UKCAMS conference and meeting survey

The Impact of Business Tourism in Guildford and Surrey 2017

Report prepared for: Visit Guildford Business

Prepared by RJS Associates Ltd

RJS ASSOCIATES LTD
Destination Tourism Consultants

September 2018

info@rjsassociates.co.uk

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

This report provides an overview of the value of business events, and the performance of conference venues in Guildford and Surrey in 2017.

Volume and value of Business Events

- In 2017, there were an estimated 11,700 business events at Guildford and Surrey venues. These generated an estimated 595k delegates accounting for 1,007k event days.
- The estimated direct spend by delegates on venues and in destination was estimated at £129.4m.

Dimensions of the Events Market

Number of events

- There was an average of 279 events per venue in Guildford and Surrey in 2017.

Levels of residential / non-residential business

- Just over half (59%) of event business was undertaken on a non-staying basis (i.e. with no stay either at venue or in destination). Nearly a third (30%) of event business was residential at the event venue – this was higher than the national average (22%).

Event Duration

- The average event duration was 1.7 days. Most events (55%) lasted a day or less.

Delegate Rates

- The average daily delegate rate achieved by venues for events was £42 (including VAT). The average 24 hour / residential rate was £173 – this was above the national average (£134).

Type of event organisation

- Among Guildford and Surrey venues, the corporate sector was the largest sector – accounting for 66% of business. This was higher than the national average (55%).

Use of PCOs and Event Agencies

- Nearly four-fifths of events (38%) in 2017 were organised by a professional conference organiser (PCO) or event management agency.

Event Size

- Most events (72%) had 50 delegates or fewer – the majority of these were for fewer than 20 delegates.
- The average event size was 50 delegates. This was below the UK average.

Origin of Event Business

- The majority of event business (76%) to Guildford and Surrey venues was generated from the South east region. About a quarter was from the rest of the UK and a small proportion (5%) was international.

Comparisons to 2015

- Average numbers of events to Guildford and Surrey venues were down on 2015 (279 events in 2017 compared to 345 events in 2015).
- However, average event duration for non-residential events was up slightly in 2017 (1.7 days compared to 1.6 days in 2015).
- Residential rates were up on 2015 (an average of £173 in 2017 compared to £152 in 2015).
- Average event size in 2017 (50 delegates) was also up slightly on 2015 (46 delegates).

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

This report provides an overview of the value of business and social events, and the performance of conference venues in Guildford and Surrey.

This report was produced by RJS Associates Ltd.

1.2 Approach and Methodology

This report is based on data collected as part of the UK Conference and Meeting Survey (UKCAMS) 2018. This involved a self-completion survey of conference venues.

Guildford / Surrey venue supply and sample		
Venue Type	**Supply[1]**	**Sample**
Hotel	20	19
Unusual venue	19	10
Academic venue	2	2
Purpose built centre	1	1
Total	**42**	**32**

1. Data supplied by VisitGuildford. The supply is based on venues that work with VisitGuildford – it does not reflect the total supply of venues in Surrey. NB the number of venues included in the supply (and sample) was amended up slightly from 2015 (the last time this analysis was undertaken.

To increase the accuracy of the data in this report, data from previous surveys has, where appropriate, been used.

The analysis has been weighted by the number of events held at a venue in order to ensure that data reflects **event averages** and not venue averages.

As an example, if the sample contained two venues, with one hosting 10 events at an average day rate of £10, and one hosting 1000 events at an average rate of £50, the average rate would be £49.60 (the event average) not £30 (the venue average).

1.3 Volume and value data

Volume and value data in this report has been derived from a model. This utilises data from a number of sources (including the venue survey outlined in this report) and is based on a number of steps, which are broadly as follows:

- The number of conferences was calculated by multiplying number of venues by the average number of conferences per venue (derived from the venue survey).
- These were then split according to sector type (corporate etc.) – this data was derived from the venue survey.
- Volumes of conference delegates were calculated by multiplying number of events by average size. Volume data was further split into origin (South east, rest of UK and overseas) and visitor type (day visitor, staying at

venue, staying in destination) – this data was derived from the venue survey.

