

2025 Festival: Headline Audience Report

The 2025 festival attracted a record number of visitors: a 10% increase from 2024:

44,000+ visitors, **300+** artists and makers, **52** workshops, **31** performances, **6** exhibitions, **6** artist talks, **5** markets and more over **one weekend**.

National and Regional Media Profile:

9 national, **22** regional, **7** trade and specialist, **8** local and **3** broadcast pieces, reaching an audience of **541,907,534**.

“For those curious about what happens when artists roll up their sleeves and step into the engine rooms of British industry, it’s not one to miss.”

– Creative Boom

“One town is celebrating our production prowess”

– BBC Radio 4 World at One

“National Festival of Making celebrates collaborations between art and industry.”

– Colossal

“A triumph of creativity: National Festival of Making 2025 wows crowds.”

– Lancashire Business View

Recent press coverage from:

BBC
RADIO



THE  TIMES

VisitEngland 

The West Australian

BBC RADIO
LANCASHIRE

BBC RADIO
CUMBRIA

selvedge

CREATIVE BOOM

THE MANUFACTURER

COLOSSAL

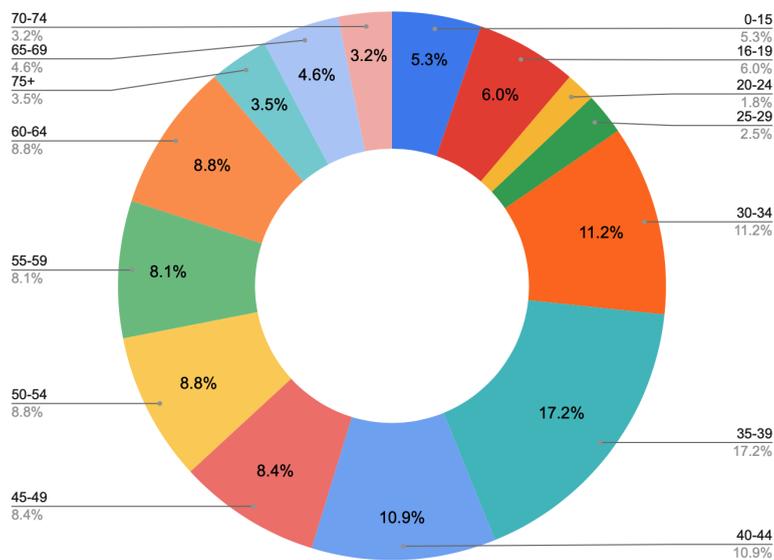
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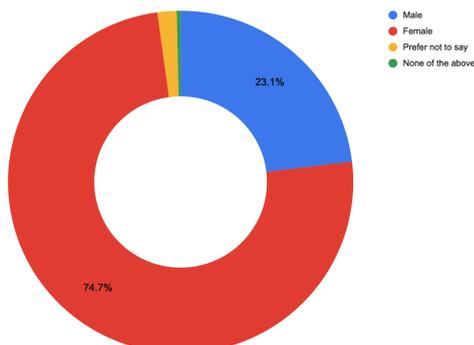
Audience Profile

- **40%** of visitors aged between **30-44**, **75%** female / **24%** male
- **76%** attended with **friends and family** - the festival is a **shared experience** suitable for a **wide audience**
- **34%** are first time visitors and **28%** visited in 2024. This demonstrates the festival has **strong reach and relevance to new audiences** as well as **high audience retention**: people who visit **enjoy the experience** and **return the next year**.
- **32%** attend cultural events **6+ times a year**, and for **18%** the festival is their **only cultural event of the year**. The festival is appealing both to **highly culturally engaged arts audiences**, and to audiences who typically have **very low engagement** in arts and culture. The festival is of **high artistic quality and relevance**, but **inclusive and accessible**.
- **58%** of visitors identify as **White/White British** and **26%** as **Asian/Asian British**. These are our two largest demographics, and are representative of local population (60% / 35% according to latest census data)
- **19%** of visitors are from the **10% most deprived areas in the country**. The festival is a free, accessible event suitable for audiences who may not be able to access other arts and culture events.

