



Background

Meet in Cheltenham is the town's official Convention Bureau led by the town's marketing body, [Marketing Cheltenham](#), it was launched in October 2020 to attract more conferences, meetings and events to Cheltenham and its surrounding areas – a sector of the economy that was amongst the hardest hit as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

In 2019, business events generated more than £31billion of direct spend to the UK economy [source: Visit Britain]. With the superb range of venues and event spaces in Cheltenham and Gloucestershire as whole, coupled with the new investment that's coming in, particularly around cyber and technology, there's undoubtedly a huge opportunity for Cheltenham and the wider region to capitalise on the corporate event and conference market.

Through its [website](#), the Meet in Cheltenham service provides free and professional event and conference planning service for local, national and international businesses or planners seeking to bring their events to the town. From large 2000+ delegate conferences to small, private meetings and from team building away days to corporate incentives, Meet in Cheltenham helps to source accommodation, events venue and suppliers, whilst also providing practical destination support and advice.

The [VisitBritain Business Events](#) sector is one key priority for VisitBritain's recovery plan which states it wants to grow back the UK's valuable business events sector as well as forming part of the Government's commitment to build, develop and boost the business events sector, supporting the attraction

and growth of international business events which align with the Governments priority industry sectors and growing the international profile of business events in the UK, as well as enabling the creation of new business events.

Through the Business Events Growth programme, VisitBritain supports all organisations in hosting international business events in the UK. VisitBritain works with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and other cross-government partners to offer Government Advocacy to British organisations, strengthening, boosting and adding value to their bids or future international business events.

Following the pandemic, business events are now starting to recover, with new opportunities for smaller niche events which the region and particularly those locations of Cheltenham, Gloucester and the Cotswold Water park area could benefit from.

VisitBritain have recognised Cheltenham & The Cotswolds as a MICE destination with the region being featured on their website

<https://www.visitbritain.com/gb/en/business/england/cheltenham-cotswolds>

Launch Campaign

Meet in Cheltenham established in October 2020 with a new microsite off www.visitcheltenham.com alongside a Simpleview CRM to enable relationship management with MICE venues, correspondence, enquiries and RFPs received via the website, produce summary proposal reports for clients and report on enquiry levels. The team carried out a launch campaign working with Conference News as a key MICE industry publication to target event buyers especially from the London events and PA network through the following activity:

- Full page advertorial for Meet in Cheltenham alongside a Venue Tips working with 3 partners Cheltenham Racecourse, Queens Hotel and Cheltenham Ladies College <https://viewer.joomag.com/conference-news-february-march/0454159001614598049> (pages 14 - 15)
- Sponsored content featured on Conference News website <https://www.conference-news.co.uk/business/summer-parties-style-cheltenham-gateway-cotswolds/>
- PA E-newsletter to 2,000 contacts (sent 17th May 2021) <https://mailchi.mp/8e4d4fed9a71/5-reasons-to-hold-your-event-in-cheltenham?e=7e5b45c703>

To continue the success of the launch campaign the team worked with a consultant to raise awareness of Meet in Cheltenham services and the destination as a whole, conduct research on event bookers based around cyber and tech and generate leads for the venue portfolio along with generating telephone appointments.

Circa 50 new contacts made, appointments xx and enquiries worth circa xx

Commented [HM1]: Tara to complete

2022 saw Meet in Cheltenham working with Cotswolds Tourism partners by exhibiting at CHS Birmingham as Meet in Cheltenham & the Cotswolds and producing a joint venue guide highlighting the Cotswolds regional MICE hotels and venues which was then distributed at the show along with post-event follow up information.

A database has been established using a combination of an e-news sign up via Meet in Cheltenham website, enquiries sent via the website, sign ups from events such as MeetGB and CHS, along with a recent purchase of a corporate event database of 9,000. Newsletters are sent on a regular basis with seasonal content related to business events, venue refurbishments, attendance at shows and venue special offers.

Website and social media statistics

Monthly page views 2021 – 9,244

Monthly page views 2022 – 14,813

Twitter followers at date – 245 followers

LinkedIn followers at date – 431 followers

Enquiry Levels

Total 57 (Oct 20 – May 23)

2021 x 25

2022 x 16

2023 x 14 (Jan – May YTD)

Results from a business survey conducted in January 2023 shows potential interest from businesses to help shape 23/24 MICE objectives.

