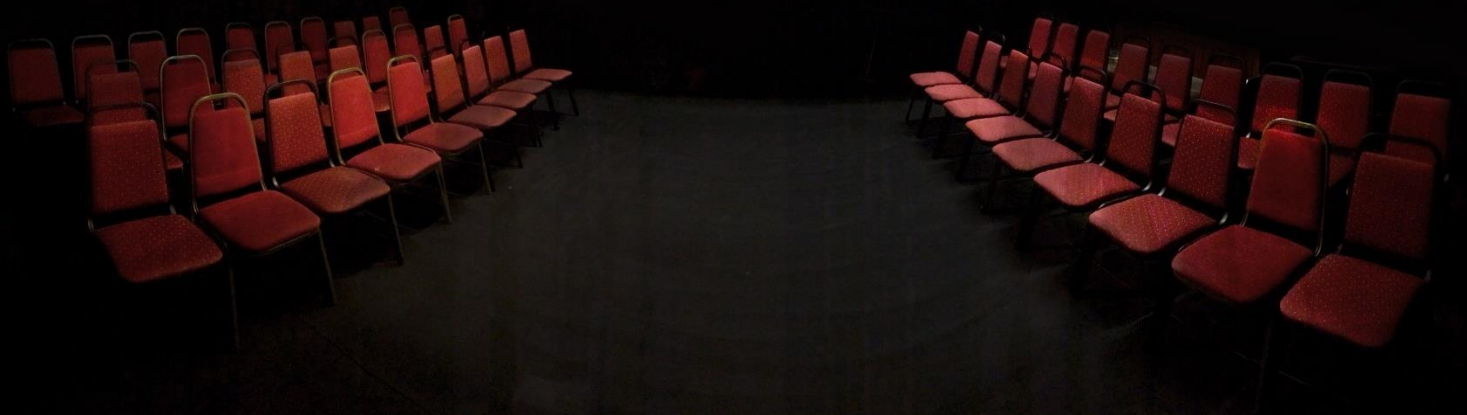


***come back
to me...***



**A survey of
audience attitudes
to returning to
OffWestEnd theatre**

Report by **OffWestEnd**

June 2020

www.offwestend.info

info@offwestend.info

OffWestEnd supports, promotes and celebrates the work of over 100 independent, alternative and fringe theatres in London. The impact of Covid-19 has devastated theatre generally and OffWestEnd venues, which operate on very limited resources, have a range of challenges to address before they can re-open.

ABOUT THIS SURVEY

This survey explores the attitudes of theatre-goers, both **generally** and with specific reference to **OffWestEnd theatre**, and in particular their feelings about **when they might return, how their habits might change post lockdown, and what will help them make a decision to return.**

The **primary target** for this survey was our mailing list of around **8,500 OffWestEnd subscribers**. We invited OffWestEnd venues to circulate the survey as well but, given that many of them are working on a skeleton staff, we did not expect many to be able to do this. In addition, we promoted the survey via social media.

There were **3 parts** to the survey:

- **actual theatre going pre lockdown**, generally and regarding OffWestEnd
- **likely theatre going post lockdown**, generally and regarding OffWestEnd
- the **demographics** of the respondents

We had 759 responses, which is about 9% of our subscriber list, and a reasonable number in order to provide valid and useful results.

OffWestEnd / June 2020 / www.offwestend.com / info@offwestend.com

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

There are **a lot of keen theatre-goers**: **89%** of respondents attend some form of theatre once a month, nearly **40%** attend once a week and **97%** are missing it!

42% of respondents spent **£20-50** on theatre tickets per month, including for OffWestEnd theatre.

OffWestEnd theatre is **popular**: pre-lockdown, **18%** attended an OffWestEnd venue **4 out of every 5 theatre visits**, **21%** attended on **3 out of every 5 visits**, and **30%** attended on **2 out of every 5 visits**.

Post lockdown, respondents had various views as to **what they were most looking forward to** with regard to OffWestEnd theatre: **for 54%**, it was **“the chance to see something that I am unlikely to see in a larger venue”** and for **51%** it was **“the shared experience in an intimate ‘off west end’ setting”**.

Regarding **attending any theatre when it re-opens**, **39%** were “very likely” to attend in Sept 2020 – this rose to **55%** if it was Dec 2020 – ticket sales in the autumn would therefore seem problematic for all.

79% of respondents said they were also **very likely to return to OffWestEnd venues post lockdown**, or that choice of theatre was not a relevant issue.

64% of respondents stated that **“extra protective measures at the theatre”** – on-site temperature taking, hand sanitisers, awareness of extra cleaning procedures, etc” would help persuade them to return.

While **56%** felt that **having seats 2m apart** was a **“positive”** factor, **34%** felt it was “negative”.

82% stated that a **vaccine** will make it **very likely they will return to theatre**.

Pre lockdown the most popular form of **transport to get to theatre** was “train or tube” (**83%**) but this **falls to 61% post lockdown** – going by car or bike, or walking, were all more popular post lockdown.

Though most (**62%**) say that Covid-19 will not affect where they visit theatre, **30%** did say that they will **try and go to more local theatre** – a possible bonus for OffWestEnd theatres which are spread across London.

The demographics of respondents are outlined on pages 15-17.

PRE-LOCKDOWN

On average, how often did you go to theatre in general prior to the lockdown?

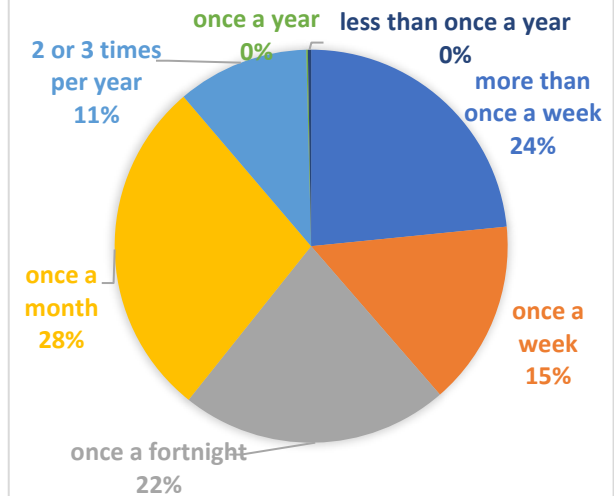
More than once a week	177
Once a week	115
Once a fortnight	167
Once a month	212
2 or 3 times per year	82
Once a year	1
Less than once a year	2

24% attended more than once a week

39% attended at least once a week

61% attended at least once a fortnight

89% attended at least once a month.

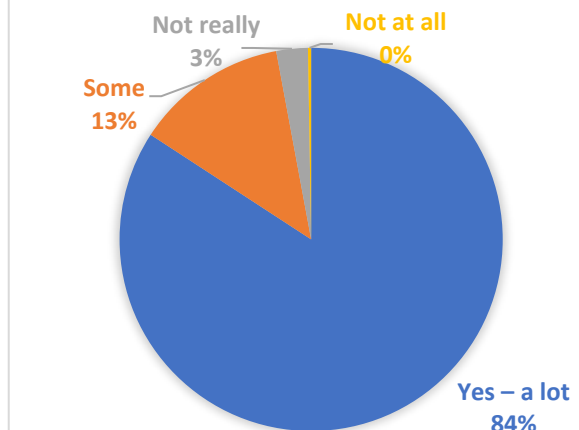


Are you missing the opportunity to attend theatre in general?

Yes – a lot	634
Some	97
Not really	20
Not at all	2

84% are missing going to theatre a lot.

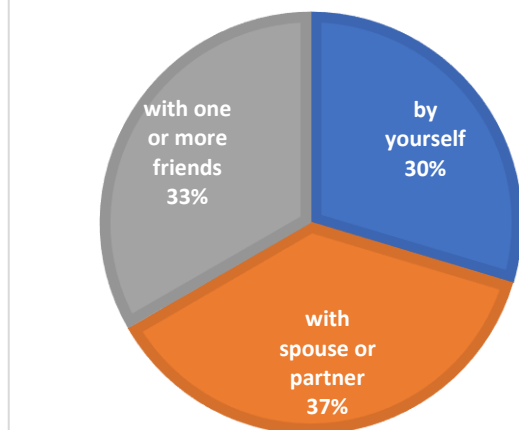
97% are missing it “some” or “a lot”.



Who did you usually go to the theatre with, if anyone?

I go by yourself	223
I go with your spouse or partner or someone else in the same household	279
I go with one or more friends (who do not live in your household)	251

About equally split between the 3 options.