- The volume of delegates was then multiplied by average event duration to provide an estimate of delegate days.
- The model also calculated estimates of leisure extension and partner accompaniment for delegates. These were based on ratios derived from VisitBritain's Business Events Research 2017.
- These were multiplied by average day and staying rates (from the venue survey) to provide an estimate of spend at venue. Delegate days were also multiplied by destination spend figures (derived from VisitBritain's Business Events Research 2017) to provide an estimate of the wider spend in the destination.

1.4 Definitions and Notes to the Reader

A number of definitions are used in this report.

An event venue is defined as:

- A paid-for facility (i.e. rented, not a company's in-house meeting rooms) containing:
- At least 3 meeting rooms for hire with
- A minimum capacity of 50 theatre-style in its largest room.

Event venues are sub-divided into five categories. These are defined as follows:

- **Purpose-built convention centre** – specifically designed to host conferences and congresses and with a capacity of over 500 delegates theatre-style. Usually with a large auditorium and supporting break-out seminar and meeting rooms and exhibition space.
- **Conference / training centre** – venues devoted to the conference or training market comprising specifically designed "learning spaces" with three or more lecture rooms, with no room having a capacity of more than 500 delegates. They host residential and non-residential conferences.
- **Hotel**.
- **University** or other educational institution.
- **Unusual / multi-purpose venue** – museums, castles, sporting venues, visitor attractions, theatres, civic / town halls, leisure centres etc.

A **business event or conference** within this survey is defined as "an out-of-office conference, meeting or other business event of at least four hours' duration involving a minimum of 10 people". Within this report, events is used as a generic term covering all types of business event such as conventions, congresses, conferences, meetings, training courses, sales briefings, seminars, product launches, roadshows etc.

Other terms used within the survey include:

- **Association:** trade and professional associations and institutions, societies (professional and voluntary), trade unions, and educational and academic groups.

- **Corporate:** company meetings and training courses, annual general meetings, board meetings, sales meetings, product launches.
- **Government and public sector:** events held by government departments and agencies, local authorities, the National Health Service, charities and similar public bodies.

Delegates are people attending a business event. Within this report they will also include exhibitors (i.e. people staffing exhibition stands at an event). A **delegate day** is a measure of the number of days spent in an area by delegates. As an example, the following would all count as two delegate days:

- A delegate staying for two days
- Two delegates visiting for the day
- A delegate visiting on two different days (but not necessarily staying).

Notes to the reader:

- All percentages are rounded to the nearest whole figure – sometimes figures may not, therefore, add up to exactly 100%.
- An asterix (*) indicates a value of less than 0.5%
- A dash (-) indicates no value.

2 VOLUME AND VALUE OF THE EVENTS MARKET

2.1 The Volume and Value of Business Events

In 2017, there were an estimated 11.7k business events at Guildford and Surrey venues.

Volume and Value of Guildford's Business Event Market, 2017				
	Non-staying	**Staying – destination**	**Staying - residential**	**Total**
No. of delegates ('000)[1]	368.8	67.7	158.6	595.2
No of event days ('000)	532.6	102.0	372.9	1007.5
Total direct spend (£m)[2]	29.9	20.3	79.2	129.4
Share (% of market)				
Delegates (%)	62%	11%	27%	100%
Delegate days (%)	53%	10%	37%	100%
Spend (%)	23%	15%	63%	100%