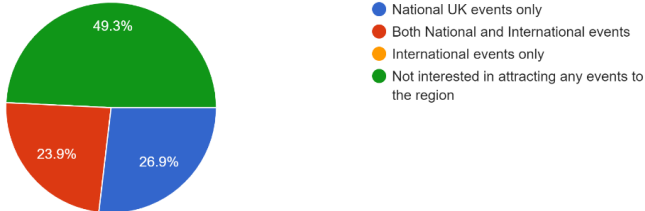
Is Meeting Incentives Conferencing & Events (abbreviated to MICE) a target market for you?

90 responses



Do you already attract National or International events?

67 responses



Local business survey: MICE Market Engagement 2023

- ▶ When asked specifically if MICE is a target market 22% said yes 24% said maybe 52% said no
- ▶ 17% are interested in or are already targeting both national and international business events and 19% are attracting national events only
- ▶ This tallies with an overall domestic bias amongst respondents
- ▶ The markets of interest reflect broadly the overall respondents broken down as 81% US and Canada, 48% Asia, 67% Europe, 30% Australia/New Zealand, 37% Nordics 22% India and 11% GCC.
- ▶ The market breakdown shows a slight preference for the Indian and Gulf State markets compared to overall respondents which is understandable for this segment
- ▶ A significant number could not/did not specify target markets (22%)

Following an independent travel trade & MICE expert reviewing the business survey it was highlighted:

- ▶ The MICE market activity and engagement can be more integrated into the leisure markets, as the operators that service it are as much part of the travel trade as the leisure ones.
- ▶ Business visits do not show seasonality generally seen in tourism flows which helps maintain a year round tourism offer.

Industry insights & trends

Visit-Britain business events [research data](#) March 21 highlights 3.5 million visits were made to attend small and medium sized meetings (up to 20 people), while 1.8 million MICE visits were made to attend a large meeting (21+ people), a conference, convention or congress, an incentive or team building events, or an exhibition, event or trade show.



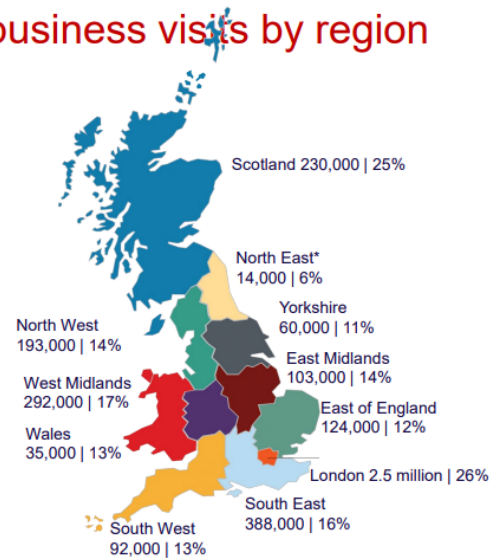
MICE – proportion of business visits by region

In the 3 years of 2016, 2018 and 2019 MICE visits represented just over a quarter of all business visits to London, and close to that share of business visits to Scotland.

Proportionally, MICE visits were also quite prominent among inbound business visits to the West Midlands (17%) and the South East (16%).

Of all the MICE visits to the UK, that only stayed in one region, London captured the lions share (60% of all UK MICE events over the three years). The South East (9%), West Midlands (7%) and Scotland (6%) also welcomed a share.

The numbers here show the number of MICE visits in the 3 years while the %s show what proportion of all business visits to the region were MICE.



BASE: MICE 2016 (1,524); MICE 2018 (1,225); MICE 2019 (1,402)
Regional data here refers to visits where the visitor stayed in one area/region/nation only; *low sample.

Regionalisation of the service

With the application for the Cotswolds Plus LVEP submitted in June 2023, plans are progressing for the development of this service as a regional offer. A relationship already exists between Cheltenham and The Cotswolds, as demonstrated by joint attendance at conferences and the co-production of literature, referenced earlier in this paper. Promotional and support services will be extended to cover the entire Cotswolds Plus region to enable more collaborative working and a cohesive offer for incoming MICE enquiries.

The following aspects are being considered:

1. Resource requirements. Additional business support and promotional activities will necessitate additional resourcing. Partners from across the region will contribute administrative time to ensure that enquiries can be responded to and opportunities maximised.
2. Financial implications. Businesses pay to be a member of Meet in Cheltenham on top of their existing Marketing Cheltenham membership. Some harmonisation is required to ensure that the charging structure is fair for all businesses in the area and to ensure that the costs for the delivery of the service can be covered. In addition, some element of the income will be allocated to the Cotswolds Plus LVEP for delivery and enhancement of destination management activities.
3. Competition amongst regional businesses. A full audit of potential MICE assets including businesses, beds, and accessibility will ensure that the full potential of the area is maximised.

Objectives

- Promoting Cotswolds Plus areas distinctive strengths and experiences to MICE operators and businesses with a focus on smaller events, sectors such as Cyber, advanced engineering and manufacturing, agri-tech and aviation.
- Operate a venue finding service on behalf of the LVEP that expands across the Cotswolds Plus region on boarding new MICE venues to the dedicated website.
- Work with businesses to develop bookable incentive experiences that can be used for MICE as well as travel trade operators
- Establish a MICE virtual sector group to share best practices, enable updates to be given virtually as well as via newsletters to the businesses
- Highlighting to businesses distribution options including TXGB, VisitBritain shops and destination websites to encourage more bookable product and working closely with Travel trade team to leverage engagement with trade operators that also deal with the MICE sector.
- Attend a minimum of two key MICE events annually to promote the region and engage buyers. Look to fund attendance by private sector stand sharing opportunities.

Note: See appendix 1 for a list potential shows for remainder of 2023 into 2024 (these are generally repeated on an annual basis)

- Host a minimum of one MICE FAM trip annually with support of private sector.
- Maximise virtual and digital opportunities to highlight the region's MICE sector such as virtual training, LinkedIn, working with VisitBritain events team.
- Look for cross regional opportunities and national opportunities with VisitBritain events team to bid for events that can highlight tourism in the region. Eg VE awards, UKInbound.
- Seek funding opportunities from private sector, public sector, and partners to ensure core MICE focus continues to attract events to the wider region.

Activities to be carried out 23/24

Activity	Expected Outcome	Responsible	Priority (1 high to 5 low)	Cost of Activity	Provider (s)	Start date	Scheduled Completion Date	Actual Completion Date
<p>Seek funding?</p> <p>Do we need to review MICE membership scheme as LVEP early on in 23</p> <p>Funding sources</p> <p>DIT, Glos CC, Oxlep, LA's - any suggestions to bid?</p>	<p>Desired outcome to Increase commission from confirmed events by working with corporates directly or shared commission with agencies</p>	<p>Cotswolds Plus LVEP</p>	<p>1</p>			<p>April 23</p>	<p>ASAP to secure overall plan</p>	
<p>MICE business as usual</p> <p>Responding to MICE operator requests in a timely manner including introducing relevant businesses</p> <p>Updating VisitBritain events team with content</p>	<p>Business continuity and reliability. Ensure operators see the region as MICE friendly with current information. Cascade information to new officers longer term</p>	<p>Cotswolds Plus LVEP</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>Officer time approx 1.5 days per week</p>	<p>Cotswolds LVEP MICE leads</p>	<p>April 23</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	

<p>Supplying MICE content to MICE media including Conference News, CHS and other MICE publications.</p> <p>Keeping https://www.visitcheltenham.com/meet up to date</p> <p>Officers to keep product knowledge updated and look to train up new partners in region to support</p>								
<p>MICE Promotional newsletters</p> <p>Clear schedule for 5 newsletters annually to be sent to MICE database & monitor open rates</p>	<p>Drive awareness of meeting venue finder service as well as featured businesses</p>	<p>Cotswolds Plus LVEP</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>Officer time</p>	<p>Cotswolds LVEP MICE lead</p>	<p>April 23</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	
<p>Follow up from the business survey with businesses keen to learn more about MICE to signpost training.</p> <p>Look to hold set up a virtual MICE group to share best practice</p> <p>Funding sources</p> <p>Core Budget Cotswolds Plus</p>	<p>Better educated businesses & more MICE product promoted</p>	<p>Cotswolds Plus LVEP</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>£1000</p>	<p>And Marketing Cheltenham Officer time</p>	<p>April 2023</p>	<p>31/03/2024</p>	