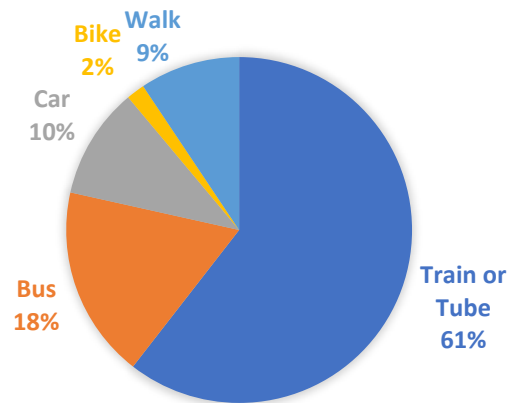


Which means of transport did you most often use to get to the theatre?

Train or Tube	633
Bus	188
Car	109
Bike	18
Walk	98

Train / tube is clearly the most popular option.

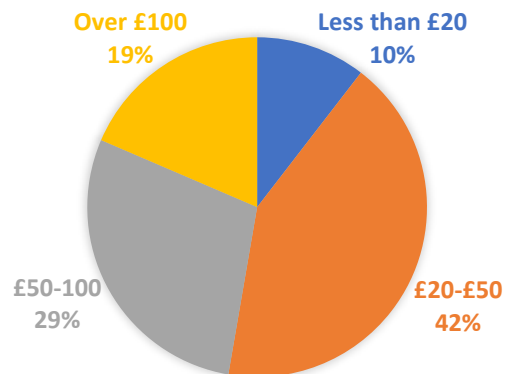
This question was repeated in the post lockdown section below – and the responses did change.



How much did you spend on tickets per month, for any theatre?

Less than £20	79
£20-£50	319
£50-100	217
Over £100	140

The largest group (42%) spent £20-£50 per month, but 29% spent **£50-£100**, and a not insignificant number (19%) spent **over £100**.

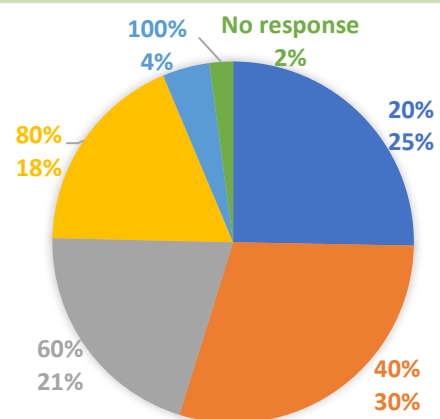


Of your theatre visits, how many were to OffWestEnd theatres?

20%	192
40%	224
60%	156
80%	139
100%	32
No response	16

The responses were fairly evenly split between the 20% / 40% / 60% / 80% options.

69% visited OffWestEnd theatres at least 40% of the time.



Please list a few of your favourite OffWestEnd theatres.

704 responded to this question:

“OFFWESTEND” THEATRES

Above Stag x35
Albany x3
Arcola x 109
Arts Depot
Barons Court x9
Battersea Arts Centre x 32
Bernie Grant Arts Centre
Bloomsbury
Blue Elephant
Boulevard Theatre x10
Bread & Roses x8
Bridewell x13
Bridge House Theatre
Bridge x12*
Broadway Barking
Brookside Theatre Romford
Bunker Theatre x14
Bush Theatre x62
Calder Bookshop & Th x2
Camden People’s Th x11
Canal Cafe Theatre x2
Cervantes x4
Charing Cross Th x33
Chickenshed x7
Chiswick Playhouse x4
Cockpit Theatre x9
Coronet (Print Room) x14
Courtyard
Crazy Coqs x3
Drayton Arms x19
Etcetera x10
Finborough x84
Gate x25
Greenwich x25
Half Moon x3
Hen & Chickens x9
Hope Theatre x33
Hoxton Hall
Iris
Irish Cultural Centre
Jack Studio Theatre x39
Jackson Lane x7
Jermyn St x74
Katzpace x2
Kiln x46
King’s Head x81
Leicester Square Th x19
Lion & Unicorn x11
Little Angel Theatre x2
Lost Theatre x2
Lyric Hammersmith x47

Millfield
Mirth, Marvel & Maud
Mountview
Network Theatre x3
New Diorama x22
Old Red Lion x45
Omnibus x5
Orange Tree Th x58
OSO Arts Centre, Barnes x4
Other Palace x24
Ovalhouse x3
Park x126
Pentameters x5
Playground Theatre x3
Pleasance x20
Polka x4
Queens Th Hornchurch x21
Questors x2
Rich Mix x5
Riverside Studios x4
Rose (?) x3
Rose Playhouse Bankside x2
Rosemary Branch x5
Shoreditch Town Hall x5
Soho Theatre x52
Southwark Playhouse x179
Space x9
St Brides Institute x2
Stockwell Playhouse x2
Stratford (?) x2
Stratford Circus x3
Tabard Theatre x11
Tara Arts x5
Teatro Technis x2
Th Royal Stratford East x20
Theatre Delicatessen
Theatre503 x26
Tower Theatre x10
Trafalgar Studios x36
Tristan Bates x11
Turbine Theatre x7
Unicorn Theatre x9
Union x49
Upstairs at Gatehouse x29
Vaults x43
Waterloo Arches
Waterloo East x15
Watermans
Watford Palace x3
White Bear x22
Wiltons Music Hall x29
Yard Theatre x8

Ye Olde Rose & Crown x7

**OTHERS NOT IN WEST END
(but members of SOLT)**

Almeida x 65
Arts Theatre x5
Barbican x 4
Bridge Theatre x6
Donmar Warehouse x29
Globe Theatre x5
Hackney Empire x16
Hampstead Theatre x64
Menier Choc Factory x76
National Theatre x19
Richmond Theatre x8
Rose Theatre Kingston x13
Royal Court x31
Young Vic x59

OTHER THEATRES

Arches (Vaults?)
Beck (Hayes) x2
Belmont Theatre
Camberley Theatre
Erith Playhouse x3
Exchange in Twickenham
Hampton Hill Theatre
Holland Park
Matchstick Piehouse
New Victoria Woking
Orchard Dartford x2
Place
Pump House, Watford
Putney Arts Theatre x4
Troubadour
Union Chapel, Islington
Wembley Theatre
Wimbledon Theatre x4
Yvonne Arnaud Th, Guildf’d

WEST END THEATRES

Coliseum
Dominion
Duke of York
Garrick Theatre
Gielgud Theatre
Lyric Theatre
Noel Coward
Old Vic x15
Queens x2
Royal Opera House
Sadlers Wells x3

Shaftesbury
Southbank Centre x3
Theatre Royal Haymarket

OUTSIDE LONDON

Alexandra Th Birmingham
Barn, Cirencester
Birmingham Hippodrome
Birmingham Rep
Chichester
Churchill Bromley x4
Edinburgh Playhouse
Grand Opera House Belfast
Grand Th Wolverhampton
Kenneth More, Ilford
Latchingdon Tractor Shed
Lyceum Edinburgh
Manchester Palace
Mercury Colchester
Milton Keynes
Octagon in Yeovil
Oldham Coliseum
RBL Reading
Royal Hippodrome Eastb’ne
Salisbury Playhouse
Sheffield Crucible x2
Traverse Edinburgh
Watermill

? VENUE/LOCATION

Abbey (Dublin?)
Artist Studio (?)
Factory (?)
Octagon (Bolton?)
Turnham Green (?)
Union Street (?)

OTHER COMMENTS

- & any other play in any theatre we fancied seeing
- and any theatre that captions plays
- arts centres
- love them all
- over 50% of those on your list for different reasons
- too many to list
- too many to mention

Apart from emails from OffWestEnd about new shows and special offers, do you also subscribe to other mailing lists which provide information on theatre?

704 (93%) responded “YES”.

Can you tell us which newsletters you subscribe to?