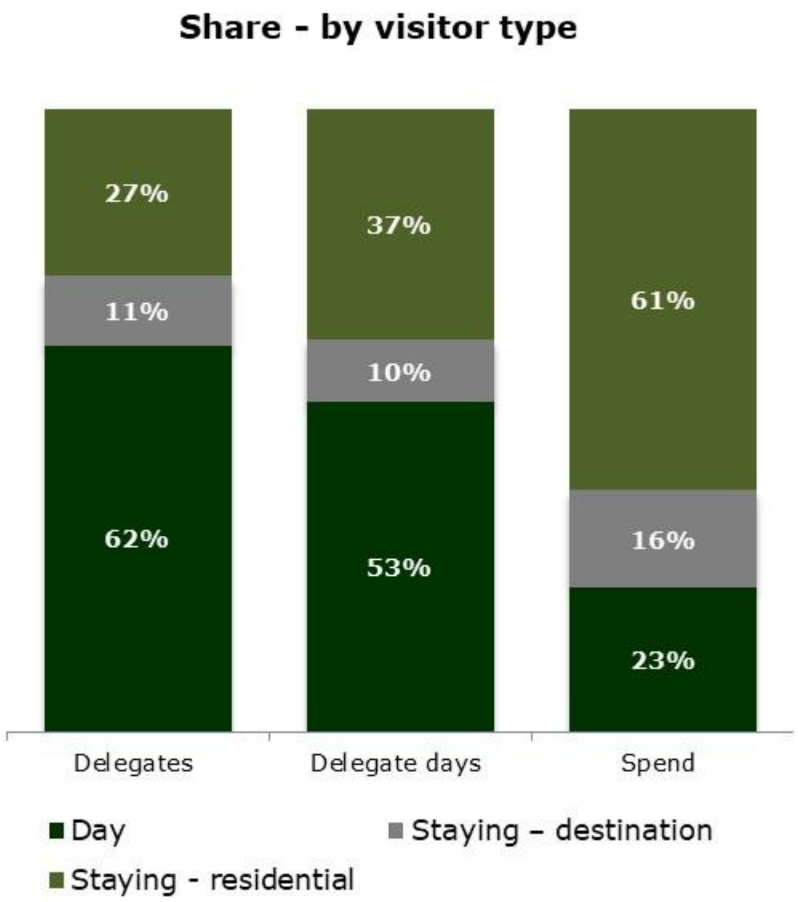
These events generated an estimated 595k delegates accounting for 1,007k event days.

Overall direct spend from delegates (and partners) on venues and in destination on a range of things including accommodation (for those not staying at their venue), food and drink, shopping, entertainment, and transport in the area was an estimated £129.4m.

[1] Numbers of delegates includes the numbers of accompanying partners. Delegate days also includes the number of days delegates leisure extending spend in Guildford/Surrey after a conference.

[2] The direct spend figure is based on delegate spend in the destination – this includes spend on venue hire, accommodation, food and drink, shopping etc. It also spend by accompanying partners (spending during and after and event) and leisure extenders (spending after an event).

The day market was the largest in terms of volume – accounting for 62% of delegates and 53% of delegate days. The residential market was the most important market in terms of value – accounting for 61% of overall expenditure.

