



# EVENTS CAN **WIN** FOR BRITAIN

A Manifesto  
for Meetings  
and Events  
in Britain

Business Visits & Events Partnership



CONNECTING BRITAIN'S EVENTS INDUSTRY

# WINNING FOR BRITAIN

The meetings and events industry contributes to exports, inward investment, infrastructure development, cultural appreciation, civic and national pride and community cohesion, to the shaping of destination identity, creative enterprise, innovation, knowledge transfer, professional development and tourism.


It does all of this and much more through the rich diversity of events held in Britain, including meetings and conferences, exhibitions and trade fairs, outdoor events, incentive travel, corporate hospitality, cultural and sporting events and festivals. Through the skills of Britain's event organising companies and the provision of some of

the best purpose-built and iconic historic and cultural heritage venues, Britain plays host to high profile world events -from major industrial, political, commercial, medical, scientific and educational conferences and trade exhibitions to leading edge motivational, cultural, sporting and music festivals.

The Business Visits & Events Partnership brings together the leading industry organisations to identify the benefits of business and leisure events, to encourage best practice, and to stimulate favourable policies and new initiatives that will develop the sector's potential in a highly competitive global market place.

This Manifesto outlines the policies that will help Britain achieve a more competitive, more profitable and higher quality world position. Successful implementation of these policies will enable Britain to attract more events and facilitate the growth of the events sector to ensure it fulfils its essential role as a major economic and social contributor to the economy and the community.

Michael Hirst OBE  
Chairman  
Business Visits & Events Partnership



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## 10 Reasons Why Meetings & Events Are Important to Britain

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- 1** Britain's Events industry is worth over **£39 billion** to the economy through direct visitor spend, accounting for **35%** of the UK visitor economy.
- 2** The spend by those accompanying attendees at business events is worth **£7.7 billion**.
- 3** Conference, meetings, incentive travel and exhibitions contribute over **£21 billion** to government tax revenues when taking into account the overall value of these sectors to GDP.
- 4** The events sector is served by **25,000 businesses**, mainly small and medium-sized enterprises, which provide valuable support services, including hotels, attractions, transport companies, florists, caterers, retailers and local traders. Amongst these are world-class event businesses which generate significant revenues outside of Britain.
- 5** The Sector employs over **530,000 people** and can increase employment numbers rapidly as the number of events expands without the need for government subsidy. The Sector provides skilled employment to a diverse workforce. It offers engaging careers for young and old, male and female, skilled and less skilled across all cultures. It maximises a wide range of creative, technical and personal talents to produce inspirational events. It is a sector with massive potential for growth and employment for future generations.
- 6** There are around **1.25 million** meetings held in Britain each year. UK exhibitions attract over **13 million visitors** each year generating **£11 billion** in spend, boosting trade and exports through over **£100 billion** of goods sold at exhibitions and trade shows. Yet none of this can be taken for granted in a highly competitive global market.
- 7** Inbound business visits to Britain equate to **23.5% of all visits** and at **£4.4 billion**, 24% of all overseas visitor spend.
- 8** Meetings & Events contribute to infrastructure development on a national, regional and local level from both the public and private sectors. Over **£1 billion** of new infrastructure development is being stimulated by events.
- 9** Meetings and events support and serve other wealth creating industries, with major customers in the automotive, pharmaceutical, manufacturing and educational sectors, as well as the public sector.
- 10** Events help develop diversity in our local culture and heritage providing opportunities for further destination expansion and growth. They have a positive social impact on society, contributing to health and wellbeing, education, social diversity, community spirit and civic pride.



## Events Can Help to Shape Britain's Future

*"World class events generate business opportunities and revenue and create a global showcase for UK expertise, capabilities and skills"*

Events are worth over **£39 billion** to Britain's economy.

Conferences and meetings, exhibitions and trade fairs, incentive travel programmes, outdoor events, corporate hospitality, festivals, sporting, cultural and music events spearhead the wellbeing of Britain's destinations.

They contribute significantly to Britain's tourism experience; to trade and export development; to creative enterprise; to the exchange of information and knowledge; to educational discovery; to greater social and cultural awareness; to community cohesion.

