



# **SOUTH BANK BID QUARTERLY REPORT**

**October – December  
2024**



# INTRO

South Bank BID is pleased to present our first quarterly report as part of the BID's new Data and Insights service introduced in our third term. This short report is intended for levy payers and local stakeholders to better understand trends within our neighbourhood.

This report covers **October to December 2024**; a period of the calendar year in South Bank which features some of our most recognisable events, including the London Film Festival, and the area's festive activations such as the Christmas markets .

Alongside analysis of data provided to us by the Greater London Authority (GLA), we've undertaken further audience research around the winter season. This research, the headlines of which are shared here, delves deeper into how visitors feel about South Bank during the festive period.

The report showed that people very much enjoy the festive atmosphere of South Bank and are drawn by the Christmas Markets as well as the cultural offer and places to eat and drink.

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# FOOTFALL

## FOOTFALL BY MONTH

The period of October to December 2024 saw some of the highest levels of footfall throughout the year, surpassed only by the month of July.

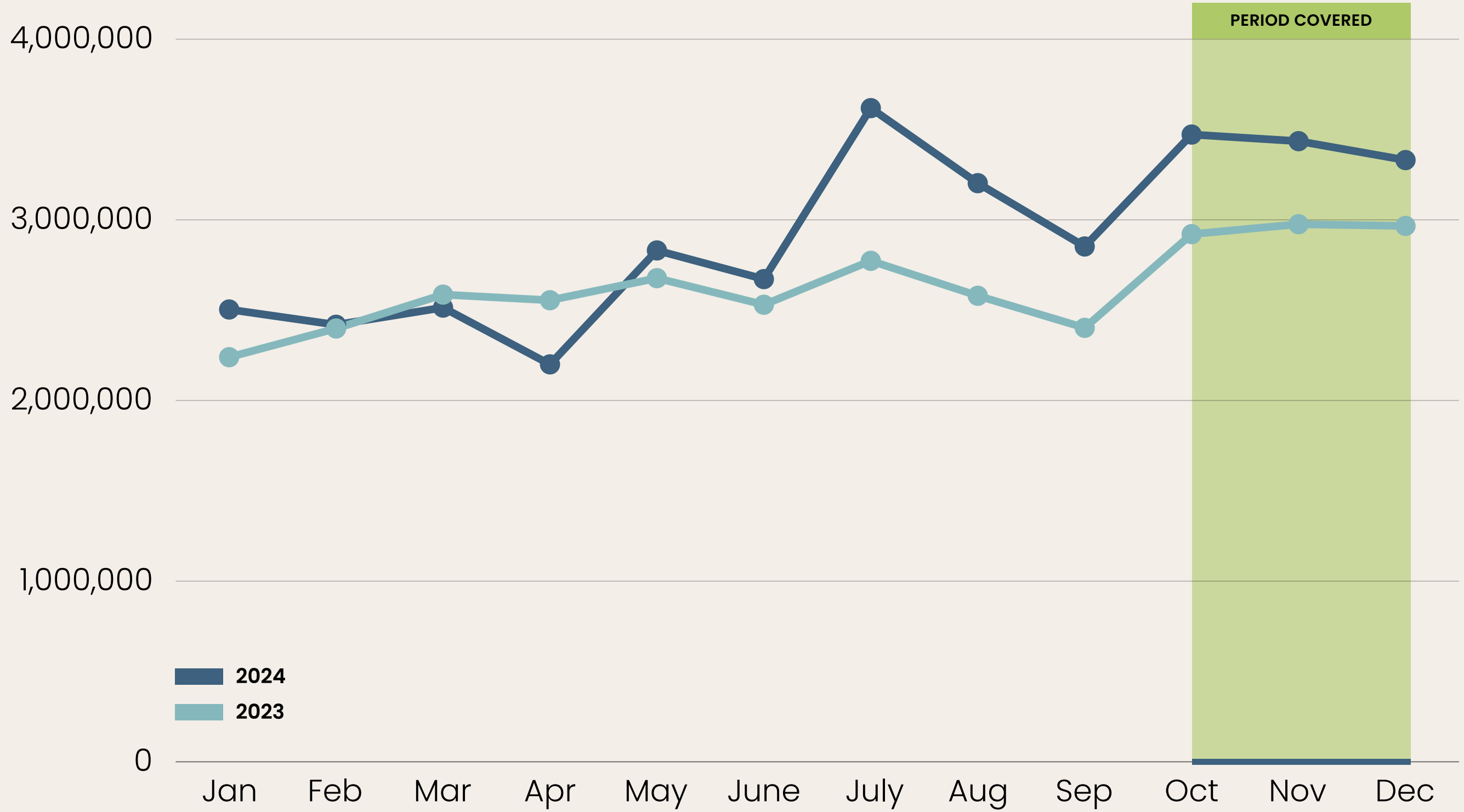
This gives a sense of the seasonality in South Bank, which was especially acute in 2024 - after a slower spring, we saw a very positive summer uplift, and this positive upward trend continued into the winter. Footfall across October to December was **5% higher** overall than that of June to August, with each month seeing over 3 million visitors in the area.

This uplift was mirrored in event attendance during these months.

The BFI reported that the London Film Festival saw an **18%** increase in visitors in 2024.

The full picture of what the annual data tells us will be discussed further in an Annual Report presented to levy payers in April.