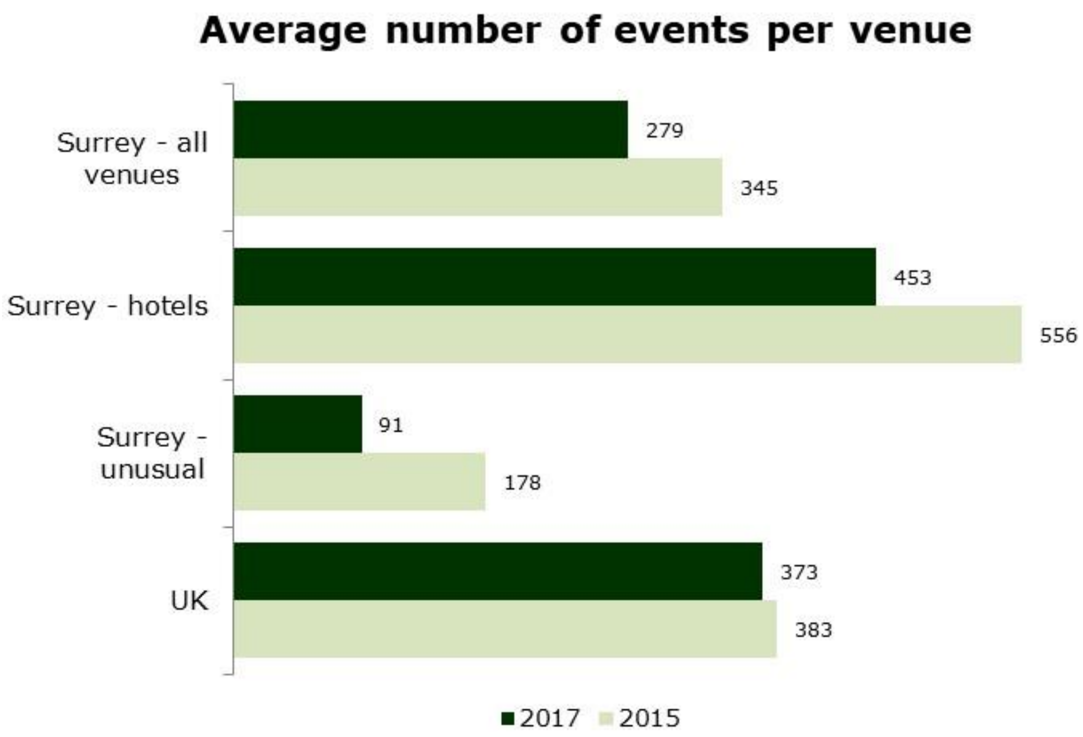


3 DIMENSIONS OF THE BUSINESS EVENTS MARKET

3.1 Average Number of Events per Venue

There were an estimated 279 business events per venue in Guildford and Surrey in 2017 (compared to 345 in 2015). This was below the national average (an average of 373 events per venue in 2017).

Hotels in Guildford and Surrey hosted more events than unusual venues (an average of 453 events compared to 91 respectively).



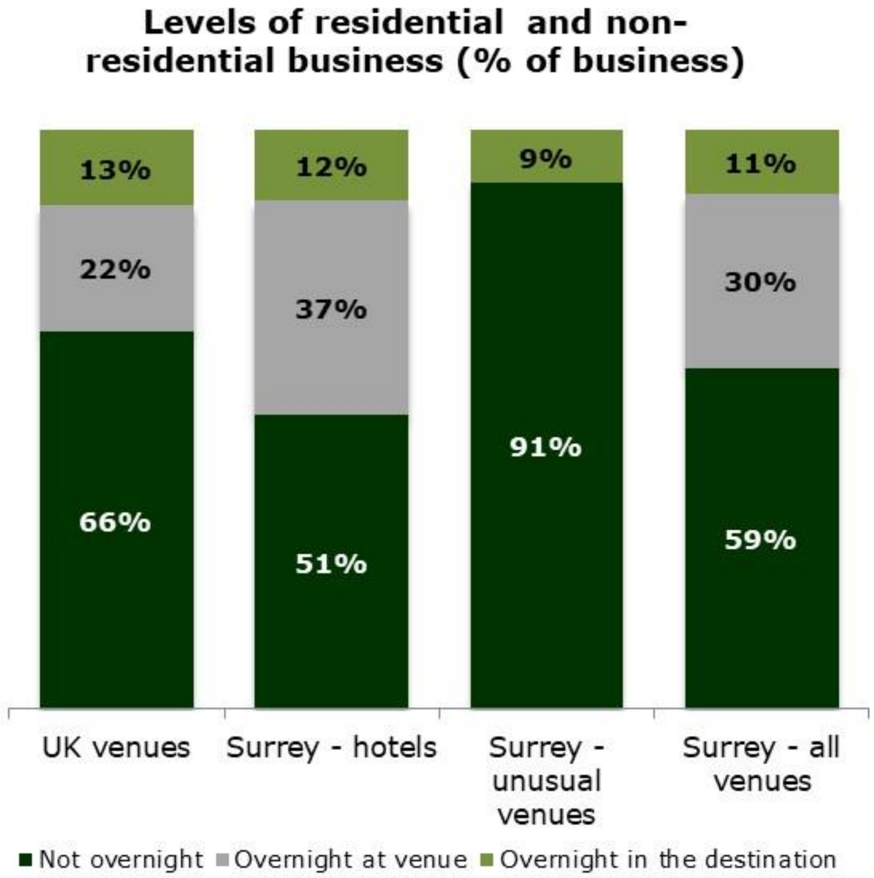
3.2 Levels of Residential and Non-residential Business

The following chart highlights the proportions of event business that involved an overnight stay in the destination (but not at the event venue itself), an overnight stay at the event venue, or no overnight stay.