GENERAL NEWSLETTERS

ACE
Arts Professional
ArtsNews
Artsreach
Audience Club x13
Ballet News x2
BECTU
British Theatre Guide x3
Britishtheatre.com
Broadway World x15
Central Tickets x32
Culture Whisper
Dash Arts
Elementary Watson
Encore Tickets x4
Ents24.com
GetIntoTheatre
Last Minute
London Pub Theatres x3
London Theatre 1 x2
London Theatre blog
London Theatre Direct
London Theatre Guide x2
London Theatre News x2
Londonist
Love London
Love Theatre x12
Monday Web Site
NODA
Official London Theatre x16
Official West End
Playbill
PR companies
sadietakesthestage.com
Seat Fillers
Sedos
See Tickets x5
seefilmfirst
SOLT x8
Stage Audience x3
Stage Faves x2
Stage Newsletter.
Stage x51
Stagedoor x5
Stagetext
Stickyfloors.net
SWET
Tait Arts
Tanya's tickets.
Teddington Theatre Club
The Week Guardian TLS
Theatre Manual
Theatre tickets direct
Theatre Tix
Theatre Weekly
TheatreClub
Thespie x2
ticket sellers
Ticketmaster x10
Timbre 4

Time Out x21
Tix Today
Today Tickets
Today Tix x32
UK Theatre
UKTW.
Vamos
West End
West End Stage
West End Theatre
West End Wilma x32
westendtheatrecom
What Next?
What's On Stage x104

OFFWESTEND THEATRES

Above the Stag x4
Arcola x10
Arts Depot
BAC x2
Bernie Grant
Bridge Theatre x3
Bush x3
Chiswick Playhouse
Coronet Th (ex Print Room)
Drayton Arms
Finborough x7
Gate Theatre x2
Half Moon
Hope Theatre x4
Hoxton Hall
Iris Theatre x3
Jack Studio Theatre x3
Jermyn Street Theatre x8
Kings Head x7
Leicester Square Theatre x2
London Theatre x6
Lyric Hammersmith x2
Millfield
New Diorama Theatre x2
Old Red Lion
Orange Tree x7
OSO Arts Barnes x2
Other Palace x3
Park x8
Pleasance
Queen's Theatre
Hornchurch x5
Questors
Riverside Studios x3
Soho Theatre x3
Southwark Playhouse x19
Stratford East x2
Tara
Theatre Monkey x2
Theatre Royal Stratford East
Theatre Royal x2
Theatre503 x4
Tower Theatre Company
Unicorn x3
Union

Upstairs at the Gatehouse
x3
Vaults
Watford Palace x2
Wiltons x3
Yard Theatre
Ye Olde Rose & Crown

OTHERS NOT IN WEST END (but members of SOLT)

Almeida x16
Barbican x8
Bridge x4
Donmar x11
Globe x8
Hackney Empire x2
Hampstead Theatre x8
Kiln x2
Menier Choc Factory x5
National x56
Old Vic x20
Richmond x2
Rose Theatre Kingston x3
Royal Court x8
Young Vic x9

OTHERS IN LONDON

Belmont
Half Moon Putney (music venue)
Masterclass
Open Air Regent
Regents Park
Royal Albert Hall
Sadlers Wells x2
Southbank Centre x6
Tobacco Factory Venues
Wimbledon x2
Woking Theatre
Yvonne Arnaud Theatre

WEST END THEATRES

Adelphi
ATG x24
Covent Garden
Delfont Mackintosh x6
ENO x2
LWTheatres x3
Nimax x2
Palace Theatre
Peacock Theatre
Really Useful Theatres x2
Royal Opera House x7

OUTSIDE LONDON

Abbey
American Shakespeare Th
Barn
Belgrade
Bristol Theatre x2
Bury Met

Chelmsford Theatres
Chichester Festival x2
Druid
Dublin Fringe Festival
East Lane
Eastbourne Theatres
Elliott & Harper
Empire Theatre Liverpool
Garden Suburb Theatre
Hoddesdon Theatre
Lighthouse Theatre
Longfield Hall
Lowry
MAC
Mayflower Theatre Soton
Merlin Frome
Milton Keynes
New Vic
Northwall
Octagon Yeovil
OLT x2
Opera House Manchester
Oxford Playhouse x4
Paines Plough
Palace Manchester
Peterborough Theatres
Pia Express Live Jazz
Provincial theatre in the midlands
Pump House
RSC x13
Rondo Bath
Royal Theatre Windsor x2
Salisbury Theatre
South Street
Torriano Meeting House
Ustinov Bath
Wales Millennium Centre
Wardrobe Theatre Bristol
Wiltshire Creative Venues
Windmill Brixton (music venue)

OTHER COMMENTS

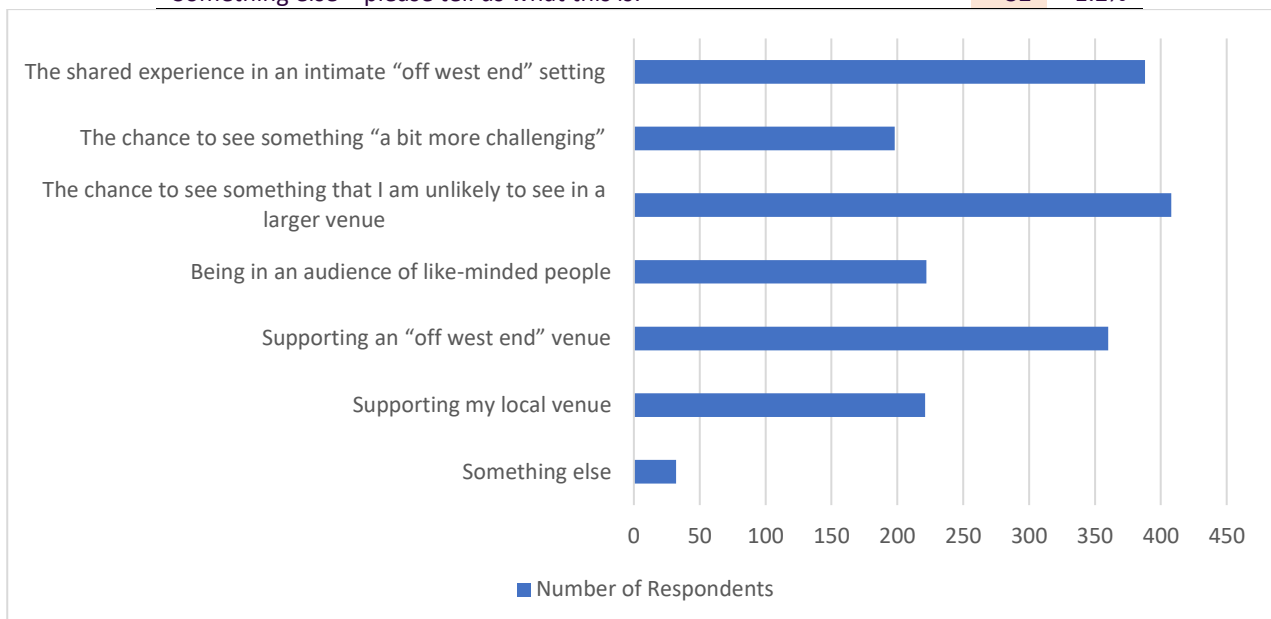
Over 100 comments were along the lines of "all I can find" or "individual theatre mailing lists" etc. A few people weren't sure. Other comments mentioned amateur sites, FB pages and local websites. Finally, there were about 12 responses that used initials or acronyms which did not seem to refer to any known theatres, venues or newsletters.

POST LOCKDOWN

(let's assume that if and when theatres re-open in 2020, there will be some social distancing restrictions)

What are you most looking forward to about attending OffWestEnd theatre in the future?

The shared experience in an intimate "off west end" setting	388	51.1%
The chance to see something "a bit more challenging"	198	26.1%
The chance to see something that I am unlikely to see in a larger venue	408	53.8%
Being in an audience of like-minded people	222	29.2%
Supporting an "off west end" venue	360	47.4%
Supporting my local venue	221	29.1%
Something else – please tell us what this is:	32	1.2%



Any other comments:

*cheaper price for amazing theatre that often ends up in West End.

A really exciting life- or at least game-changing theatre, an event, not just entertainment nor something I could find on the telly.

Being able to experience theatre properly again, rather than via my laptop

Captions for I am deaf.

Continuing to working in these venues with the teams that are built

Experiencing theatre live

Friendly welcoming venues

Getting to see good work and interesting stagings

Going out with my "theatre friends" and a sense of normality - theatre is a big part of my life

Hopefully some of the things I had booked that were subsequently cancelled

Just being in a theatre!!!!

Live as opposed to recorded media New Theatre.

New writing especially musical theatre

Non-distancing opening

Nothing beats live theatre, anything can happen, emotions are more visceral in live (especially close) spaces

Rare musicals and plays

Seeing a brand new story told live

Seeing live theatre in general

Something that my 85 year-old mum can go to. Usually Alan Ayckbourn. (If you included music venues I'd say going alone among the like-minded in a scrum)

Spending time with my theatre-going friend

Supporting artist colleagues

Supporting friends' shows

Supporting Gay Theatre

The chance to see New Writing showcases.

The experience of live theatre in general

The live experience

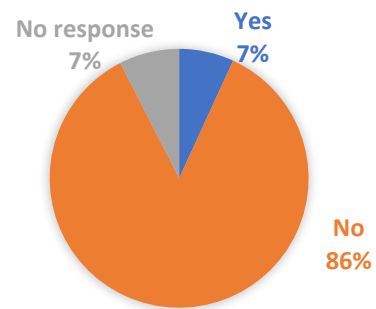
Watching with friends is an entirely different experience to watching online. I miss having a good discussion in the interval, etc.

Working again!

Are you actively booking NOW for any theatre events in the future?