### 2024 VS 2023 AVERAGE MONTHLY FOOTFALL



# FOOTFALL

## AVERAGE WEEKLY FOOTFALL NUMBERS

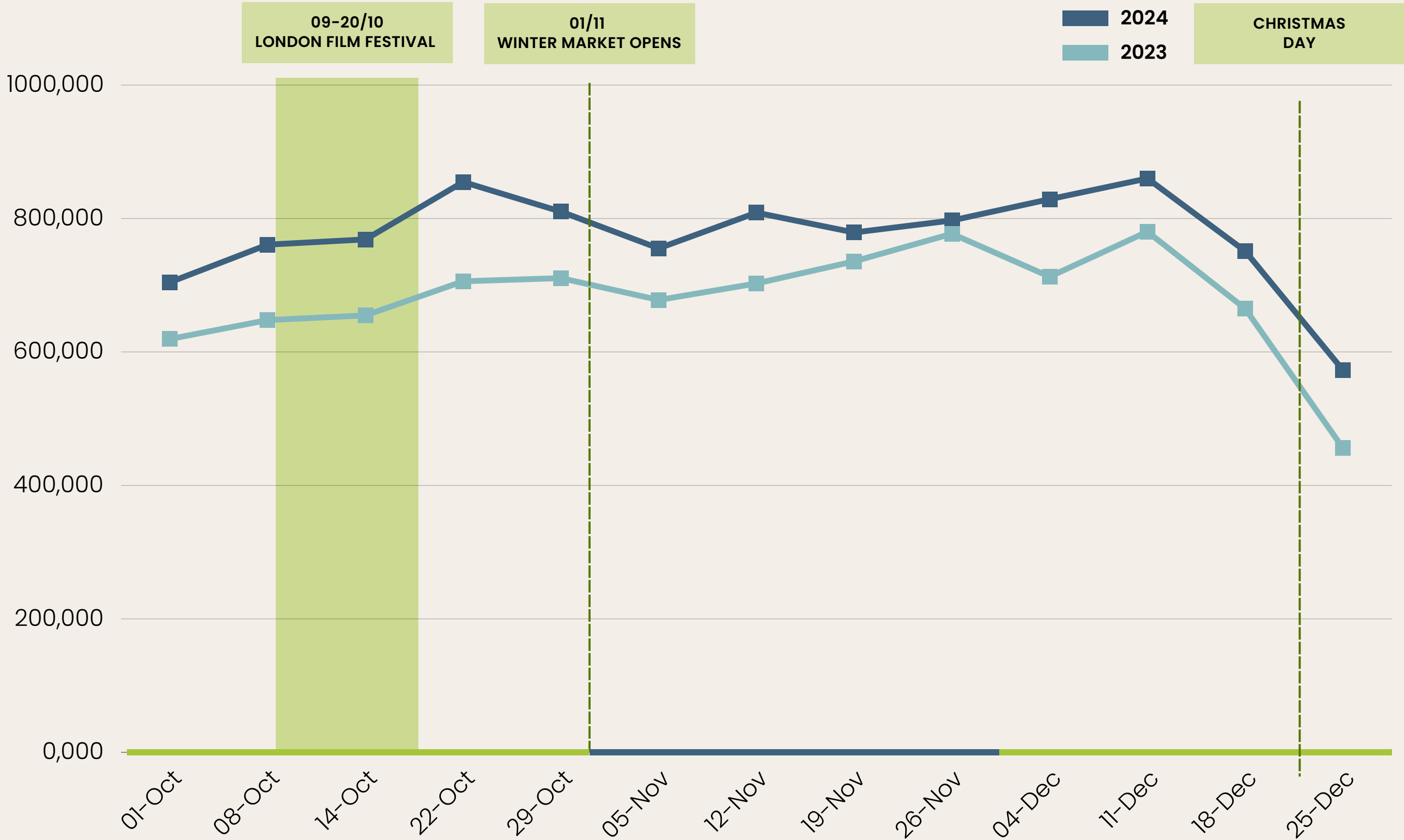
**+14%**  
GROWTH IN FOOTFALL  
ON SAME PERIOD IN 2023 (BT)

**+8%**  
GROWTH IN TUBE JOURNEYS  
THROUGH WATERLOO STATION (TFL)

Overall footfall across these three months was steady, seeing only the expected dip towards the second half of December.

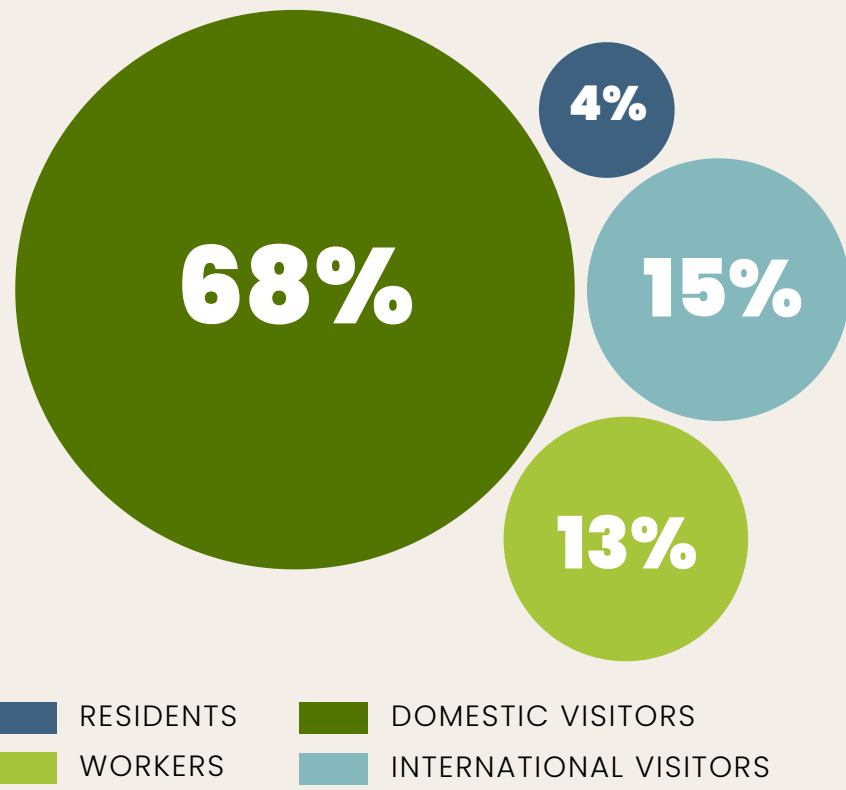
According to the GLA's data, sourced from BT, the wider central London area was up **8%** on the same period in 2023. With South Bank's uplift of 14%, the area outpaced the collective central London area in YOY footfall growth.