Just over half (59%) of event business was undertaken on a non-staying basis (i.e. with no stay either at venue or in destination).

In terms of event business that was overnight, delegates were primarily staying at the venue in question (residential business). This was above the national average (30% compared to 22%).

The overall pattern was similar to 2015.



3.3 Event Duration

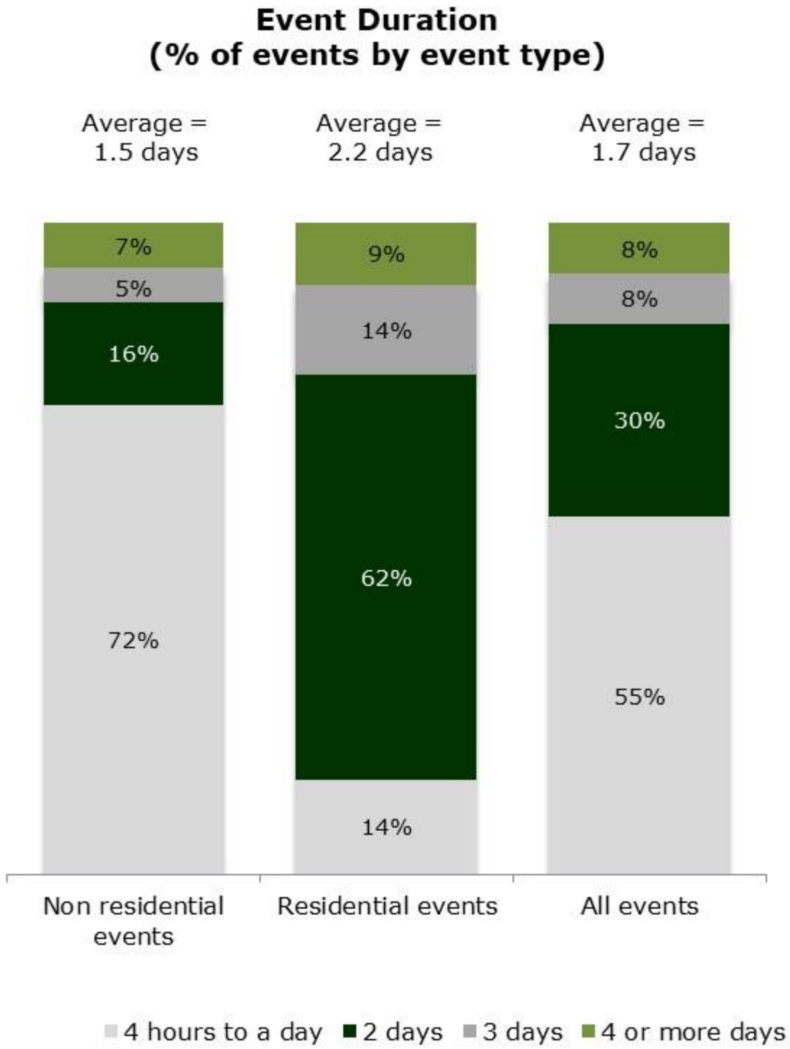
The majority of events (55%) lasted 4 hours to a day and about a third (30%) lasted two days. The overall average length of an event was 1.7 days (compared to 1.6 days in 2015).

Non-residential events (i.e. an event that did not involve an overnight stay at the venue, although in some instances could involve a stay in the destination) lasted on average 1.5 days (1.4 days in 2015) with around 72% lasting 4 hours to a day.

Residential events (i.e. an event that involved a stay at the venue) lasted on average 2.2 days (the same as 2015). The most common length for residential events was two days (62% of events), with 23% lasting 3 or more days (compared to 20% in 2015).