Yes	52
No	650
No response	57

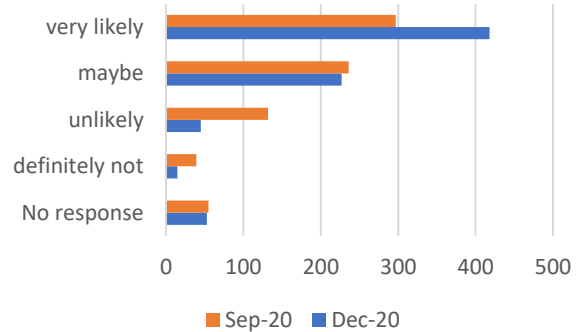
The majority (86%) are not booking at present.



When theatres in general re-open, how likely are you to attend?

	Sept 2020	Dec 2020
Very likely	297	418
Maybe	236	227
Unlikely	132	45
Definitely not	39	15
No response	55	53

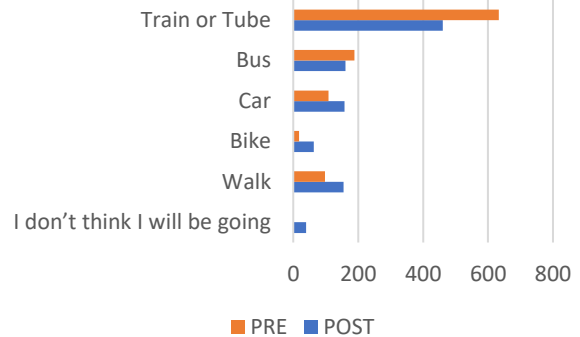
Far more are likely to return in December rather than in September – so more missed ticket sales.



How do you expect to travel to theatre post lockdown (compared to pre-lockdown results above) ?

	PRE	POST
Train or Tube	633	461
Bus	188	161
Car	109	158
Bike	18	63
Walk	98	155
I don't think I will be going	0	40

Travel by train/tube is less likely post lockdown – more will go by car or bike, or will walk.

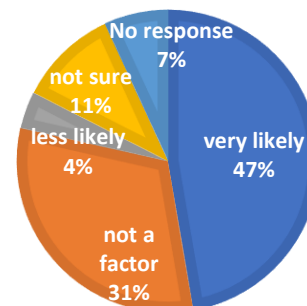


How likely are you to return to the smaller "off west end" venues as opposed to larger theatres in your area or in the West End?

Very likely	359
Not a factor	237
Less likely	30
Not sure	81
No response	52

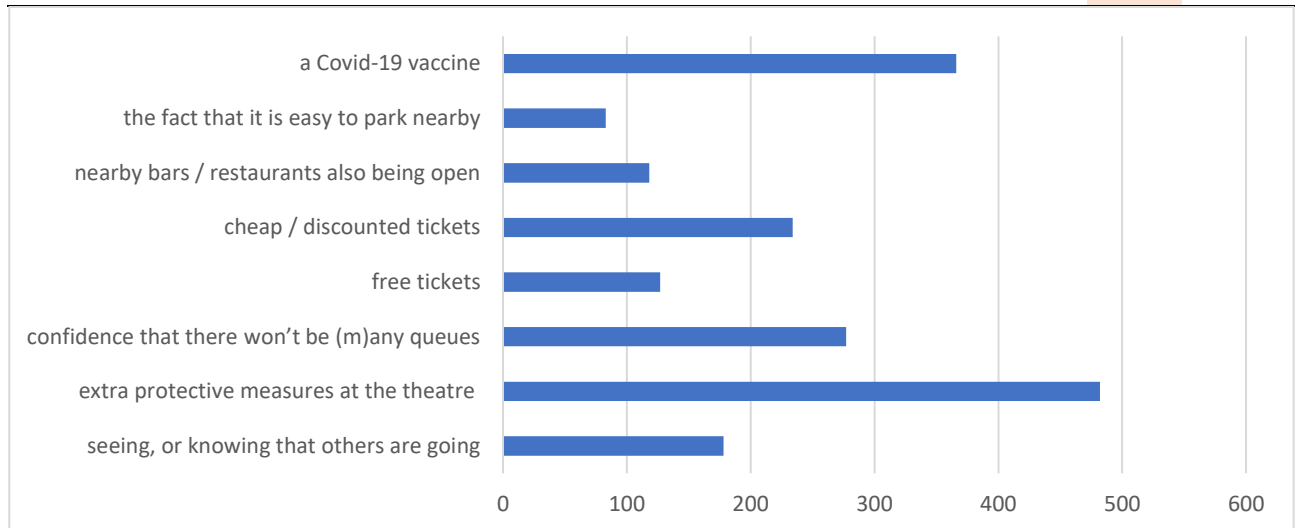
78.5% are very likely to return, or this is not a factor in their decision making.

very likely not a factor less likely
not sure No response



Are any of the following likely to help persuade you to go to theatre in general?

Seeing, or knowing that others are going	178	23.5%
Extra protective measures at the theatre – on-site temperature taking, hand sanitisers, awareness of extra cleaning procedures, etc	482	63.5%
Confidence that there won't be (m)any queues	277	36.5%
Free tickets	127	16.7%
Cheap / discounted tickets	234	30.8%
Nearby bars / restaurants also being open	118	15.5%
The fact that it is easy to park nearby	83	10.9%
A Covid-19 vaccine	366	48.2%

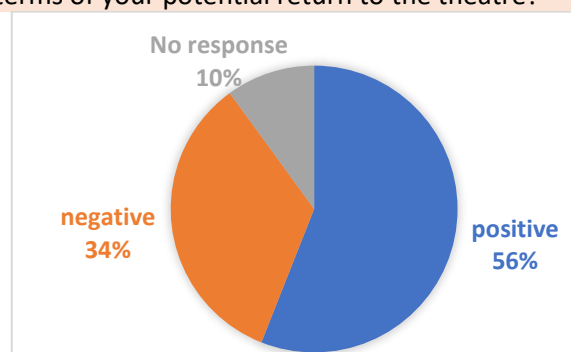


The largest number of responses is for **extra protective measures at individual theatres**.

Is having seats 2m apart a positive or negative factor in terms of your potential return to the theatre?

Positive	425
Negative	258
No response	76

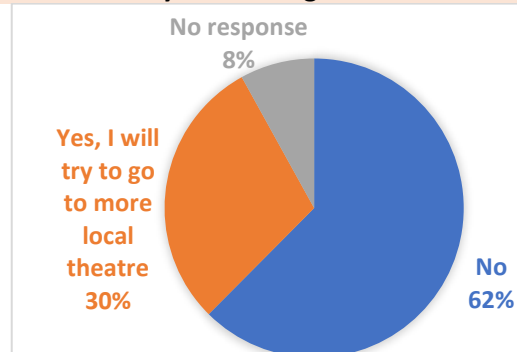
The majority feel 2m distancing for seats is a **positive step** but a significant number (34%) feel this will be a negative factor.



Is the Covid-19 experience likely to change the areas of London that you visit to go to the theatre?

No	474
Yes, I will try to go to more local theatre	224
No response	61

Though the majority say that Covid-19 will not affect where they visit theatre, **30% do say that they will try and go to more local theatre**.



Any other general comments

The following responses have been grouped by themes:

I AM KEEN TO GO AGAIN

As soon as the theatres are open I will be the first through their doors!

I am a 62 year old retired man who loves theatre , I want to get on with enjoying the rest of my life so am not afraid to go back to theatres as soon as they reopen!

I am hoping that smaller OWE venues may get an earlier opening - many have small capacity in any case

I can't wait to get back to London and the theatre. I am stuck in St Paul, MN USA, until the 14-day quarantine ends!!!

I live with someone who is in a vulnerable group and I'm a teacher so I will have to be careful, but I can't wait!

I will go to the theatre as soon as they open, and will go much more often

Looking forward to any opportunity to attend live performances.

Please know I live in the US and had my upcoming trip cancelled by the airline so will not be in the area this year. We WILL return and attend events again, they must thrive.

Please open as soon as possible. If people are scared they don't have to come.

Please open theatres as soon as you can!

We (my husband and I) attended around 350 shows in 2019 & find theatre experiences to be an integral part of life. It's amazing to immerse yourself in the moment. It can also be educational as well as escapism entertainment. And London has been a Theatre Mecca that must not be lost, especially the middle to smallish venues. It's there that many dare to experiment and reach for new expressions, or taking risks with new ideas or exposing current/old ones. It is often a voice to make things visible and understood where other methods fall short.

We'll be guided by the science! If theatres and public transport are safe then we will use them.

I WILL MAKE MY OWN DECISIONS

I just want to get on with my life and am prepared to take a risk as we all do every day of our lives.

I will act on my own thoughts and not that of others

I will take my own precautions to protect myself when going to events. At least until a vaccine is found.

Once theatres open, I will be going to see what I find interesting. I will be sensible and cautious but I will not stop doing something because of a virus - I will protect myself.