<p>Attendance at MICE trade shows</p> <p>Currently attend CHS trade shows in person to maximise promotion. Ideally look to attend a further show subject to business support such as The Meetings Show/Confex/PA Show/BNC</p> <p>Funding sources</p> <p>ESIF funding?</p> <p>Commercial income from stand share partners</p>	<p>Look to generate a min of 20 new leads from B2B meetings & maintain min 20 existing relationships per show. Contacts across the MICE database updated</p>	<p>Cotswolds Plus LVEP</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>£10K min</p>	<p>VisitBritain / UKInbound / House of Britain</p>	<p>Autumn 23 – March 24</p>	<p>31/03/2024</p>	
<p>Increasing MICE product</p> <p>Develop more product from across the wider LVEP region on the MICE website both accommodation and incentives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hotel bedrooms in Cheltenham total 1,230 / bed spaces 2,618 • Total bedrooms 1,900 / bed spaces 4,246 	<p>Keep product on the trade website current and relevant alongside increasing new products. Look to add a min of five new products onto the trade website.</p>	<p>Cotswolds Plus LVEP</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>Officer time & business time</p>	<p>Private Businesses & trade officer's time</p>	<p>April 23 ongoing</p>	<p>31/03/2024 & ongoing</p>	

Funding sources Core Budget Cotswolds Plus								
Business events hosting Investigate funding options for business events hosting and support bidding for future events based around region's sector strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would require a BID document creating as a template to utilise 	Visit Britain Business Events Growth Programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidate City Bid Support to bid and win new international business events in the UK (financial support) • International Delegate Growth to support the creation, growth, and internationalisation of your business events in the UK (financial support) • Government Advocacy to support the UK's business events industry and add value to your events by working with HM 							

	Government (soft power support)							
<p>Scope out a commercial model for 2023 – 2024</p> <p>Target list of venues and experiences to contact and sign up for 1 year – exposure to include features in newsletters, blogs, social media, opportunity to host FAM / influencer visits and sent relevant enquiries for their business</p> <p>Longer term, combine MICE & trade focus across the Cotswolds Plus LVEP region</p>	Grow venues and incentive experiences through region	Cotswolds Plus LVEP	1 (immediate commercial fee for businesses to be a part of sooner) 3 (longer term priority)	Officer time to research and produce a PDF to distribute. Time spent on calls or venue visits to sign up businesses	Cotswolds LVEP MICE LEAD	June 2023	July 2023	
<p>Investigate costs for upgrade to current Microsite off Visit Cheltenham to encompass a venue search tool so enquiries are sent straight to venues (to reduce officer time in collating responses)</p> <p>Simpleview CRM used by Marketing Cheltenham would need to be configured to 'manage' the MIC &</p>			2	Officer time to research and potentially procure?	Cotswolds LVEP MICE LEAD	Autumn 2023	Early 2024	

Cotswolds venues to keep separate to MC member database								
Branding of website, logo, stand shell scheme, marketing collateral to include the whole region			3/4		Cotswolds LVEP MICE LEAD	Autumn 2023	Early 2024	

Appendix 1 Potential MICE shows

- CHS Leeds & CHS Birmingham – exhibit at annually with a range of stand partners contributing to the stand fee.
- The Meetings Show – Annual event ExCel London – 28 – 29th June 2023
- PA Life Summit – 14th September 2023 (Hilton London Tower Bridge) – Meet the Buyer Event - 1-2-1 meetings with senior industry professionals of PA's, executive assistants and corporate bookers. USP = small, niche event unlike other large, busy exhibitions and conferences.
- BNC Show – 20th September 2023 (The HAC, London) **and** BNC Show April 2024 (Central Hall Westminster) – MICE Industry recommended. Table top expo with networking opportunities and high quality of buyers.
One person - £3,000
Two people - £2,350 each
Three people - £2,166 each
Five people - £1,800 each
- Event Organisers Summit – 18th – 19th October 2023 (Radisson Hotel & Conference Centre London Heathrow) - A 2-day event that focuses on high-end corporate clients. USP = highly focused event with 1-2-1 business meetings, interactive seminars and networking opportunities.
- The PA Show – 19th October 2023
- IBTM World 2023 – 28th – 30th November 2023 – one of the world's leading trade shows for the MICE industry held in Barcelona, Spain. Potential to stand partner with Visit Britain / Meet England. Meet face-to-face with decision-makers and do business on an international scale. Online appointment system ensuring you meet with buyers who have a specific interest in destination or product.

2024

International Confex 28th – 29th February 2024 – ExCel London

The PA Show – 28th – 29th February 2024 - ExCel London

MeetGB 2024 – Dates and details TBC

CHS Leeds - 23rd April

CHS Birmingham – Oct/Nov