Event duration was slightly above national averages – i.e.:

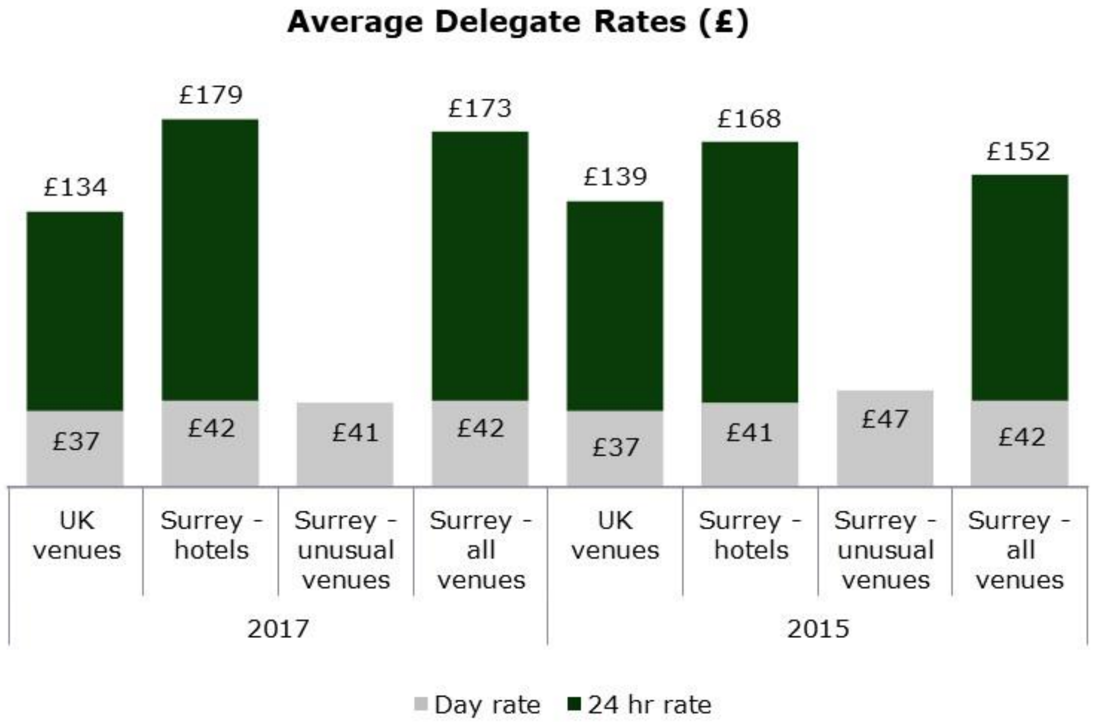
- 1.7 days for all events compared to an average of 1.6 days nationally; and
- 2.2 days for residential events in Guildford and Surrey compared to 2.0 days nationally.



3.4 Delegate Rates

Residential / 24-hour delegate rates in Guildford and Surrey, at £173, were significantly above the national average (£134). Day rates, at £42, were also above the national average (£37).

Residential rates were up on 2015. Days rates across all venues were static.