Not really bothered about CoViD-19 at this point - reckon I've had it, reckon London's pretty much hit herd immunity, long past ready to get back to normal, not going to say no to cheap/free tickets and extra space

Not waiting for a vaccine

Theatres to take precautions for audience members is to be expected, but at some point audience members will just need to take responsibility for their own attendance and take an educated 'risk'. Ticket purchasers to be made aware of safety measures undertaken by the theatre and accept terms that they are entering an enclosed space at their own risk. Let's hope the govt will allow venues to open soon and people to make their own choice.

This virus will not put me off at all. I will go again as soon as theatres reopen.

IT'S DIFFICULT / HOW WILL IT WORK?

Difficult question to answer. I will make my own judgement on if I think its safe at any given time. I might not want to book too far in advance based on that.

Difficult to be specific coz everything will be different

Fluid situation, I will make my decisions 'in the moment'.

I still can't see how theatres can open with any guarantees of safety for audiences, performers or venue staff. It's very worrying

It's an indoor experience, not good due to the virus. Crowds entering, leaving. Inclined viewing.

It's not just about the auditorium, it's what's happening on stage; it's exit strategies when the show is over, it's queuing for toilets, it's everything!

Looking forward to supporting off Westend theatres when it is safe to do so

Oh it's so difficult. Want to go but don't want to die.

These questions/answers are really impossible to answer. Everyone is just guessing

SOCIAL DISTANCING / OTHER PRECAUTIONS

Changing the seating makes no difference - you are still breathing the same air for hours

I do not know how theatres will cope with "social distancing". To separate every seat by a vacant seat is crazy. If you share a bed, you don't need a seat between you at the theatre. If you are a family of 4 who share a table at home, must you still sit two metres apart at the theatre ?

I don't think sitting 2metres apart in an air conditioned room will make it any less likely to spread virus'

I have NO interest in attending socially distanced theatre.

I like the idea of "family" groups of seats then 2m distance, not every person 2m distant; supporting local venue is critical - use it or lose it; it is the individual's responsibility to safe first, the venue can only help with this

I understand need for space between seats, but if we're indoors altogether I'd rather wear a comfortable mask than be spread out as we're still going to be breathing in same air!!

I want to support small theatres but will be harder to social distance so will likely choose a smaller number of shows to see.

I will not be returning to theatres if they do not respect social distancing measures. If they do, I will return asap.

I worry that having distanced seating will cost the theatres too much due to reduced audience numbers, but if it is what is required to reopen then I support it. However, social distancing will necessarily end and theatres may be important in helping people to understand that it is once again ok to be in close proximity to others, provided everyone is suitably cautious not to attend when potentially infected.

I'm not sure the 2 meters apart will work to be honest.

I'd say that seats 2m apart will have NO impact, but I had to choose one.

If 2 m distancing is introduced I might not return until all restrictions are down

If everyone is wearing masks and there is proper equipment to keep things and people disinfected, then the 2m can probably shrink. But masks would have to be mandatory.

I'm not sure how much help having seats 2meters apart would actually do. Better doing every other seat and saving the hassle/money to take out the seats. If people sign a waiver with their ticket purchase this could be a great way of covering the risk that everyone knows they are embarking on. Theatre MUST continue.

Let's remove the 2 metre distancing. 1 metre is what the WHO suggests

Personally, much as it pains me, whilst social distancing is in place I just don't see how audiences can return to smaller venues (and larger ones would find it financially impossible to open). Realistically I don't think theatres will or should open until mid-2021

Protective measures are a MUST. I was studying in London and the sheer difference in pandemic handling between the UK and my home country, which has been largely successful in combating COVID, is very stark. If theatres weren't instituting basic measures like requiring masks at all times, providing sanitiser, mandatory temperature taking, recording ICs for tracing etc. I don't think I could be confident in attending.

Roll on opening all theatres. Need to be creative, challenge the 2m rule (1m more sensible but still a challenge). Family groups can sit together.

The 2m apart restriction is only positive in a small step to getting theatres reopened again, but I don't think the theatrical experience will be the same until we can have full audiences. So it's a bittersweet positive response.

The 2m rule is face to face not side on

The concept of opening venues with distancing is a nonsense. There is no point in opening while distancing is required.

The fewer people, the better.

We'll go to any theatre that adheres to the 2 m distancing

While I wouldn't want to have to sit 2 metres away from audience members I happily would if it were a quicker way of getting venues open. It wouldn't bother me either way.

worried ticket prices will soar if less seating

HEALTH / AGE CONCERNS

As a vulnerable nonagenarian, I must be very cautious, although I love theatre and miss it.

As long as theatres follow prevailing health advice I shall go

Being 77, I don't intend to catch this virus so won't be going till I can be sure

Everything depends on the Government response and how the spread of the Virus develops. The Government is sending out such mixed messages that I don't know whether it is safe to visit a theatre or not so, for the moment, I'm staying home at all times.

Hygiene. Mostly important

I am in the clinically extremely vulnerable group so still slating the factors when I might be allowed out. I also travel to the Queens Theatre in Hornchurch every month for their Jump The Q so will continue with that when it is safe to do so.

I am shielding with a risky condition and over 80, so a lot will depend on a lot!

I have already had Covid with mild symptoms, so am not concerned about being a danger to others or getting infected myself. The answers I've selected are partly from a public health perspective, as this is my professional field.

It depends if there is a resurgence of Covid.

Might be a good idea to wear face masks for a while.

Not even a vaccine will save this. You really should close until the virus has been eradicated around the world. At the point there are zero cases is when I will return and you should close until then because people are dying.

Others coughing, that usually happens when at the theatre, is not going to be something that I am ok with.

Overall level of infection/risk in London. Mitigation on transport

TRANSPORT

I don't live in London - so much depends on safety of the trains

I live outside London so travelling in will be an issue and I am over 65 with husband over 70 so in vulnerable group

I am scared about travelling on public transport in the near future

I think not overusing TFL at the moment and leaving it less busy for essential workers is important. Therefore I think the distance I would have to travel by bike will influence my choice of venues. That being said that has always been an issue as getting across London in rush hour in time to catch a show has been tricky before. As a North/East Londoner I have plenty of theatres close by but I wouldn't mind going further. Going to the Orange Tree might be a bit unrealistic though.

I usually visit London 2/3 times a year, from central Scotland, so also have to take into account the risk of a 4hr+ train journey

I want to know that scientists think it is safe to end lock down before I start using public transport or going out again. What happens if book shows for later in the year and a second wave hits causing closures?

I will have to go to venues I can drive to. I live in the middle of Kent but won't be getting on public transport for a long time

I will probably try to avoid crowded places and I won't want to travel during rush hour. I live outside London so once I've arrived at Waterloo, not having to get on the tube and being able to walk instead would be a bonus for me so I'm likely to prioritise the Southbank etc

I will try to avoid using public transport if I can. I live in North London, so trips to The Brockley Jack will be ruled out for a while.

I would like to go to the centre, but a longer trip is likely to feel more stressful due to the longer journey (and often running times)

If the insanity continues in fear of this virus I will stay home

I'm not in London - it will affect where I travel because typically I would travel by train every week and see shows in the places they're happening - now travel is more of a barrier. It is less the theatre that worries us but the journey to get there

Just hard in London, to travel outside your borough without public transport. Could use a bike but they just always get stolen!

Sadiq Khan's imposition of a congestion charge 7 days a week is a disaster for people travelling into town. What a stupid thing to do!

Shows on Sunday so I can walk

The increase in the price and timing of the congestion charge means that I am much less likely to come into town as it adds too much to ticket prices

When theatres open, the most important factor for me will be whether I feel able to use public transport

Will want to avoid public transport and that's my main way of travelling

Worth thinking about parking more, as more will come by car
Would probably start by attending theatres that I can walk to

LOCATION / TYPES OF VENUES

I already mostly attend off west end theatres or fringe venues

I don't live in London so 'local' doesn't really apply.

I don't live in London so not likely to visit soon because of pandemic but would go to theatre if I still lived in London

I usually visit the UK for several months each year to visit family and I go to a lot of theatre

I won't be going to enclosed venues for a very long time but would support open air events

Must save theatres – otherwise heart of London dies

Please don't assume that all subscribers to this list live in or near to London. Local theatre in this case does not mean a venue in the Greater London area, it means in another county altogether.

Support for the smaller provincial theatres, they have struggled most

When I can I will continue to go to local theatre as well as London venues

SOME ALTERNATIVES?

I doubt I will attend ANY theatre until a vaccine is found but I am VERY happy to pay to view a theatre production on-line

The scheme put forward by Sam Mendes & others for the government to give theatres financial breaks including acting

as angels in return for a share of the later profits in order to save the theatre industry is vital. The industry would be dead if no help is forthcoming and one has to wait until a vaccine is found.