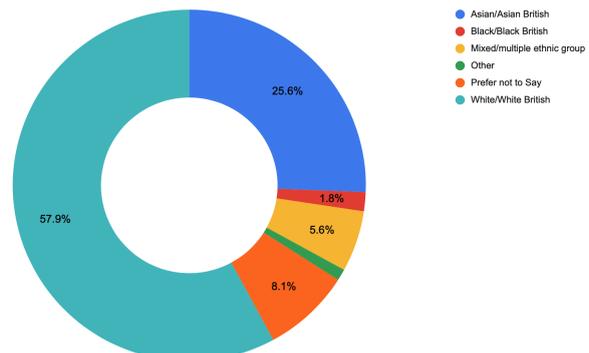
Age



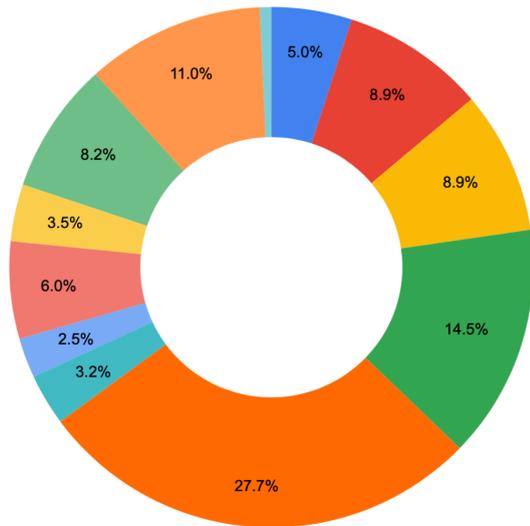
Gender



Ethnicity



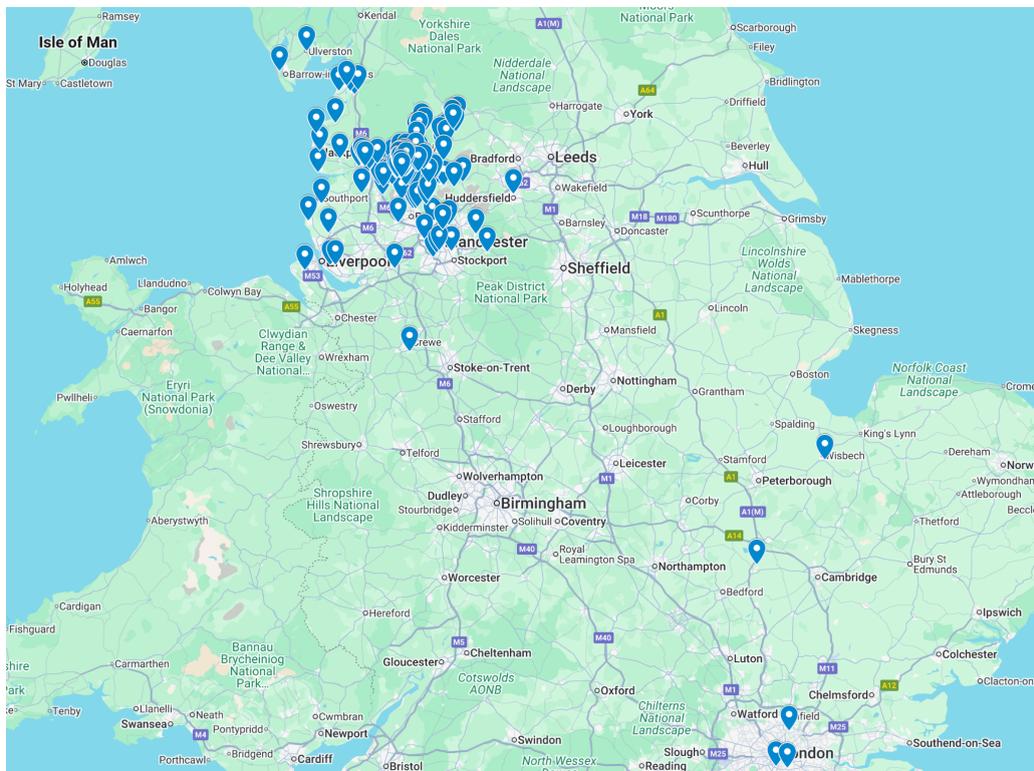
Occupation



- Full-time education such as: studying for a degree or apprenticeship
- Prefer not to say
- Small business owners who employed less than 25 people such as: corner shop owners, small plumbing companies, retail shop owner, single restaurant or cafe owner, taxi owner, garage owner.
- None of the above / Not Known / Not applicable
- Modern professional & traditional professional occupations such as: teacher, nurse, physiotherapist, musician, police officer (sergeant or above), software designer, accountant, solicitor, medical practitioner, scientist, civil / mechanical engineer.
- Other
- Routine, semi-routine manual and service occupations such as: postal worker, machine operative, security guard, caretaker, farm worker, catering assistant, sales assistant, HGV driver, cleaner, porter, packer, labourer, waiter/waitress, bar staff.
- Clerical and intermediate occupations such as: secretary, personal assistant, call centre agent, clerical worker, nursery nurse.
- Technical and craft occupations such as: motor mechanic, plumber, printer, electrician, gardener, train driver.
- Senior, middle or junior managers or administrators such as: finance manager, chief executive, large business owner, office manager, retail manager, bank manager, restaurant manager, warehouse manager.
- Retired
- Long term unemployed (claimed Jobseeker's Allowance or earlier unemployment benefit for more than a year).