We saw a peak point of 130,000 tube tap-outs from Waterloo on **5 December**, the highest for the entire year - this number was also higher than 2019's November and December's highest daily peaks of around 120,000 tap-outs.





# FOOTFALL

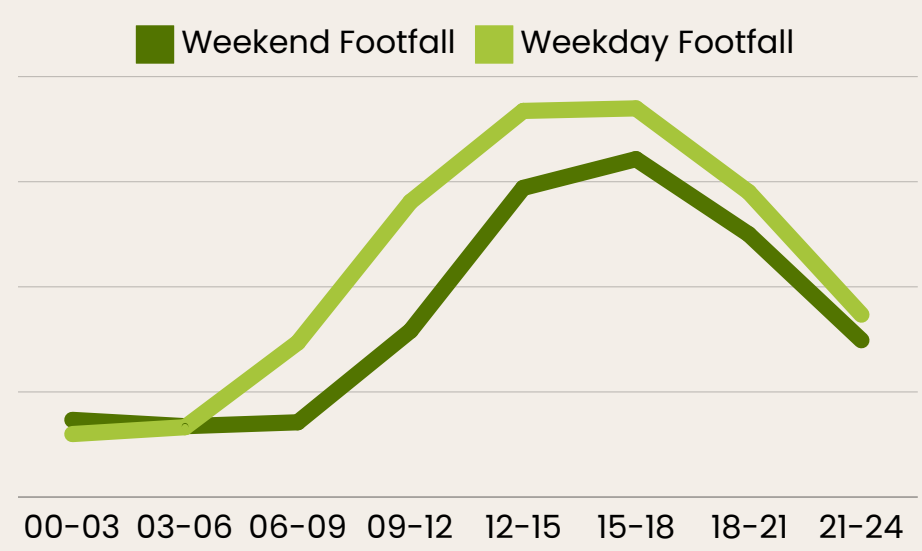


## AVG. DWELL TIME

Time Period	Avg. Dwell Time
AM	95 mins
PM	126 mins

Despite the darker nights, due to the range of cultural activity visitors tend to stay longer during the PM (6pm to 6am) rather than the AM (6am to 6pm). This was similar to 2023 levels of dwell time, suggesting there has not been large changes in visitor behaviour.

## FOOTFALL ACROSS 24 HRS

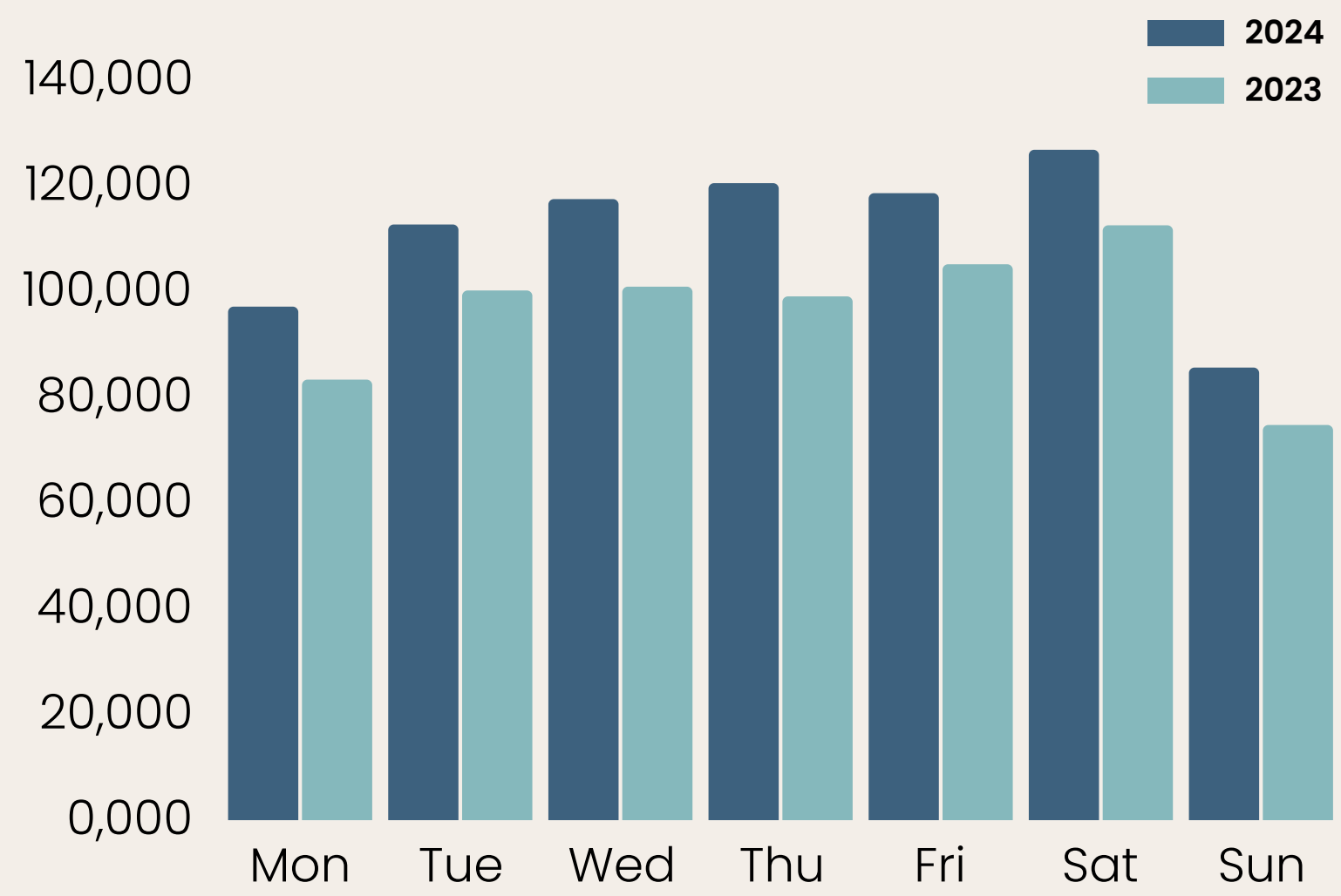


## AUDIENCES

The run up to Christmas closely mirrored the audience breakdown we see in South Bank throughout the rest of the year; our audience is mostly dominated by domestic visitors, the majority of whom are domestic.