Try promenade immersive theatre. A lot depends on what the infection rate is at the time. Winter makes me more nervous as possible there will be a second wave.

Would like open air theatre in parks etc this summer and would go if audience from different households could be spaced out

OTHER COMMENTS

I think a common sense attitude needs to be employed with regard to Covid 19.

I will be less likely to take a risk on theatre that I don't trust will be excellent.

It all depends if this rotten Government actually does something!

Just being safe

Please don't close for good, I've yet to see Come From Away. 😊

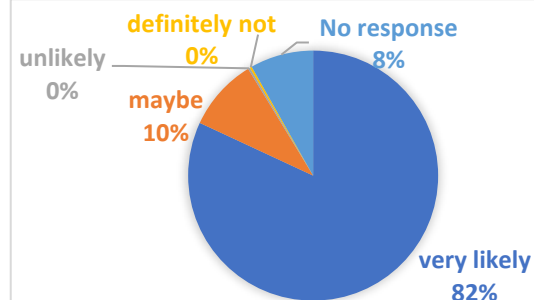
This too shall pass...

What put me off before was the research time needed to find something to suit three different people, usually on web sites that assume you know off hand where a theatre is.

Once a vaccine is available, how likely are you to attend theatre in general?

Very likely	621
Maybe	71
Unlikely	2
Definitely not	2
No response	62

A vaccine is the holy grail for the majority of respondents (82%).



Any other comments about returning as an audience member?

These responses are also grouped by theme:

IMPORTANCE OF THEATRE

Good luck and all best. Hope you get through this. Theatre is important.

It is so important to support theatre - one of the most vital parts of life and yet one of the most punished at the moment. Just that I am missing theatre, and very concerned for all of you, and will probably take risks to come back

Theatre is the life of the world, and contemporary drama--and Shakespeare--are its heart and soul!

Theatre is the lifeblood of London.

Theatres are a great way to relax, enjoy a new experience and to leave feeling inspired and happy. That is why I enjoy going to Theatre shows.

KEEN TO RETURN

Again as soon as we are able to get there we will return

Bring it on!

Can't wait [from quite a few respondents]

Desperate

Hope it's soon!

I want to feel human again. Self-isolating alone is lonely.

I want to help local theatre to thrive

I will always attend whenever possible

I will return regardless of events, as soon as theatres begin to show work and there is something I am interested in.

I will support theatre

I write about theatre and opera - and want to get back to that

If it was open I would return now

Look forward to attending theatre again

Miss it so much!

Please open theatres as soon as you can!

Really missing live theatre

Sooner the better [from several respondents]

Wanting to support actors and venues

Wary but looking forward to it

We are desperate to get back. Living in London without theatre to me is almost pointless. I would do anything to get back but the public transport worries me and friends the most.

KEEN TO SUPPORT THE SECTOR

Hoping for the best for all the artists and creatives.

I just really want to support off west end venues and help in whatever way I can to help theatre survive post Covid.

I really want to support small spaces. As a theatre blogger its something I love and especially fringe. Last year I went to nearly 200 productions. Supporting festivals will be crucial.

It will be a long time before I go back to the theatre (unfortunately) I will try to support in other ways/

The performing arts are an enormous part of our contribution to the world, and I look forward to making my contribution to them.

WORRIED ABOUT THE IMPACT

Missing it and worried for the industry big time!!

My husband and I work at schools, so are not of means for large financial support, but the greater share of our disposable income went to theatre. Most of the bookings we've lost (in the dozens thus far) we donated our unused tickets, some will just be saved for future dates. We continue to make small contributions to theatres & production companies and find other ways to help support artists, but not having vast resources while being fans of so many of each, ... well, we can hardly make any impact of note. I cry when I think of the potential losses in theatre/production companies/artists and pray for means of their survival to surface, for help to gather to salvage as much as possible for this beautiful London Phoenix to rise again!

NEED TO FEEL SAFE / COMFORTABLE

At present I would feel uncomfortable sitting in a crowded theatre be it large or small

As above, people coughing is not acceptable - unless they have face coverings - and then, if it is persistent it is not acceptable for them to be there.

Can't wait but I want it to be as safe as possible

I am missing theatre a lot. I miss experiencing something together with other people. I am aware that the industry is already struggling immensely and I hope that most venues and companies can somehow survive this. We have a cultural landscape that we can't lose. As long as we have some measures in place and can ensure the safety of people on and off stage I am more than happy to return to theatres.

I can't wait to go to the theatre again, it is my favourite form of entertainment BUT I would need to know that is was absolutely safe to attend.

I miss it so much and I just can't picture what would make me feel safe enough.

I MISS the theatre! I really want to go back to seeing theatre again but I need to feel safe.

It must be safe

It will probably be more of a feeling - do I feel safe

It's not about the date, it's about how safe it is for me other members of the public and the cast and crew. if its not safe for me - its not safe for the cast. Other countries have shown the

virus can be eradicated without a vaccine. this is what we should be aiming for.

It's such a difficult time I wish all theatres and culture venues good luck with sorting some safe environment

SOCIAL DISTANCING: NECESSARY / ESSENTIAL

I would be happier in every other row was left free and at least two seats between each household group

I'd rather be sitting 2m apart than not be going to see anything, but I understand this may not be possible for many venues and/or would possibly make tickets very expensive due to reduced capacity. i would also consider paying a few pounds to live stream OWE theatre if I was unable to attend in person, or to sit through some adverts which would fund a free release

It has to be a social distancing theatre

Maintaining social distancing is a must for me. I understand the concern about impact on the 'vibe' - but if it's not in place I won't go simple as that.

That toilets and bar areas are also able to maintain social distance

The main issue is the amount of people in one enclosed space.

Toilet facilities is a big issue - how can social distancing be achieved, especially in smaller venues?

Will expect socially distanced seating

SOCIAL DISTANCING: QUESTIONING THE 2M RULE

Difficult to be clear...at this stage even the 2m distance guide is uncertain.

The 2 metre "rule" is unscientific and frankly ridiculous, 1 metre is OK

You don't need seats 2 metres apart; you just need one metre between different households

SOCIAL DISTANCING: NOT A GOOD IDEA

I don't know if I'll get away with not answering about the seats being 2m apart but am genuinely indifferent!

I think the lockdown was an over-reaction anyway, and a big mistake.

Quarantine, social distancing etc plays no part in my deciding to return as an audience member.

SOCIAL DISTANCING: AN IMPEDIMENT?

I won't bother attending while distancing is required

If everything is social distanced, it would not be the experience I want

OTHER RESTRICTIONS – PROS & CONS

Happy to return with additional measures in place (e.g. temperature testing and availability of hand sanitisers

I don't want plastic screens or OTT health & safety rules

Just hope the experience is not spoilt by everyone wearing face masks!

Masks should be enough.

Open theatres and bars and restaurants and advise people to wear masks in public and in large social groupings

Perhaps there could be an extra 20p added to each ticket to cover the cost of face coverings issued by the theatres?

WHAT ABOUT THE PERFORMERS / TECH PEOPLE?

If the cast have to wear masks we would need surtitles. It would be very odd but perhaps necessary. Hand sanitiser, and compulsory mask wearing with strict guidelines on how to wear them.

The intimacy of the experience & safety of the cast are core issues. Social distancing is a major impediment, & while that is necessary it is hard to see how "normal" theatre can function

What about the casts – how will they cope with social distancing

HEALTH / AGE ISSUES

As a person with immuno-suppression I will not want to take any chances. Other people can be very thoughtless and careless.

As an over 65, I am naturally wary about intimate space.

As in the most at risk age group help to keep safe is important as younger people are more cavalier.

As we are in the shielding category, much as we would like to go back to our regular theatre going, we may not feel really safe until there is a vaccine or prophylactic treatment.

Availability of effective treatment

Being less demonstrative (no hugs) when I meet friends

Depends completely on the prevalence of the virus and so the chances of contact

Fear of uncertainty about virus, I think the Government was slow to act and too quick to encourage a return to "normal"

I am classed as extremely clinically vulnerable so I will return when I am allowed out there late no guidelines yet. I am also disabled so take a carer and need to park close by.

I am fearful of that others will not adhere to the necessary protective measures - I am in a vulnerable group and don't want to catch COVID-19

I am painfully aware that, as a slightly older & nervous audience member, with a husband in a high-risk group, my needs in this situation are directly at odds with the needs of theatres/venues & their staff. What makes me feel safe is likely to make operating an almost impossible task for them, especially financially.

I am torn between the desire for connection and live performance and anxiety neither to contract nor spread the virus

I will definitely go when I believe it is reasonably safe for me in my 70s

It all depends so much on how well the virus is contained and scientific advice, rather than when the government say it's safe to attend again.