Audience Travel

[View full map](#)

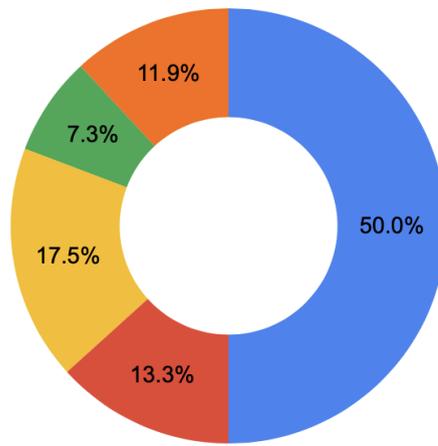


- **60%** of visitors are from Blackburn (BB postcodes)
- The festival also attracts audiences from across **Lancashire, Greater Manchester, Cumbria, Merseyside, North East** and **London**.
- **30%** of visitors travelled via **public or sustainable transport**

Boosting the Local Economy

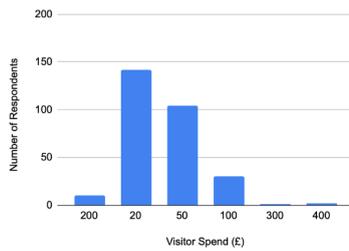
- **38%** of visitors rarely, or have **never visited Blackburn before**. The festival is a vital driver for new visitors to the town, **putting Blackburn on the map** through a groundbreaking cultural tourism event.
- Visitors spent on average **£49 each** in the town during the festival.
- Local people spent on average **£50**, with out-of-town visitors spending **£47**.
- Total economic boost to the town is estimated to be over **£1.9m**, a new record.

Visitor Frequency

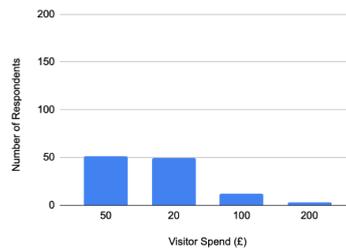


- I live here
- I hardly ever come here
- I don't come here very often
- I have never been here before, this is my first visit
- I come here a lot

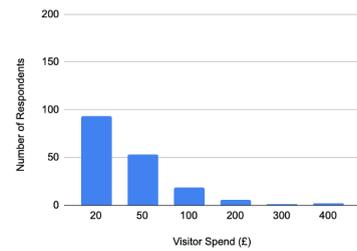
Average Spend (Full Audience) = £49



Average Spend (Non-BB Postcodes) = £47

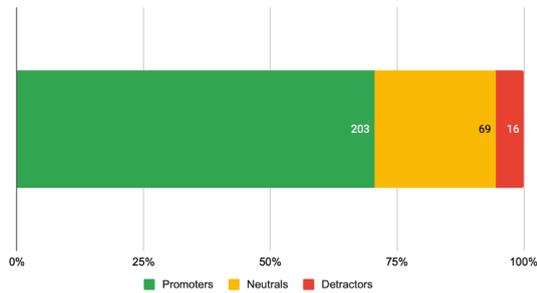


Average Spend (BB Postcodes) = £50

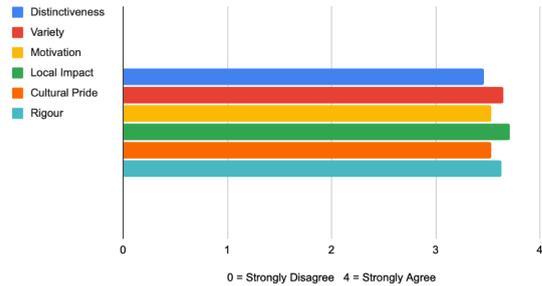


Visitor Feedback

Net Promoter Score = 64.3 (Excellent)



Dimension Statements



The festival received a Net Promoter Score of **64.3** (an increase from 54 in 2024). NPS ratings range from -100 to +100. **This is an excellent score.**

Visitors were asked to strongly disagree > strongly agree with the following statements:

Distinctiveness: It was different from things I've experienced before.

Variety: It had an interesting mix of activities/work.

Motivation: It made me feel more motivated to do creative things in the future.

Local Impact: It is important that is happening here in Blackburn.

Cultural Pride: It strengthened my cultural pride.

Rigour: It was well thought-through and put together.

Our strong positive ratings are in line with the responses received in 2023 and 2024 (these were first monitored in 2023), indicating the festival maintains a **consistent, high standard of audience satisfaction** and **perceived value**. The highest average rating was for Local Impact, as was the case in 2024.

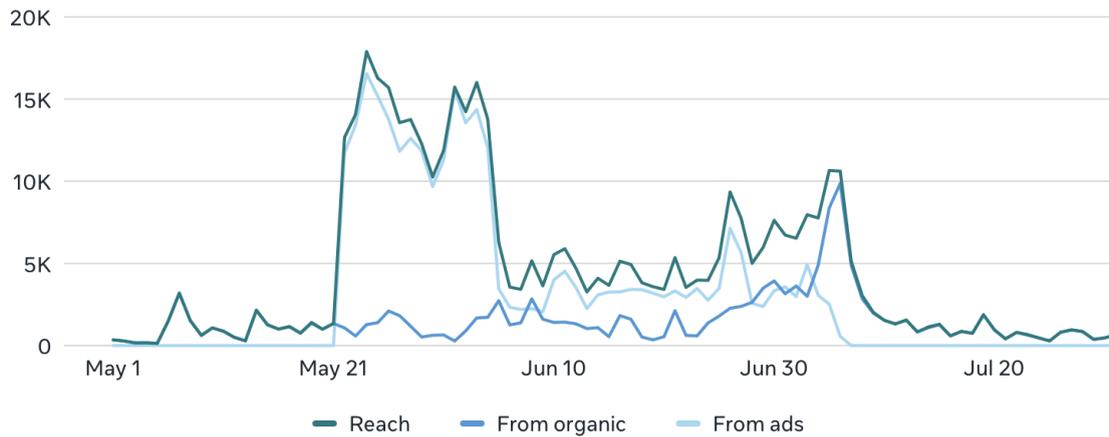
This aligns with our other findings - audiences feel the festival is an **essential part of the fabric of the town** and encourages local people and visitors alike to feel **pride of place**.

Online Reach

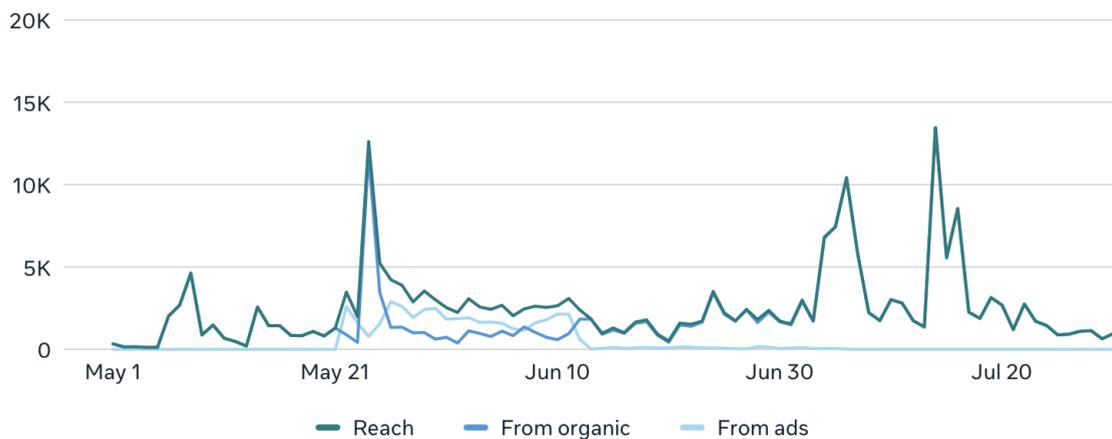
We achieved a combined reach of **372k** across Facebook and Instagram through May - July. (**18% growth** from the same period in 2024).

In the same period we achieved **36k** website sessions from over **25k** active users (**9% growth** from the same period in 2024).

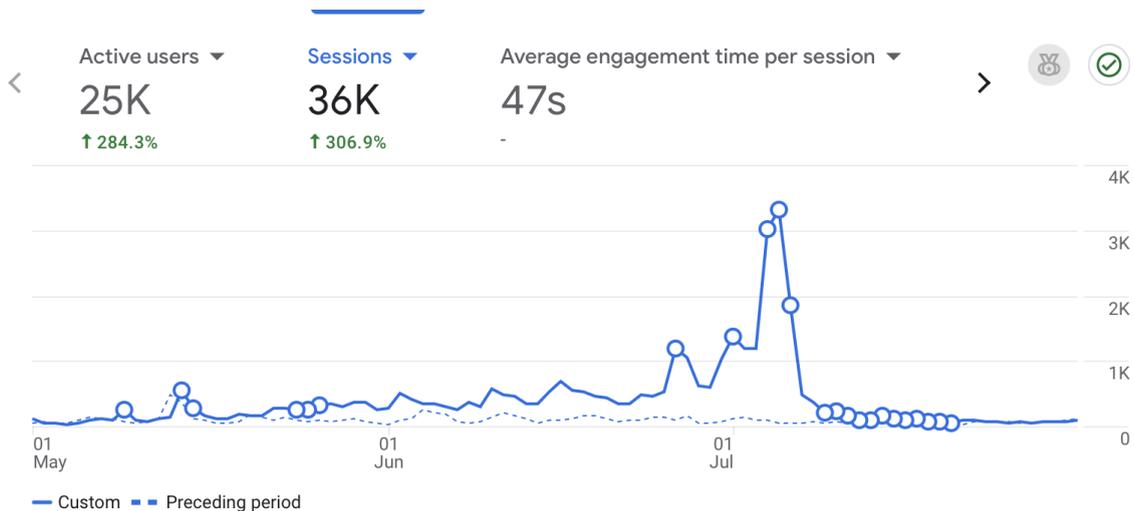
Facebook



Instagram



Web Traffic



Audience Comments

“What's amazing about the Festival is that it genuinely is about making, and the opportunities to give things a go are **phenomenal**. And that it happens in Blackburn - and engages **everyone from locals to regional arty types** - is just brilliant.”

“It was a fantastic day out. So much to do and covering so many areas. I'm a DT teacher and it was lovely seeing future generations enjoying and embracing making. **I've told everyone in my department they need to go next year.**”

“This wonderful event not only looks at our **rich heritage** but also spotlights **everything positive about our town.**”

“The festival was incredible, the atmosphere was so **upbeat and enthusiastic**, the volunteers were so friendly and welcoming and knowledgeable, and the workshops were **inspiring and informative**. There was so much to do and my whole family LOVED the day. It's so wonderful to have something for the whole family which is free and so very **inspiring.**”

“The first time I visited with a friend was just for the afternoon. We decided we would need a whole day. This year we brought 2 more friends and decided we need to attend for the whole weekend next time! Love it. It's a **fabulous event for Blackburn.**”

“I bloody love having this festival in Blackburn! It's amazing that almost everything is for free and it's great to see the whole of the town centre being used for **something so positive!** It was so nice to see full families enjoying themselves and participating in all of the activities. **Such a good range of activities** with a great **community spirit!**”

“**This is the best thing I've seen in Blackburn.** I grew up here in the 80s and it's an absolute joy to see this event particularly because it brings together the different communities that live here.”

“Art in Manufacturing! **Such an incredibly moving and inspiring display of human expression.** Thank you to all the artists involved, the @thefestivalofmaking and to the selfless hard work of organisers and delivery team. I absolutely enjoyed every minute of @creativelancs Conversations Creativity talks and Radical Pairings exhibition of works that we experienced.”

“My daughter and I had a great time today. Joined craft activities in Blackburn library and STEAM activities in the marquee on King William Street. We dropped in to the Cathedral to see the installations and saw performances at different locations across the town. We browsed stalls and visited the thingamabobas - which my daughter loved. We had limited time but **wished we could have stayed longer and do more!** Thanks and well done 🙌 to all.”

Artist Comments

“**The festival is so unique and introduces the audience to so much making in a joyful, stimulating and accessible way.** I am so proud to have been part of it. Fantastic curation. My collaboration with Crown was perfect.”

“**Really fantastic energy and synergy with all involved** and buzzing with joy after the event. Overall really smooth set-up and rewarding to see things come together after lots of online preparations. Inspired to see so many makers in one space.”

*“NFoM is truly one of a kind. **Thought provoking and inspiring and places the people and manufacturing front and centre, with stories shared, knowledge passed on and the immense fullness that comes from a vast array of projects for all ages that have participated...**it reminds us of who we are, what we can do together and the importance of a collective strength through making....”*

*“I just think the Festival is brilliant - **the combination of ambition, embeddedness and such a collectively positive atmosphere over the whole weekend** - I don't know of anything else like it.”*

*“I just love the Festival of Making. I am really passionate in my belief that there should be no barriers to creativity, in particular financial ones. **I love the diversity of the activities available and the availability to try so many different artistic practices that you may never otherwise get to give a go, for free!** I've been coming for a few years with my family and it's a highlight of our summer each year, **it's been an honour that I got to be a part of the programme this year.**”*