This winter however, saw an uplift in international visitors, who overtook workers as the second biggest audience segment.

## FOOTFALL BY DAY



The increased footfall seen during this period was spread out evenly across the week, with each day of the week seeing an uplift compared to 2023. The highest growth was seen in midweek days, with Thursday edging out Friday to see on average the second highest levels of footfall in the week after Saturday.

Footfall levels peaked during the day between 3 to 5pm, with 6 to 9pm on weekdays on par with 9 to 12am.



# SPEND

**+ 9%**  
GROWTH IN **INTERNATIONAL SPEND**  
ACROSS OCT-DEC 2024 VS 2023

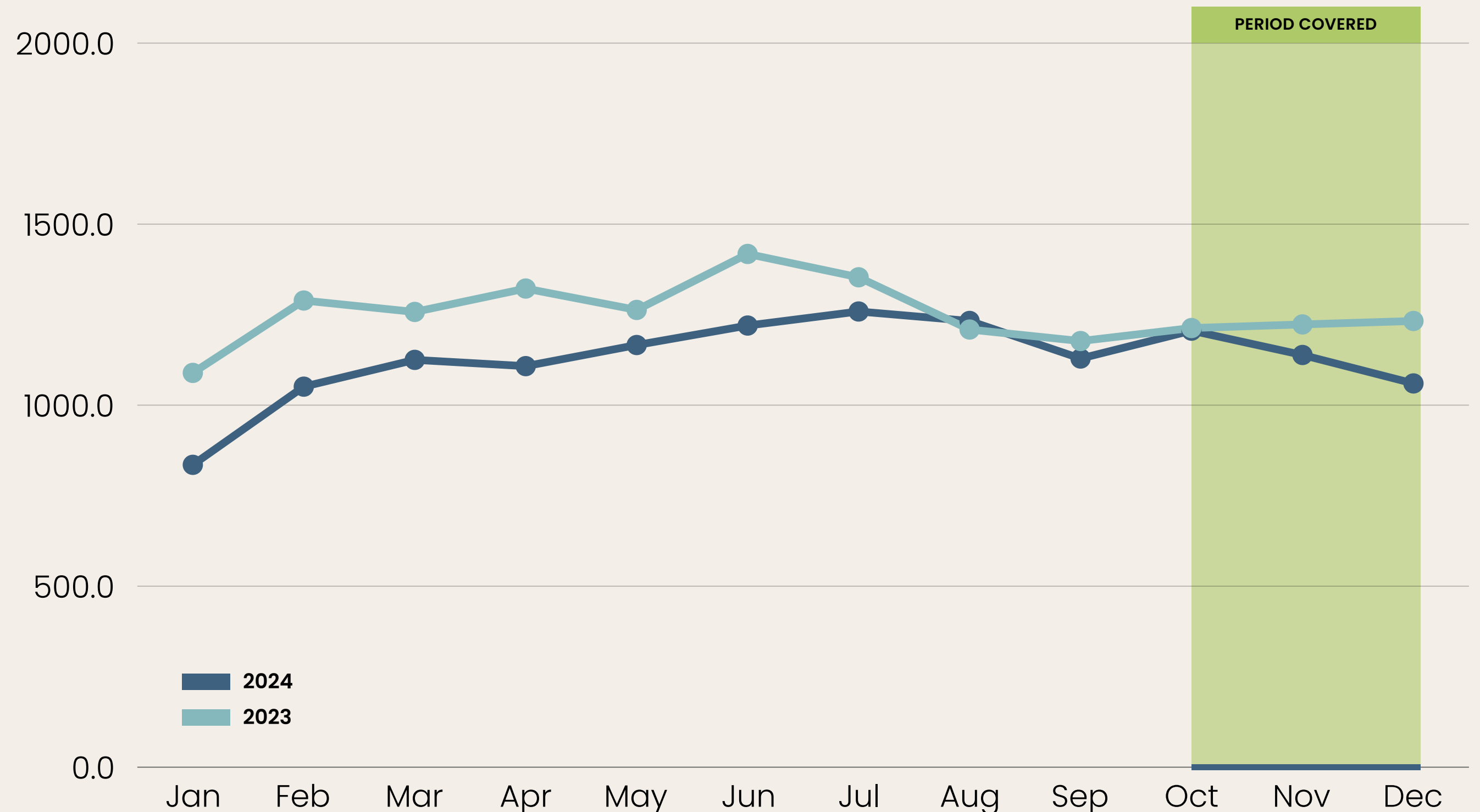
**6pm-9pm**  
PERIOD WITH THE HIGHEST  
ON THE GROUND SPEND

Despite the uplift in footfall during these months, on the ground spend in the area seems to have partly dropped.

Food and Beverage (F&B) spend saw a bigger drop in transaction count numbers than non F&B spend, as did spend outside of the **12 to 3pm** and **6 to 9pm** time brackets. Both seem to indicate the impacts of a change in discretionary spend amongst visitors due to challenging economic circumstances, with South Bank offering more free activities for visitors than many comparable areas in London.