### The latest available data estimates that the individual segments of the events sector are worth:

- Exhibitions and trade shows - £11.0 billion
  - Conferences and meetings - £19.9 billion
  - Sports events - £2.3 billion
  - Music events - £1.3 billion
  - Incentive travel and performance improvement - £1.2 billion
  - Festivals and cultural events - £1.1 billion
  - Corporate hospitality - £1.2 billion
  - Outdoor events - £1.1 billion
- In addition:
- Trade transacted at exhibitions and other business events is conservatively estimated to be worth over £100 billion.
  - Accompanying attendees of business events are estimated to spend an additional £7.7 billion during their stay in Britain.

Total - £39.1 billion



*"A diverse range of annual festivals and promotional events showcase excellence in the creative industries and provide an iconic focus for the visitor economy."*

## Resilient and growing with even greater potential

The Sector is resilient and events provide real recreational and motivational opportunities for communities. Whilst the recession affected corporate and government business, association congresses and attendances at festivals, sporting, cultural and music events grew by up to 20% in the same period. Most recent data indicates that business tourism is on the increase again with an improvement in the number of business visits and business events, and fresh growth in sector recruitment.

## Events in Britain are big business and world leaders

- The sector generates 23.5% of all overseas visits and 24.4% of all inbound tourism earnings.
- International business visitors spend an average £611 per visit whilst leisure visitors spend £583 per visit.
- There are around 1.25 million external business meetings each year in the UK attracting 85.5 million delegates and generating 140 million business event days.
- The exhibitions sector generated £11 billion in spending and contributed £5.6 billion in value added to the UK economy in 2010, equivalent to 0.4 per cent of UK GDP. This activity supported 148,500 jobs, equivalent to total employment in the city of Milton Keynes and 0.5 per cent of total UK employment
- Music tourism generated a total of £2.2 billion of direct and indirect spend in 2012, sustaining 24,251 jobs. Overseas music tourists spent an average of £657 per visit in the UK.

The events sector has a great story to tell, but with the right government response, it can WIN for Britain!



# Our Manifesto Objectives

## To influence policies which can:

- Make Britain the natural destination choice and an international hub for all sectors of the events industry.
- Create wealth.
- Harness the creativity and talent pool to conceive and deliver the best events at home and abroad.
- Improve communities.

## 1. A role for Government working with the events sector

- Integrate the Events sector into the Creative Industries' Strategy.
- Support the showcasing of Britain as a leading global destination for business, cultural, leisure and sports events.
- Ensure better co-ordination of policies towards the Sector across Whitehall Departments, especially DCMS, Treasury, Trade and Transport.
- DCMS should chair a formal sub-committee with invited stakeholders from Home Office, BIS and Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).
- Government to engage proactively with the Business Visits & Events Partnership (BVEP) and the Britain for Events campaign as the central and fully representative voice of the UK events industry.



## 2. Increase Government involvement in the process of attracting events to Britain, especially in support of key industry sectors.

- Place the use of events as a central part of economic growth by encouraging more international events to come to Britain and encourage more British creative talent to be exported world-wide.
- Fully incorporate Events into the GREAT campaign.
- Procure letters of bid support from across Government Departments and greater involvement of ministers in the bid process.
- Involvement of Ministers in welcoming overseas organising committees and attendance at opening ceremonies.
- Provide subvention funding to Destination Marketing Organisations.

## 3. Empower and require local government to use events for the benefit of local community through:

- Requiring local authorities / destination marketing organisations to work closely with businesses and organisations concerned with the events industry to develop a region-specific approach to subvention, not limited to purely fiscal support but providing a long term and sustainable support for returning events business.
- Investment in event facilities and the adoption of events plans.
- Opening of public buildings for event use.
- Reviewing the feasibility and economic impact of giving local government powers to raise income for capital expenditure that demonstrates a net benefit return for the local community, with the support of the local community by democratic consent.
- Initiating a joint government-event industry communication programme aimed at local authorities to promote the benefits of the events sector for UK destinations, and its potential in regeneration, for example of inner city areas and seaside towns. This to include the provision of information and advice on subjects such as licensing and regulation, health and safety etc.



## 4. Better Regulation, applied consistently, without detriment to UK competitiveness

- Achieve consistency in the application of licensing and health and safety regulations across the UK.
- Continue to reform employment law to make it easier for the sector to employ people.
- Reform The Package Travel Regulations to remove from regulation B2B transactions with large corporate customers.
- Reform ATOL licensing to create a level playing field between tour operators and airlines and to exempt transactions between event management companies and large corporate customers.
- Encourage and support industry established best practice including The Purple Guide, and The eGuide.
- Work with the industry to achieve proportionate application of the CDM Regulations to events.

## 5. A competitive taxation regime on the global stage

- Increase the exemption for annual parties and other social functions.
- Re-introduce investment allowances to hotels, convention centres and event venues.
- Bring VAT levels on accommodation, conference and event services more in line with European levels.
- Reform the Tour Operators Margin Scheme to reintroduce a B2B opt-out option.
- Introduce allowances to businesses using events in Britain to grow inward investment and exports.
- Reduce Air Passenger Duty



## 6. Improve infrastructure and transport. Welcome events visitors

- Create a “Special Events Visa” to provide a more positive welcome to influential event parties travelling internationally and provide pre- approved business travellers and ‘event tourists’ with a more pleasant entry into the UK. This was authorised for the Commonwealth Games but should be extended to international trade shows, consumer and business-to-business events
- Identify and fix inadequate communication links between airports, the rail network and meetings and events venues
- Facilitate the creation of world class conference, exhibition and event facilities throughout Britain
- Urgently address the need for more air capacity for London.

## 7. Commit adequate resources to those organisations which sell Britain

- Accelerate marketing activities which sell Britain as a destination for meetings and events including VisitBritain, national and regional destination marketing bodies.
- Get key government departments (BERR, FCO, DCMS) and UKTI to work more closely with the event sector to expand events in Britain.
- Re-establish a role for VisitBritain in the marketing of business events in Britain.

## 8. Recognise the importance of training, education and research in the sector

- Back industry initiatives including:
  - The Institute of Event Management
  - Industry accredited qualifications
  - Apprenticeships
  - Further and higher education programmes in event management.
  - Fund research into the economic and social importance of events





## About the Business Visits & Events Partnership

The Business Visits & Events Partnership is an umbrella organisation representing leading trade and professional organisations, government agencies and other significant influencers in the business visits and events sector.

The BVEP exists to:

- garner the cohesive opinion of these stakeholders and collectively influence and develop policies, practices and strategies that support and generate growth in the sector and,
- raise sector awareness through clear communications of the social and economic benefits of the business visits and events sector.

The Partnership seeks to provide a cohesive point of view for the entire business visits and events sector. The BVEP works with prominent sector leaders including its partners, government departments and agencies to influence and develop policies and practices favourable to the growth of business events, and trade and creative enterprise through business visits and events.

It has the support of the leading trade and professional organisations and government agencies with a shared interest in the economic benefit and growth of conferences, meetings, exhibitions, trade fairs, incentive travel, corporate hospitality, ceremonies, as well as other business, sporting, cultural and festival events.

### Members:

- Association for Conferences and Events
- Association of British Professional Conference Organisers
- Association for Events Management Education
- Conference Centres of Excellence
- EVCOM (The Event and Visual Communication Association)
- Events Industry Alliance
- Events Industry Forum
- HBAA (Hotel Booking Agents Association)
- International Congress & Convention Association
- International Special Events Society
- Local Authorities Events Organisers Group
- London & Partners
- Meet in Ireland
- Meetings Industry Association
- Meetings Professionals Association
- National Outdoor Events Association
- Northern Ireland Tourist Board
- Production Services Association
- Professional Convention Management Association
- VisitEngland
- VisitScotland
- Visit Wales

- Supporting Government bodies:
- Department for Culture, Media & Sport
  - UK Trade & Investment
  - VisitBritain

Information in this document was primarily sourced from the Britain for Events Report 2014

[www.businessvisitsandeventspartnership.com](http://www.businessvisitsandeventspartnership.com)

For further information please contact;

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Thank you for reading the Events Manifesto and supporting the UK Events Industry.

Venuefinder.com is a proud sponsor of the Britain for Events campaign and the work of the Business Visits & Events Partnership and, as the UK's market leading venue sourcing web site, we feel that we have a responsibility to support this important initiative. We believe that initiatives such as this significantly benefit the growth of the UK events industry and as a result the UK economy.

At venuefinder.com we feel that government has a key role to play in aiding the UK Events Industry by freeing up red tape, making it easier to organise events and facilitate entry into the UK for international visitors and exhibitors, through new VAT legislation and Visa controls.

We would hope all political parties will back the manifesto and publicly acknowledge the benefits to UK plc and promote the advantages of hosting an event in the UK.

Kind regards

*Kate*

Kate Hewitt  
Director - venuefinder.com

*If you are looking for a venue at home or abroad, venuefinder.com has over 15,000 venues listed.*



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Business Visits & Events Partnership



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BLUE & GREEN

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