It depends how things go over the next few months. My main aim is to avoid passing the virus onto my elderly mother.

Very keen to return, but wary of infection

Would be difficult to focus and enjoy a play if anxious about catching a virus

You have not given the option of 'Covid 19 has burnt itself out' - which is when I will be going back to the theatre

VACCINE

I am suspicious of a vaccine.

Not answering the above as I believe the vaccine to be irrelevant to my decisions.

Think I can't risk it until C19 vaccine or safe Covid 19 rate of infection

Vaccine might not work and you can't force people to get it. Just close until virus has gone.

Vaccine won't make any difference; theatre is a vital part of our cultural infrastructure - why wait for/rely on something un-tested

What does a vaccine have to do with it.

Will return but will never have the vaccine

LIFE IS A RISK ANYWAY

Be practical about it, life is a risk, but, we all cross roads every day (or did)

Initially it will be difficult not to be scared, but like anything you have to take a deep breath and move on.

PEOPLE SHOULD MAKE THEIR OWN CHOICES

Govt to allow people to make their own informed choice to attend.

TRANSPORT

Having to use public transport is a real issue.

I am just concerned that social distancing will be forgotten about and I do not relish traveling to the West End during rush hour.

I am not able to travel to the UK at the moment and not sure when it will happen

I am not keen on taking the train in the near future and that is usually the best way to travel apart from my local theatres

I expect some venues to open before others and, sadly, some to not open at all. Similarly some journeys (train to Clapham) may be safe before others (Overground to Dalston) and our return to theatre will adjust accordingly.

I have had COVID-19 tested positive and had few symptoms. Knowing if this gives me immunity (when scientists know) will give me reassurance. It seems highly likely that I caught CV in London in a theatre or travelling to a theatre the week before theatres close. I live near Southampton so any visit to London theatre requires train travel and normally tube journeys too.

I hope that if people are unwell that they will not attend and theatres will be more sympathetic in giving refunds. To be responsible requires compassion from management(s).

I hope ticket prices stay the same!

I live in Oxford and travelled up to London once a month by coach or rail so public transport puts me off going as well as enclosed theatre spaces

I live outside of London - so on top of the risks of being in an enclosed space at the moment, I also have 2 hour's journey on a train to factor in to the risk assessment :(

Longing to return. But theatre ticket prices are just not possible for me very much now, otherwise i would go every week

My concerns are not so much about being in the theatre but travelling on public transport. It's expensive and slow and inconvenient for me to drive but if I'm driving in for work then I'll consider going to the theatre too.

Need to know how easy will be to attend on own rather than a group, want to know if can still try for tickets on the day at box office

Travel is going to be an issue

Will depend on accessible public transport

ISSUES FOR VENUES

Going to the theatre is experiencing the performance with others (that's why the streaming is so bland) - a handful of people will not enhance the experience - and how will costs be covered?

Friendlier ushers

I am super concerned about the ability to fund productions with audience numbers reduced. I think those venues with non-fixed seats will be able to find the best layout solutions. But really do think we would all need to wear masks for it to have meaningful difference. my personal return to watching shows is further scuppered by fact that childcare is now almost

non-existent as the grandparents cannot help like they could before.

I think that the issue around toilet facilities is just as difficult as seating - for both genders

I will go back to the theatre regardless of whether there are physical distancing measures in place - and would not want theatres to make themselves uneconomic by trying to put on excessive measures.

Smaller OWE Theatres would be less risky to visit than larger ones. Fewer potential audience members in the first place

ALTERNATIVES: STREAMING

Dont understand why that now lots and lots of people are used to watching theatre streamed that with social distanced smaller audiences why then productions of the socially distanced performances are not offered streamed for a small fee to make up revenue for the seats lost if the production is wanted to be seen by many and all the seats are sold why theatres are not thinking of this

I do not believe that physical attendance in a confined space will work or be worth the venue's trouble. All available funding should be put into film and video and then transmission of performances. Venues should be able to charge the cheapest to median prices.

I really appreciate the streaming, which hopefully will continue and reach people who even in safer times couldn't get to London to see innovative theatre.

I shall have to be very careful to ensure I can safe distance until and unless I am confident that I am protected through immunity or that the virus is no longer in the community. I do think that the future for the theatre is in streaming performances for which I would happily pay.

I would happily pay for live-streamed tickets to a show I couldn't attend, or one that was sold out.

Not enjoying watching On-Line theatre on an I Pad too small no atmosphere

Stream and pay is the way to go.

ALTERNATIVES: VENUES / OTHER

Etickets only would be beneficial for less handling. If the 20min result test could be rolled out in scale I would happily arrive at a venue in time for screening and then surely no seat removal would be required? Cast and crew could be tested regular - as per the football teams! A vaccine may never come.

I can ONLY go to CAPTIONED shows so hopefully theatres will resume this firm of Access to the theatre?

I don't want to go to shows with audience participation / interactive experiences.

I hope all theatres will take the 2m distancing etc as an exciting opportunity for design filtering into the audience (if it is financially possible for the show to go on with limited capacity audiences)

I think rural touring theatre might lead the way. I would be very happy going to 'two planks and a passion' theatre in a church hall with a socially distanced audience while we wait for more sophisticated theatre to return one stage at a time.

Open air events much more appealing as long as strict social distancing in place. Won't be going to anything indoors where I have to sit statically (ie will go to an art gallery but not theatre) until there is a vaccine or the virus has been eradicated

Something new and appropriate to the new whole context is much more inspiring than trying to make a quasi version of what used to be

Theatre needs to learn from other spectator events, music, sport etc

What would encourage me back would be a shared format for listings (schema.org has a start) and more or better web sites for listing them - preferably by travel time from a given postcode, so I could check the few closest theatres until I found something like an Alan Ayckbourn. Distance is less help. I have a river to the north of me and an overground station quite close, so travel time can be very different from distance. You will need to change the way plays are performed until the infection rate goes down. E.g. promenade, immersive theatre, like Punchdrunk

LOCATION

Don't assume everyone lives in London. I travel 60 miles to get there by train and tube both of which will stop me from travelling

It's vital we support our local theatres especially unsubsidised ones

OTHER COMMENTS

As a long time theatre goer who rarely finds the West End at all interesting, maybe the long lockdown will clear some of its cross.

At present, the outlook looks bleak

Even less working class people will attend - unemployment is about to go off the chart

Have not missed theatre as much as I thought I would. Have enjoyed being at home with time for other hobbies. I think I will probably reduce my theatre attendance as a result.

I already have tickets for July onwards, may feel uneasy about going but a lot depends on what happens in the next few months.

I am partially deaf, so I have to select either captioned performances (eg at The National) or be in a very small venue where I can lip read, so I don't go to the theatre a lot now, unfortunately

I'm very conflicted. I want theatre to re-open, but I don't want to sit in a room with a lot of strangers, even if socially distanced. I also think it would be a strange experience to be in such an empty theatre.

My comments have been slightly affected due to the fact I have also had a baby a few months ago.

Sadly it's not a top priority as things are.

Seeing the shows posted online might make me more interested in the future

Still hoping to see the booked show at the Lyric that was cancelled

The Edinburgh Fringe is also a big part of my theatre going - and seeing events I've missed there during the year in London. I so hope that can happen again from 2021.

There are so many uncertainties that make this a difficult questionnaire to answer. Not least why would I be booking theatre tickets without having any details of what's on when? I am donating. For something that was cancelled I was told to hold on to the ticket for a rescheduled date. This week I was given the rescheduled date in September 2021!

Too many unknowns to give definite answers

With cancelled shows at the Queens we are donating our ticket money as a gesture rather than asking for refunds.

Your www is very helpful to find new venues

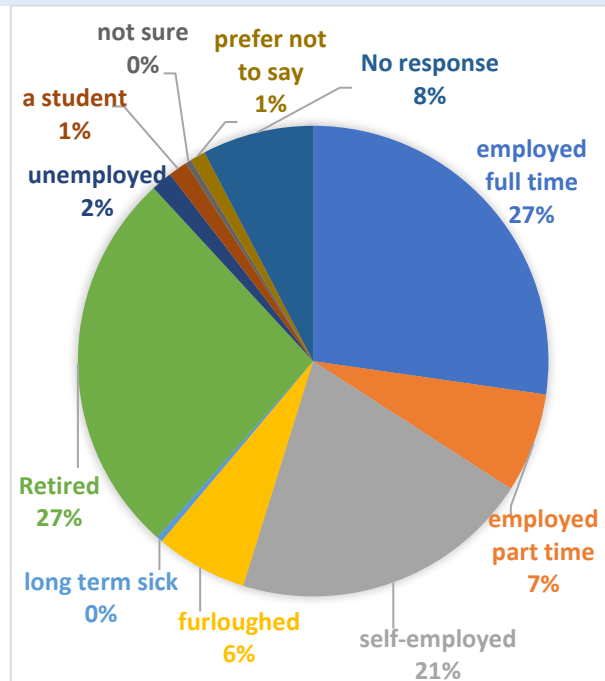
ABOUT YOU

This section explores the **demographics** of the respondents. In summary, most (**75%**) are either **employed (FT), self-employed or retired** and there was an almost equal split between these 3 groups. **52%** of respondents were **aged 55 & over**. **12%** were aged 20-34, **12%** were 35-44 and **14%** were 45-54. The majority (**63%**) **did not see themselves as a 'vulnerable' person** with regard to Covid-19. More **females (50%)** than **males (39%)** responded to the survey but **11%** chose not to say or did not respond. **The majority of respondents were white (83%)** – those choosing a non-white option covered a **wide range of ethnic backgrounds**. Of the respondents stating where they were living, nearly **80%** were from **London**. The remainder included 6 from outside the UK.