**International spend** grew in comparison to 2023, due to the uplift in international visitors - on the ground spending in summer generally however remains higher than winter for both domestic and foreign visitors.

### AVERAGE MASTERCARD SPEND INDEX PER MONTH (DOMESTIC)



*Note: The **Mastercard Spend Index** tracks on the ground spend from millions of Mastercard users - this data is based on pound values that have been scaled to an index. The axis should not be read as pound values, but as overall trends.*



# AUDIENCE RESEARCH DECEMBER 2024

## AUDIENCE SENTIMENT

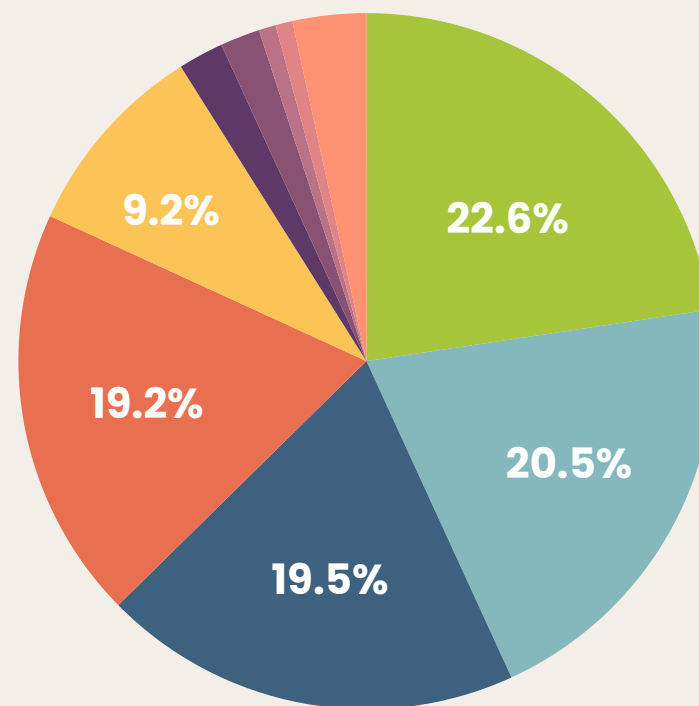
Having seen that footfall over the last quarter of the calendar year is often high, and in 2023 had been higher than the summer footfall, we wanted to understand what was driving visits to the area and what people thought of their time here.

Throughout November and December 2024 we conducted an audience sentiment survey to track visitors' opinions and thoughts about South Bank during the festive period. Data was collected via an online survey and through face-to-face interviews with people on the ground.

The overarching feeling is that people very much enjoy the festive atmosphere of South Bank and are drawn by the Christmas markets as well as the cultural offer and places to eat and drink.

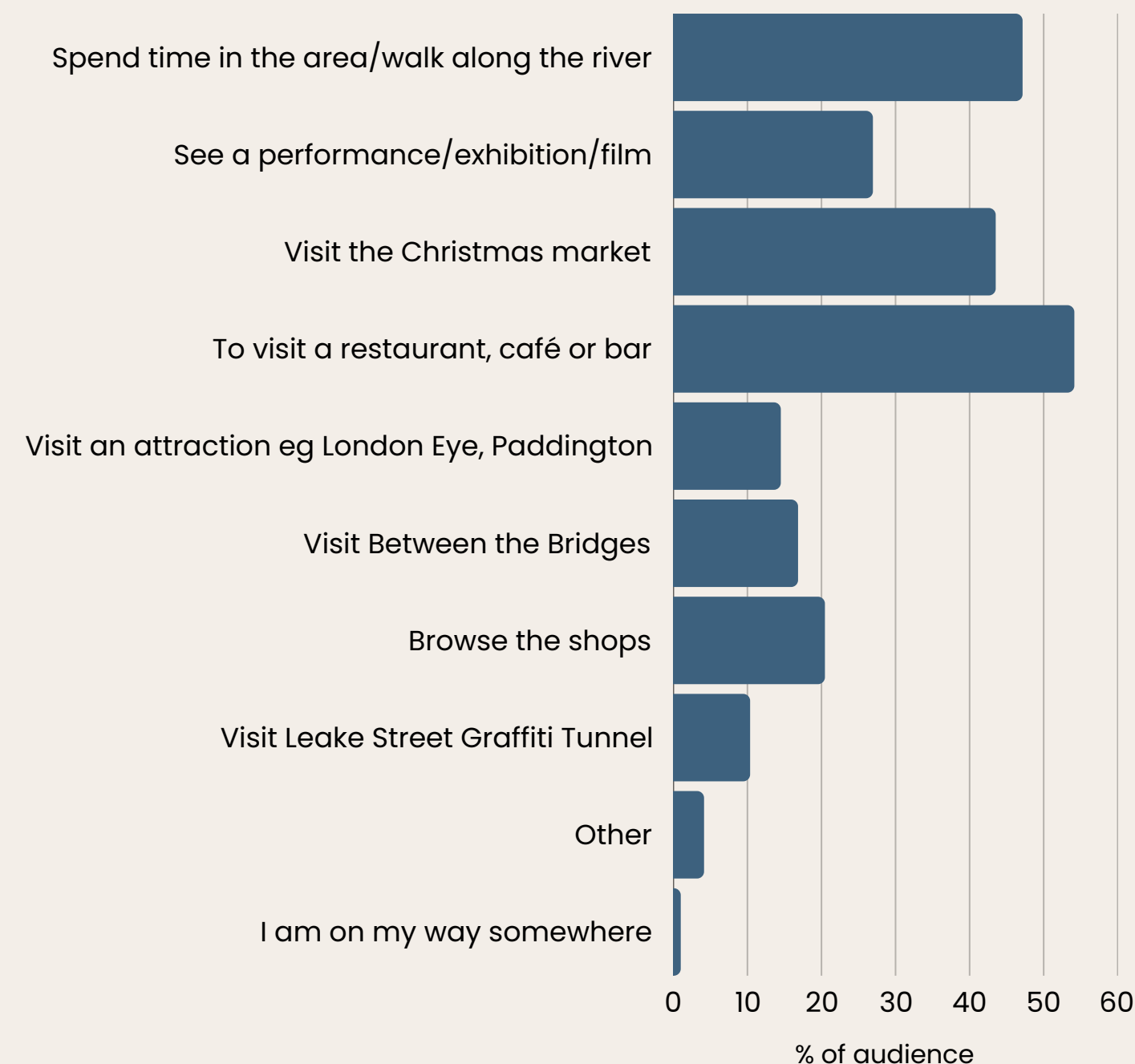
Just over a fifth of the audience said their main reason for visiting was to spend time in the area, and a fifth were coming to a performance, exhibition or film at a cultural venue. Regardless of the primary reason for visiting, over half visited a café, bar or restaurant as part of their visit and 43% visited the Christmas markets.

## PRIMARY REASON FOR VISIT



- Spend time in the area/walk along the river
- See a performance/exhibition/film
- Visit the Christmas market
- To visit a restaurant, café or bar
- Visit an attraction eg London Eye, Paddington
- Visit Between the Bridges
- Browse the shops
- I am on my way somewhere
- Visit Leake Street Graffiti Tunnel
- Other

## WHAT DID YOU DO DURING YOUR VISIT





# AUDIENCE RESEARCH DECEMBER 2024

## STATEMENT RATINGS

When asked about their experience overall, 86% of visitors rated South Bank as Good or Very Good. This is a reduction from the summer research where 94% had rated it good or very good.

Despite a lower overall rating, the majority of statement ratings were more positive than in July 2024, with particular improvements in perception of how 'clean and tidy' South Bank is.

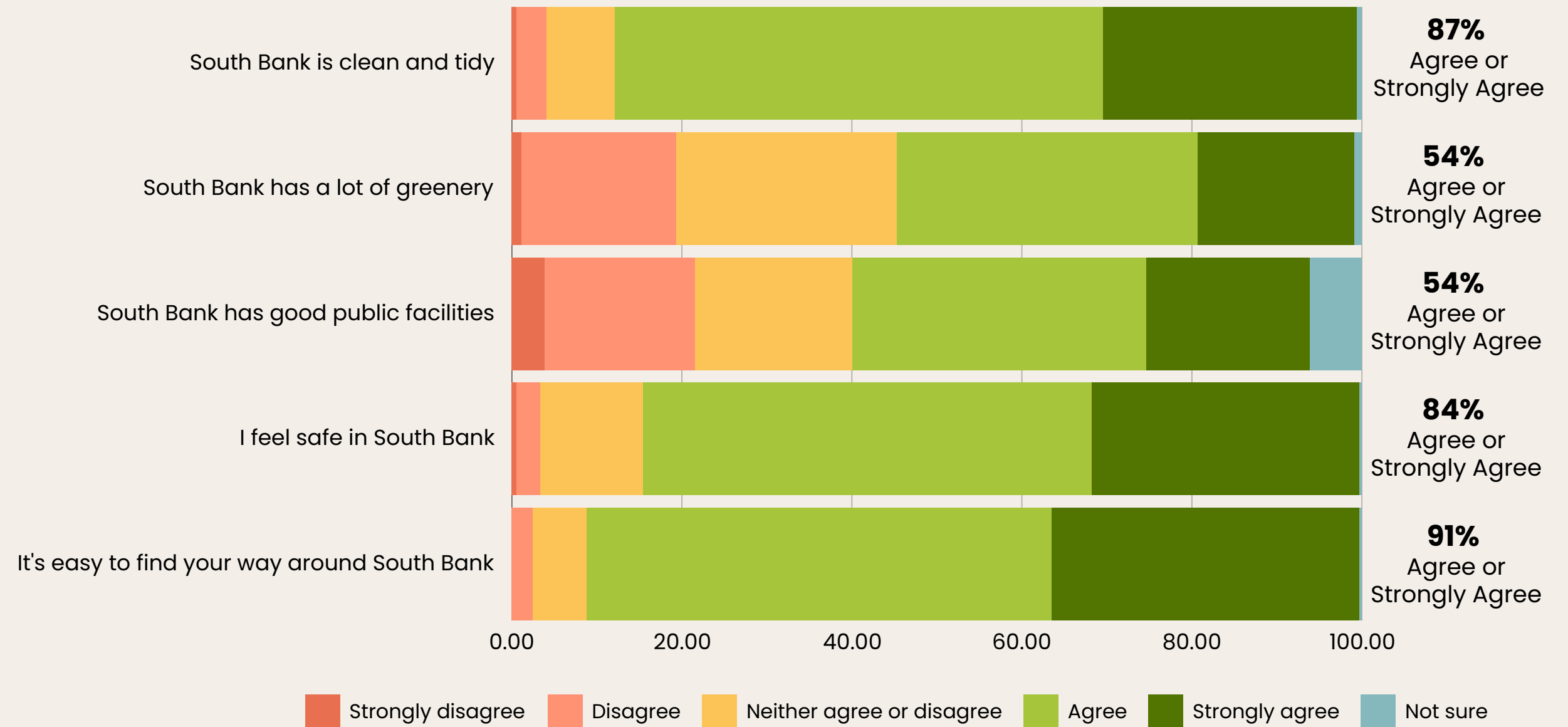
Respondents liked the 'general vibe' and had particular feedback about wanting more winter-themed entertainment, better lighting and decorations and more emphasis on crowd-control and safety around the Christmas Markets.

Comments suggest that their experience in South Bank at Christmas is good, but not excellent, indicating that there is an opportunity to improve the overall offering that will make South Bank *the* stand out destination in London during the festive period.

**86%**  
RATED SOUTH BANK AS  
**GOOD OR VERY GOOD**  
DURING THE FESTIVE PERIOD

**92%**  
**AGREED OR STRONGLY AGREED**  
THAT SOUTH BANK IS A GOOD  
PLACE TO SOCIALISE WITH FRIENDS,  
COLLEAGUES OR FAMILY

**94%**  
**AGREED OR STRONGLY AGREED**  
THAT SOUTH BANK IS A GOOD  
PLACE TO TO ENJOY CULTURE AND  
ENTERTAINMENT





# AUDIENCE RESEARCH DECEMBER 2024

## VISITOR FEEDBACK

It's a great festive environment and it has most things you could want for a night along the river.

Expected more art and craft stalls, handmade Christmas bits

Missed opportunities for lighting shows, for example, instead it's a few pop up sheds, few tree lights, no schedule. No energy or things at certain days or times to make it more "we need to go here on XYZ"

Just walking along the Thames at night was wonderful - the stalls, the music & the lights.

The decorations were ok, but didn't really feel the festive season. Not enough Christmas atmosphere and activities to celebrate the season.

Compared to other places in the festive period, it could be better.

Could be more spread out as busy

Covent Garden offers a much more Christmassy experience

The whole place is happy, inviting and a very enjoyable experience.

Just loved the whole ambiance.

The London eye is always a delight to see

It is fine just not fabulous!

Needs more Christmas photo opportunities

Some more independent shops would be good and maybe a few more winter themed activities and/or bars

Great atmosphere, plenty of things to see and do, safe environment.

No atmosphere it doesn't have that Christmas feel anymore

Just needs to be a bit more affordable for everyone



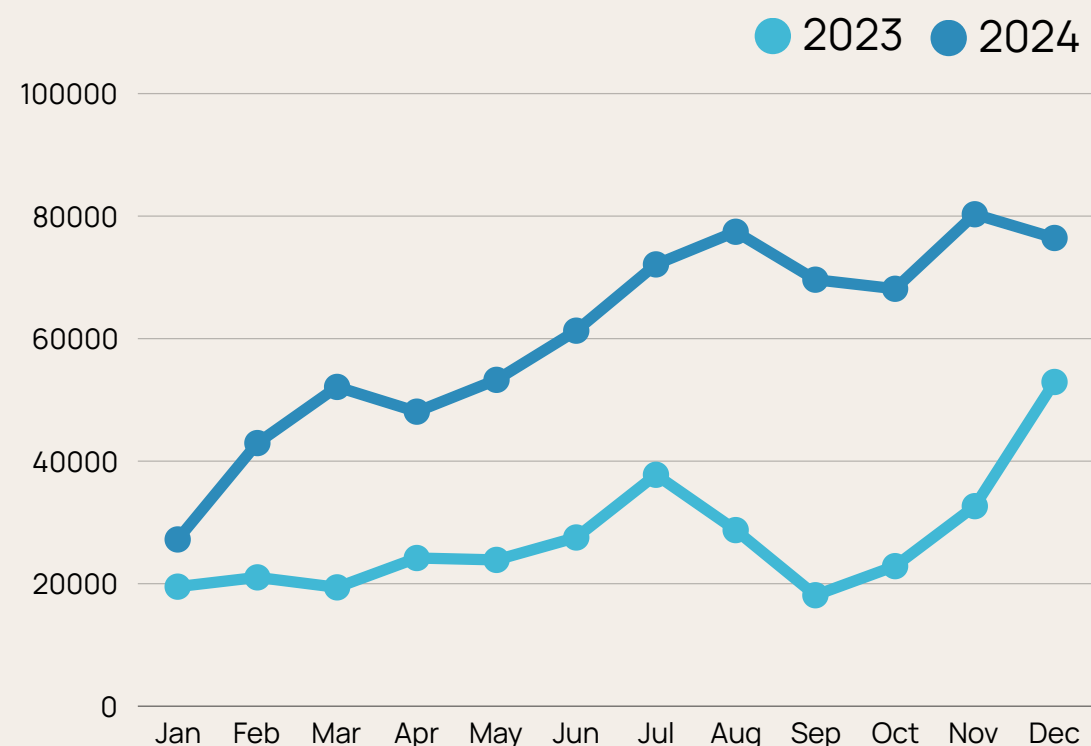
# SOUTH BANK LONDON WEBSITE ANALYTICS

## SITE VISITS

Our destination website, southbank.london exists to share South Bank’s story, providing visitors with an all-encompassing platform to see what’s on, where to eat and drink, things to see and do, latest news and inspiration for their visit.

Website sessions in 2024 demonstrated a significant increase on 2023 with a total of 729,00 site visits across the year.

Visits peaked in November at 80,302 with a particularly heightened interest in the Christmas markets and festive activity.



## TOP CONTENT

- 1 What's On: Southbank Centre Winter Market 17%
- 2 What's On listings page 11%
- 3 Eat & Drink listings page 11%
- 4 New Year's Eve 5%
- 5 See & Do listings page 4%
- 6 Christmas 4%
- 7 What's On: Interstellar at BFI IMAX 3%
- 8 What's On: Laika Frame by Frame at BFI 3%
- 9 Guide: Family Day Out Top 10 3%
- 10 Leake Street 2%
- 11 Guide: Best Brunch Spots 2%
- 12 Guide: What's On this Half Term 2%
- 13 Guide: Top Free Things to do in South Bank 1%
- 14 What's On: Winter Light 1%
- 15 Guide: Kid Friendly Restaurants 1%

The most visited page of the whole site was the event listing for Southbank Centre’s Winter Market accounting for 17% of site visits for the period. This far outweighs any other individual event or business listing, highlighting the huge interest in South Bank as a Christmas destination.

