



A survey of live music in England and Wales in 2007

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Summary

The findings show that there has been a five percentage point decrease in the provision of live music in secondary live music venues in England and Wales since the baseline survey was conducted in 2004 (from 47 per cent in 2004 to 42 per cent in 2007). The decrease is largely explained by a decrease in the proportion of restaurants and cafes and church halls and community centres staging live music. In other types of venue provision appears to have been broadly stable, with the exception of small clubs where it increased.

The Licensing Act does not appear to have been a major factor in decisions relating to whether or not venues provided live music with very few of these venues cited the Act as a factor in these decisions. Decisions on the staging of live music are driven primarily by commercial and practical considerations such as customer demand, and venue suitability. A large majority (74 per cent) of venues felt that the Licensing Act had no overall impact on the staging of live music in their venue.

Two thirds of all venues said that their premises licence permitted them to stage live music, while four in ten venues not regularly staging live music said they would consider doing so in the future. That equates to more than a fifth of all venues in the survey, suggesting the possibility of substantial future growth in the proportion of venues staging live music.

Changes in live music provision

The 2007 survey findings show that there has been a five percentage point decrease in the provision of live music in 'secondary' live music venues (venues where staging live music is not the main business) in England and Wales since the baseline survey was conducted in 2004. The proportion of venues that had staged live music in the 12 months prior to interview fell from 47 per cent in 2004 to 42 per cent in 2007.

Among venues that had staged live music, the mean number of events staged was 22 in 2007, compared with 25 in 2004. Including venues that had put on no live music in the previous 12 months, the mean number of live music events staged in the previous 12 months fell from 12 in 2004 to nine in 2007.

This decrease in the provision of live music was reflected in a decrease in the proportion of venues that had staged live music regularly¹: 15 per cent of venues in the 2007 survey had staged live music regularly, compared with 19 per cent in 2004.

While there has been a decrease in the provision of live music since 2004, this is largely explained by the decrease in provision in restaurants and cafes and in church halls and community centres, which between them account for just under 40 per cent of all venues in the survey population.

Among the restaurants and cafes the proportion of venues that had staged live music in the 12 months prior to interview fell from 28 per cent in 2004 to 16 per cent in 2007; among church halls and community centres, the equivalent proportion fell from 68 per cent in 2004 to 44 per cent in 2007.

If restaurants and cafes and church halls and community centres are excluded from the base of venues, the proportion of secondary live music venues putting on live music in the previous 12 months is in line with that recorded in 2004 (49 per cent in 2007 and 48 per cent in 2004), as is the mean number of live music events staged across all venues (12 in 2007 and 13 in 2004).

In other types of venue, provision has been broadly stable, with the exception of small clubs, where provision has increased since 2004. Fifty-seven per cent of small clubs in the 2007 survey had staged live music in the

¹ Defined for the purposes of this survey as staging at least six live music events in the previous three months.

12 months prior to interview, compared with 42 per cent in 2004, while the mean number of events staged by small clubs increased from ten in 2004 to 14 in 2007.

Impact of the Licensing Act

The Licensing Act does not appear to have been a major factor in decisions relating to whether or not secondary live music venues provide live music. This is best illustrated by the fact that only a small proportion of venues have started or stopped providing live music since the introduction of the Act and that very few of these venues cited the Act as a factor in their decisions to start or stop live music.

Decisions on the staging of live music are driven primarily by commercial considerations, such as customer demand, cost-efficiency and fit with the nature of the business, as well as by practical considerations, in particular the suitability of the venue for staging live music. The most common reasons for staging or not staging live music remained largely unchanged since 2004.

Most secondary live music venues (72 per cent) felt the Act had made no difference to the ease of staging live music. Nine per cent felt the Act had made it easier for live music to be staged while the same proportion felt the Act had made it more difficult to stage live music.

The large majority (74 per cent) of venues felt that the Licensing Act had had no overall impact on the staging of live music in their

venue, while 12 per cent thought that it had had a positive impact and nine per cent that it had had a negative impact.

The future of live music

Two thirds of all secondary live music venues (64 per cent) said that their premises licence permitted them to stage live music. Half of the venues (50 per cent) that had not staged live music in the previous 12 months said that their current licence *did* permit them to stage live music.

Four in ten venues not regularly staging live music said they would consider doing so in the future (39 per cent). That equates to more than a fifth (22 per cent) of all venues in the survey, suggesting the possibility of substantial future growth in the proportion of venues staging live music.

For further information about the research methods and data analysis in this study please contact Simon Matty at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

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For the full report and any associated technical information please visit our website:

<http://www.culture.gov.uk>