What is your current employment status?

Employed full time	207
Employed part time	52
Self-employed	157
Furloughed	48
Long term sick	3
Retired	202
Unemployed	11
A student	10
Not sure	3
Prefer not to say	8
No response	58

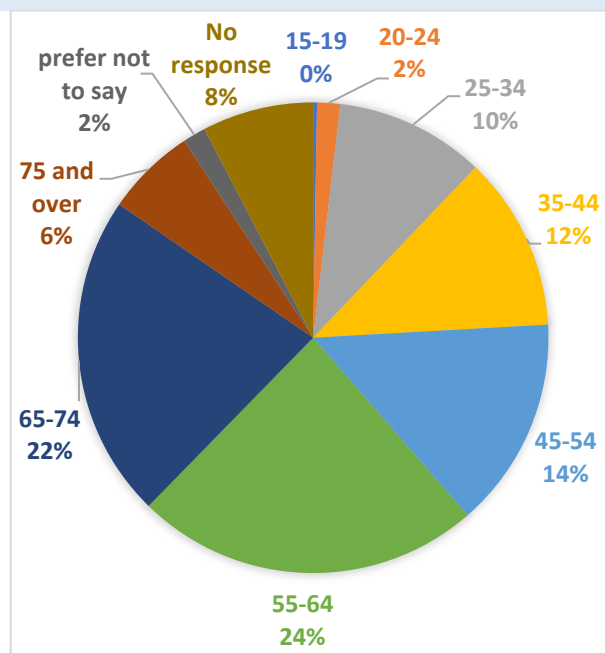
Most (75%) are either employed (FT), self-employed or retired and there was an almost equal split between these 3 groups.



Which of the following age ranges do you fit into?

15-19	2
20-24	12
25-34	78
35-44	91
45-54	110
55-64	180
65-74	169
75 and over	47
Prefer not to say	12
No response	58

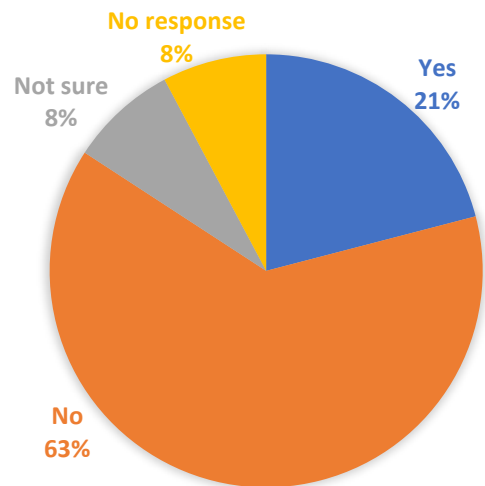
52% of respondents were aged 55 & over. 12% were aged 20-34, 12% were 35-44 and 14% were 45-54.



Do you currently see yourself as a 'vulnerable' person in relation to Covid-19?

Yes	159
No	480
Not sure	61
No response	59

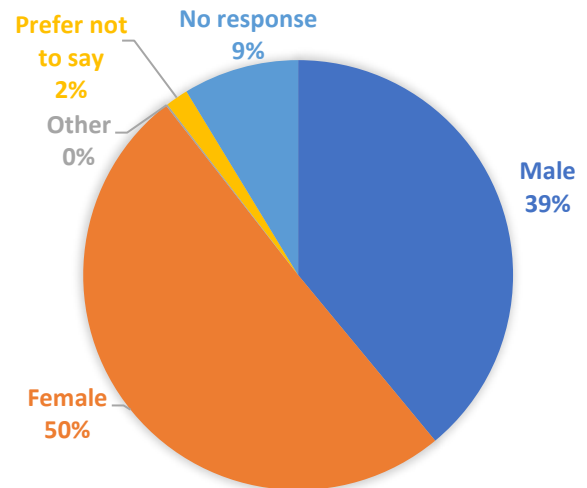
The majority (63%) did not see themselves as a 'vulnerable' person.



Which sex are you? (optional question)

Male	296
Female	383
Other	1
Prefer not to say	13
No response	66

More females (50%) than males (39%) responded to the survey – noting that 11% chose not to say or did not respond.

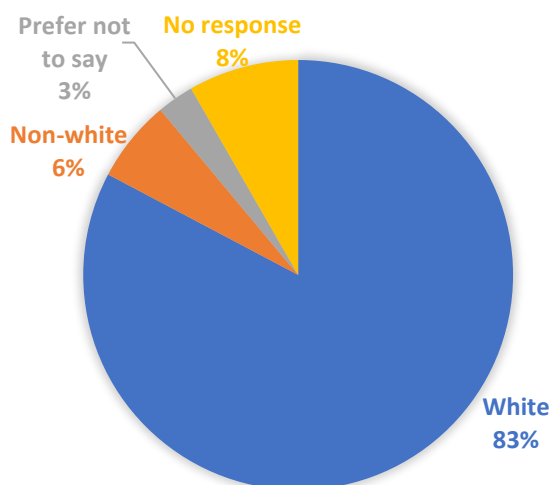


What is your ethnic background? (optional question)

White	628
Non-white	47
Prefer not to say	21
No response	63

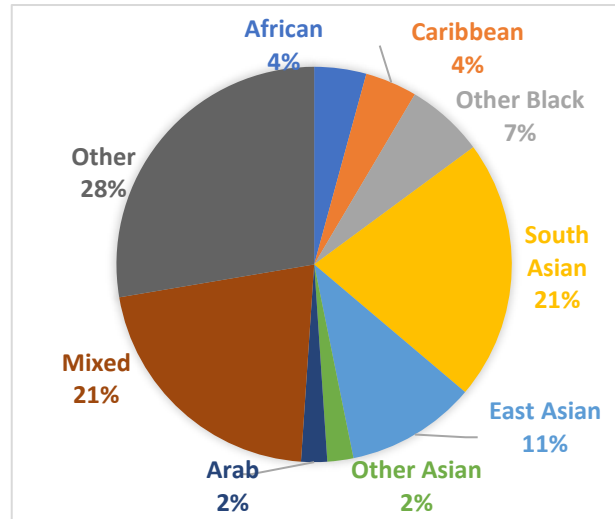
The survey listed a long list of options here and the results are presented across this table / graph and the one below, so it is easier to see the split of the non-white respondents.

The majority of respondents stated they were from a white background (83%). The equivalent of the UK population is 80%.



The breakdown of the non-white respondents is as follows:

African	2
Caribbean	2
Other black / African / Caribbean background	3
South Asian (Indian / Pakistani / Bangladeshi)	10
East Asian (Chinese / Japanese)	5
other Asian	1
Arab	1
Mixed	10
Other	13



What is the first part of your postcode?

LONDON: 525	SE x76	BL x1	HU x1	NR 6	TN x3
BR x6	SM x4	BN x8	HX x2	OX x7	TQ x1
CR x12	SW x60	BS x1	IP x2	PL x1	TR x1
DA x10	TW x19	BT x2	KA x1	PO x2	TS x1
E x63	UB x3	CB x2	KY x1	PR x1	WR x1
EC x8	W x40	CF x3	LE x2	RG x7	WV x1
EN x13	WC x8	CM x8	LL x1	RH x5	
GU x9	WD x8	CO x2	LN x1	S x2	OUTSIDE UK: 6
HA x18		CT x5	LS x1	SG x3	FRANCE: Paris
HP x8	X LONDON: 135	CV x1	LU x1	SL x2	GERMANY x2
IG x10	AL x6	DE x1	ME x4	SO x2	USA 21676
KT x13	B x5	DT x1	MK x1	SS x9	USA 92780
N x80	BA x2	EH x1	NE x1	ST x2	USA 98131
NW x36	BB x1	GL x1	NG x2	SY x2	
RM x19	BH x1	HD x1	NN x2	TA x2	

The majority of those responding to this question (79%) were from London. The breakdown across London postcodes is as follows:

