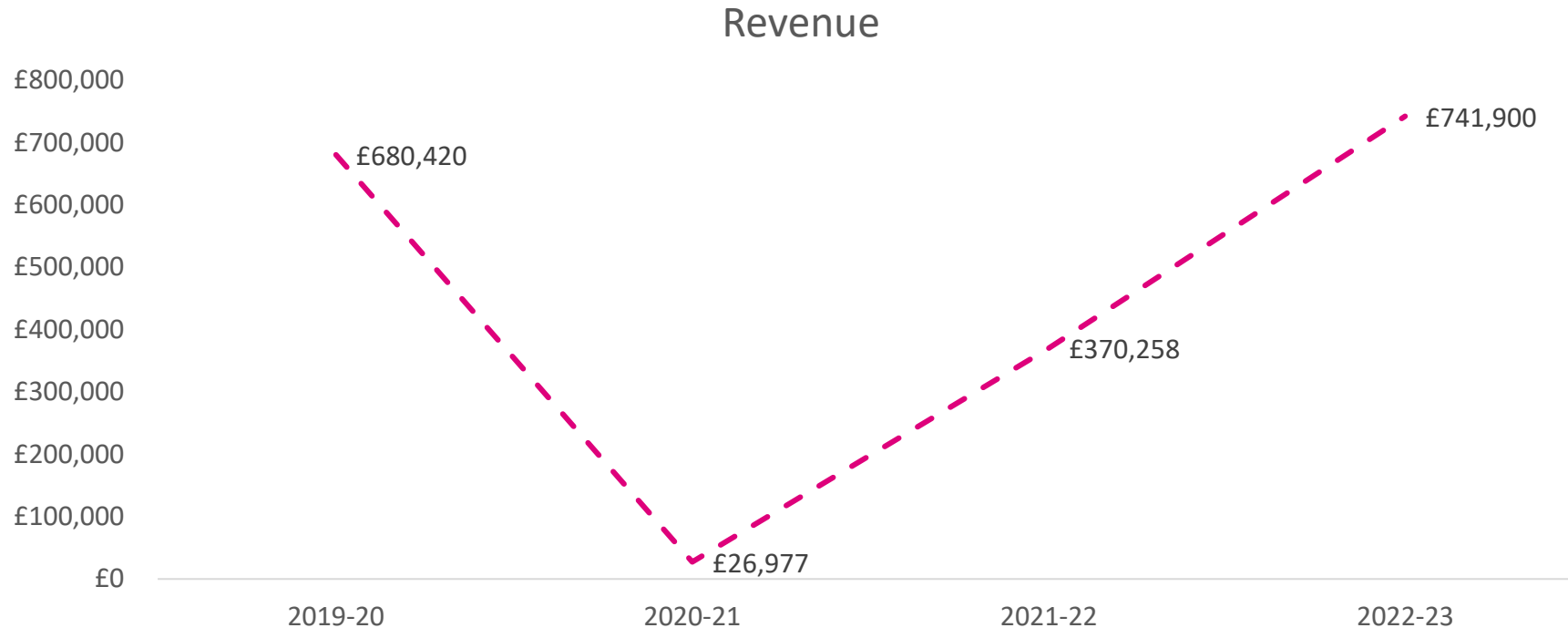


# The demand is there



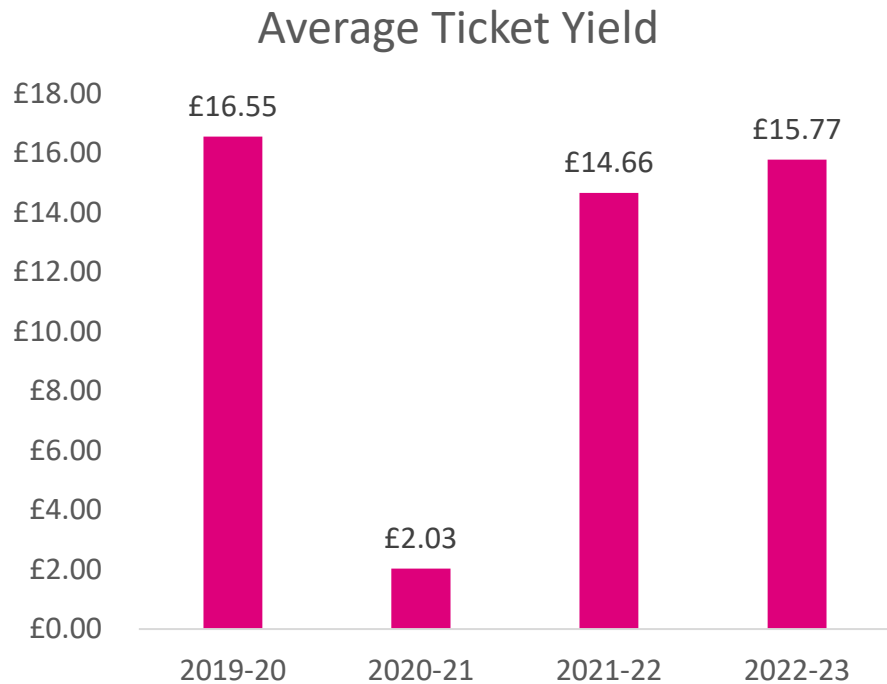
- Demand for festivals is back – 47k tickets were sold in the last financial year, which is higher than pre-pandemic.
- People are also booking more tickets per booker (3.08 vs. 3 pre-pandemic).

# Revenue is going up



- In the last financial year, festivals made £741k in revenue, which is 60k higher than pre-pandemic.
- We did further research, and according to a [Mintel](#) report, UK music concerts and festival incomes are set to surpass pre-Covid levels in 2023.

# Ticket yield is down

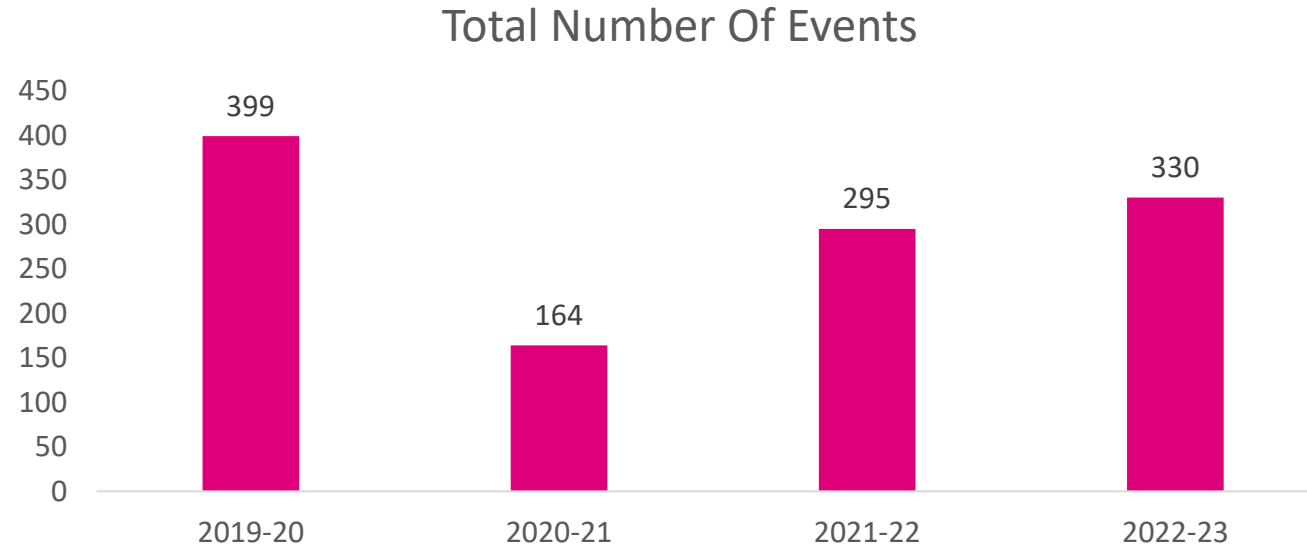


Difference between 2019-20 to 2022-23

Increase in tickets sold	Increase in revenue
14%	9%

- Ticket yield = revenue / tickets sold.
- Ticket yield dropped significantly during the first year of Covid, possibly due to the higher number of free/online events.
- Ticket yield has not returned to pre-Covid levels – there's been a 14% increase in tickets sold but only a 9% increase in revenue.
- More people are attending, but they are paying less than they used to.

# Supply is down



- As expected, the number of events fell from pre-Covid to 2020-21 with the implementation of lockdown measures.
- While they've been increasing since then, the overall number of events is still lower than pre-pandemic.

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