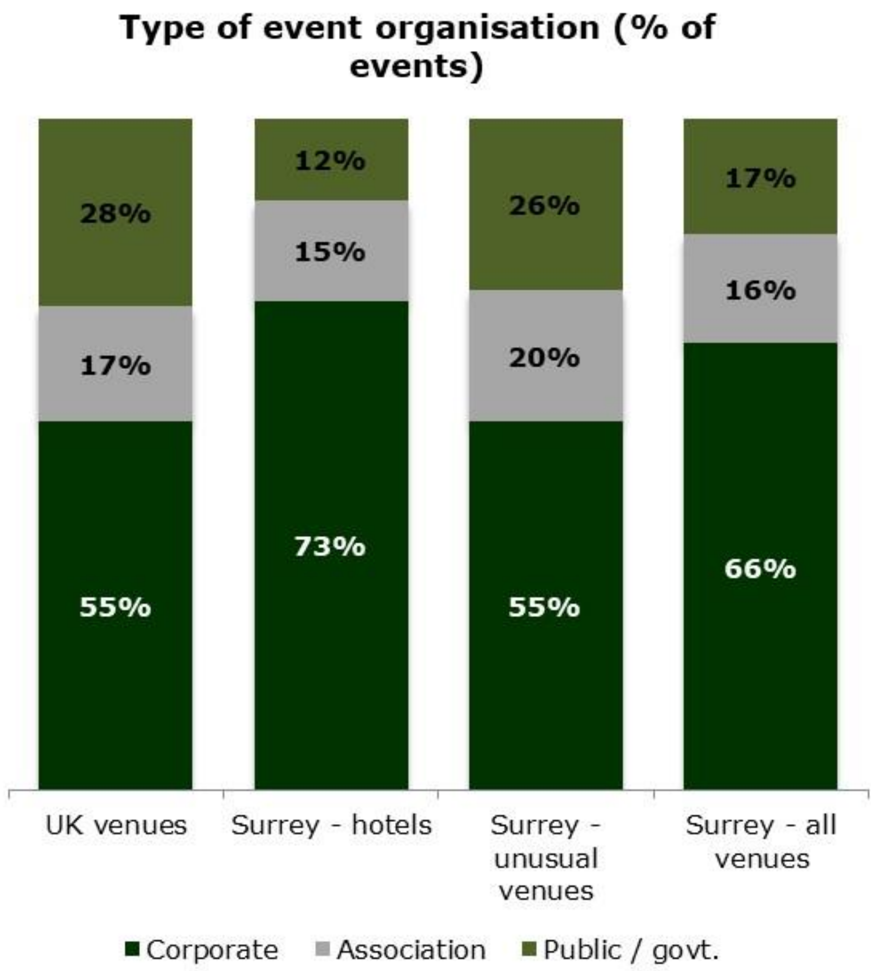
3.5 Type of Event Organisation

Among Guildford and Surrey venues, the corporate sector was the largest sector – accounting for 66% of business. This was higher than the national average (55%).

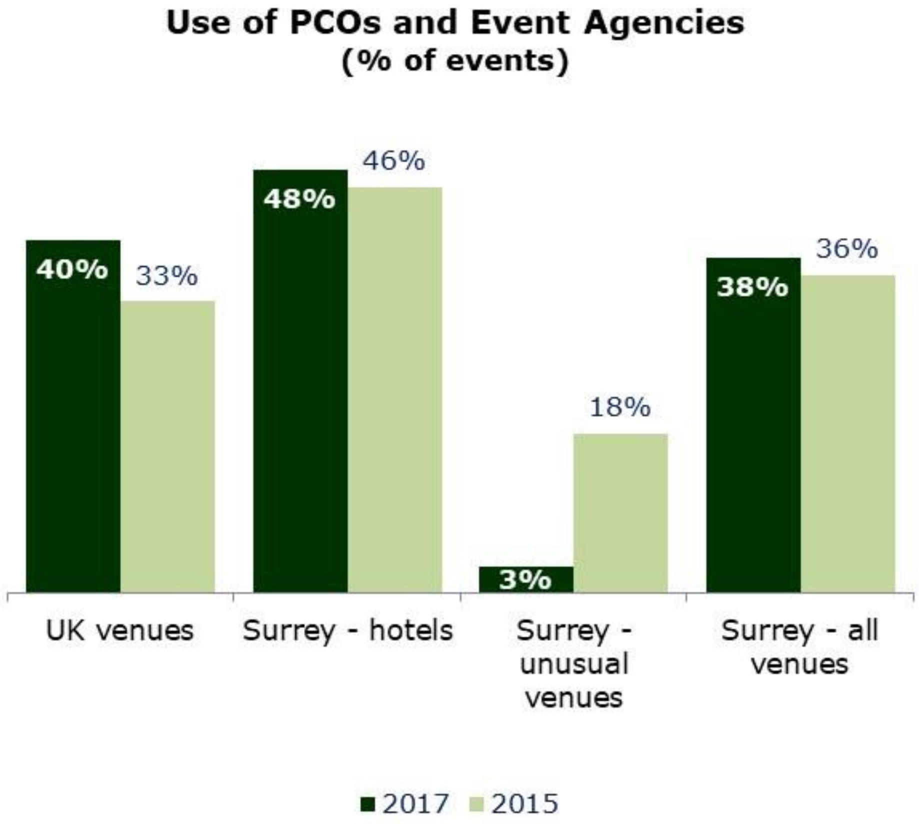
The public and government sector accounted for 17% of business (down from 22% in 2015), with the association sector accounting for 16%.

The corporate sector was more important for the hotel sector (73% of events). Unusual venues attracted a higher proportion of public sector events - 26% in 2017 (compared to 33% in 2015).

In overall terms, the pattern was similar to 2015.



3.6 Professional Conference Organisers (PCOs) and Event Agencies



Nearly four-fifths of events (38%) in 2017 were organised by a professional conference organiser (PCO) or event management agency. This was significantly higher for hotel venues (48%). The proportion of events in unusual venues organised by PCOs was significantly down on 2015 (3% compared to 18%). This possibly reflects the downturn of business in unusual venues in 2017 (section 3.1).

Use of PCOs in Guildford and Surrey was similar to the national average (40%).

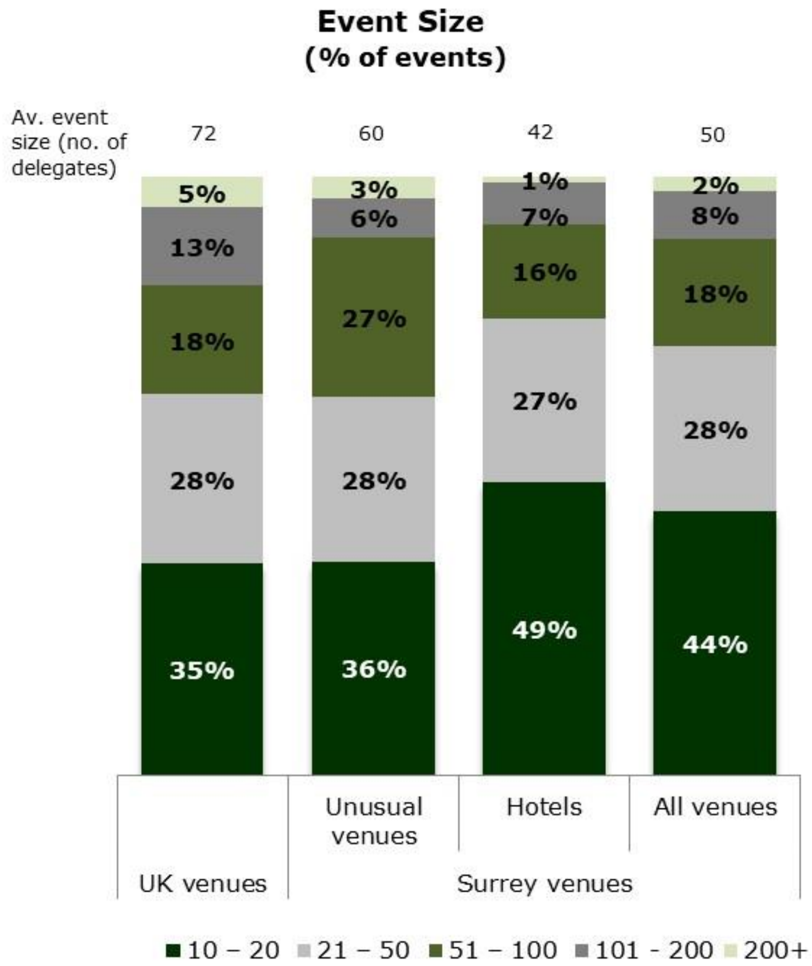
3.7 Event Size

Most events in Guildford and Surrey (72%) had 50 delegates or fewer – the majority of these were for fewer than 20 delegates (44%).

Approximately 2% of events had more than 200 delegates.

The average event size was 50 delegates. This was below the UK average. Average event size was up in 2017 compared to 2015 (an average of 46 delegates per event).

This echoes the national patterns (where the average event size was also slightly up in 2017).



3.8 Origin of Event Business

As the chart highlights, the majority of event business (76%) to Guildford and Surrey venues was generated from the South east region. This was broadly the same as 2015 (79%).

About a fifth was from the rest of the UK (19%) and a small proportion (5%) was international.

Unusual venues tended to attract more local / regional delegates.