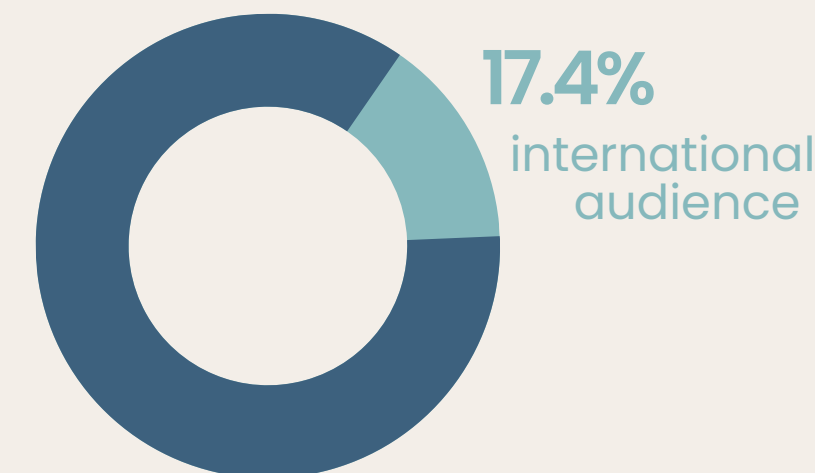
## OCT - DEC 2024 PERFORMANCE

**224,872** total website visits Oct-Dec 2024

**69%** users viewed on a mobile

**5,687** 

Onward clicks generated to venues’ websites, booking links, social profiles or telephone numbers





# WHAT'S COMING UP SPRING 2025



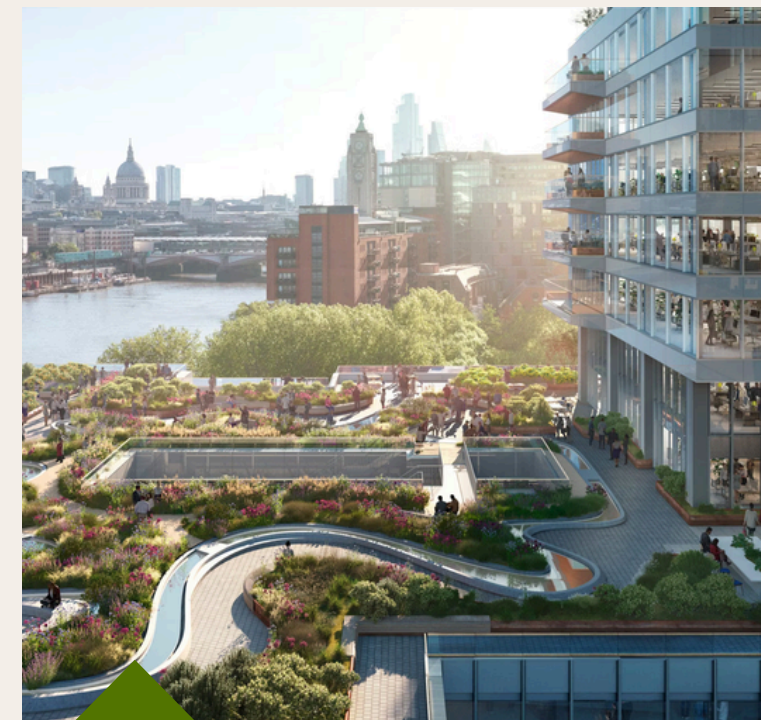
**25th Anniversary of the London Eye**

 [CLICK FOR MORE INFO](#)



**Flat Iron to open at the Southbank Centre**

 [CLICK FOR MORE INFO](#)



**72 Upper Ground begins construction**

 [CLICK FOR MORE INFO](#)



**Waterloo and South Bank Wayfinding Strategy underway**

 [CLICK FOR MORE INFO](#)



# SOURCES

## THE GLA'S HIGH STREETS DATA SERVICE

All footfall and spend data comes from the GLA's High Streets Data Service, a collective purchasing model and service created by the Mayor of London to allow local Councils and BIDs access to detailed footfall and spend data at a lower and more efficient cost. HSDS data is also used by teams within the GLA to track and monitor the impacts of activations and events across London.

All GLA data referenced in the report is aggregated across the wider BID area, shown in the map to the right.

### Footfall

The GLA's footfall data comes from **BT's Geolocated Mobile Network Data (GeoMND)**. BT's data geolocates 100% of all devices connected to BT's network on a 24x7 basis: GeoMND allows BT to accurately estimate user locations down to within several hundred metres so that we can say with high confidence which MSOA a user belongs to. Data is anonymised, weighted and scaled up proportionally.

Due to phone movements, home locations and work locations can also be ascertained, and can then be used to break audiences into demographic segments such as Visitor, Worker, and Resident.

### Spend

The GLA's spend data comes from **Mastercard** and Mastercard's Retail Location Insights. Using Mastercard's proprietary Retail Location Scoring leveraging anonymized and aggregated transaction data from billions of cards, MRLI provides spending insights; relative metrics are derived from Mastercard transaction data, and are shown as an index of spend. All GLA data referenced in the report is aggregated across the wider BID area, shown in the map to the right. Spend is solely on the ground spend, and does not incorporate purchases made online.

## AUDIENCE RESEARCH

South Bank BID works with **Indigo** to deliver qualitative audience research which explores evolving audience perceptions of South Bank, most recently a survey around the 2024/25 festive period. This survey included questions on: Dwell time and visitor behaviour, Perceptions and ratings of the festive 'offer', and Perceptions of overall look and atmosphere. The surveys were distributed both face-to-face and online.

Indigo did not separate out visitors from residents and workers in this round of research, but respondents needed to have visited the area 'for leisure' during the 2024/25 festive period.



SOUTH BANK BID AREA





South  
Bank  
**BID**

**SOUTH BANK**

LONDON

If there is anything in this document you would like to discuss further or would like to go through with a member of the team, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

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