

Impact Report 2025

I NEED THIS WILDERNESS
FOR MY HEART TO BEAT

Highlights from 2025



40 years of New Designers

In 2025, New Designers Fair, the UK's most established graduate design showcase, celebrated 40 years – with 39 of those at the Business Design Centre. This long-standing partnership reflects the value we place on trust, consistency and helping organisers grow over time.

Read more about Our Industry, Clients & Suppliers on page 9.



The Power of Events

Working alongside a range of partners, our team took part in a range of volunteering opportunities - including the launch of the Schools Engagement Programme through the Power of Events, inspiring young people to explore the wealth of careers available in our industry.

Read more about Our Community on page 7.



Carbon Reduction & BDC Garden

In 2025, we reduced our carbon footprint by 76% against our baseline year of 2018/19. Some of our team also completed Carbon Literacy Training and we inaugurated our roof kitchen garden, which provides herbs and seasonal vegetables to our on-site restaurant.

Read more about Our Environment on page 4.



Sunday Times Best Places to Work (Small Company)

We were delighted to be recognised as one of the Sunday Times Best Places to Work in the Small Organisation category, an award reflecting our people-focused culture.

Read more about Our People on page 5.



New Digital Signage

We installed new state-of-the-art digital signage across key areas of the venue, an investment that will help create a better visitor experience through improved wayfinding while supporting lower-waste operations.

Read more about Our Company on page 2.

Our Company



An introduction by Max Bull, Chief Commercial Officer at the Business Design Centre

2025 was a defining year for the Business Design Centre. It was our first full year under new ownership and a year of strong performance, investment and progress. But just as importantly, it was a year that showed what kind of business we want to be.

As a venue, we know our role goes beyond hosting events. We have a responsibility to support our people, strengthen our community and reduce our impact on the environment.

From our work towards Net Zero to our partnerships across Islington and the wider events industry, we are committed to using our platform in a positive way.

This report shares some of the steps we took in 2025 and the progress we made across planet, people and community. It also reflects our ambition to lead by example and help shape a more responsible future for events.



A Year of Changes

2025 was a year of change, marked by Dominic Jones stepping down as CEO of the Business Design Centre after 26 years in the role and a total of 35 years at the company. Max Bull was promoted to Chief Commercial Officer, with responsibility for overseeing all commercial and operational areas of business.

EN Indy Awards

At the same time, the Business Design Centre continued to be recognised for excellence. We were named Best Supporting Venue at the Exhibition News Indy Awards and were also included in The Sunday Times Best Places to Work 2025 list for Small Organisations. Both accolades reflect the support, care and effort our team puts into helping our organisers bring their events to life, successfully and safely.

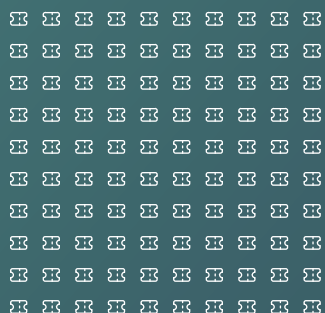


Our 2025 in numbers



100+ Events

With 73% returning
from previous years



10

New Exhibitions &
Conferences



857K

People through
our doors



105

Resident
Businesses



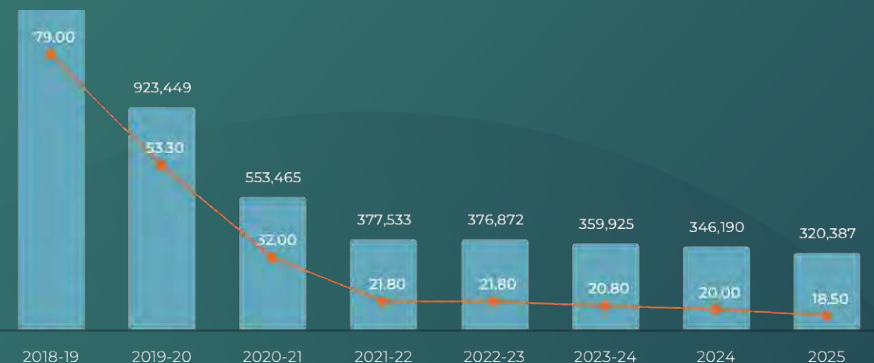
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Charities &
Community
Projects Supported



Our Environment

Reducing our environmental impact remains one of our biggest priorities. In 2025, the BDC entered its **sixteenth year** as a Certified Carbon Neutral venue. During this time, we have continued to reduce the footprint of the business while offsetting residual emissions. Working with carbon consultants at ecollective, we have established a benchmark for our carbon emissions and set goals and targets to help us achieve Net Zero by 2030. Notably, we made a **76% reduction** since our baseline year in 2018/19.



The bars represent our total emissions throughout the years, whilst the red line shows our carbon efficiency.

“

Working with our 3rd party independent consultant, ecollective, we have continued to make reductions in our carbon emissions year-on-year and maintain our Net Zero target by 2030. These reductions have prevented an incredible 6,000 tonnes of CO2 being released in to the atmosphere over the past 8 years.

Chris Harris
BDC Sustainability Lead



Carbon Labelling

One of the key areas of focus was to collaborate with our catering team, the Good Eating Company, to improve carbon labelling across the F&B offer at the venue - increasing transparency and encouraging lower-carbon behaviour.



edie25 Collab for B Corp Month

In March 2025, we sponsored the edie25 B Corp Mixer. This networking event featured a sustainable drinks cabinet, where 12 B Corp-certified drink brands showcased their commitment to people and planet.



Recycling rates

As we continued our journey to Net Zero, we improved waste segregation across the venue and achieved a 35.91% recycling rate (compared to 31.3% in 2024). Through the continuation of our Donate not Waste programme in collaboration with social enterprise A Good Thing, we donated unwanted items from events to local charities.



New Bins

New bins for recycling, compostable items and food waste were introduced throughout the building and in Jack's Restaurant, with clearer branding to provide visitors, tenants and organisers to dispose of waste properly.



Our People

Welcoming New Members & Celebrating Milestones

In 2025, we welcomed one new staff member and continued our internship programme, with Amelia Bower joining us for a one-year placement from Oxford Brooks University as our Venue Services Coordinator. In addition to welcoming new members, we celebrated fantastic long-service milestones with Leanne Pettyfer marking her 15-year anniversary and Charlotte Barker and Nanthini Sivarasa toasting to 10 years.

Health & Wellbeing

Supporting the physical and mental wellbeing of our team has been a priority throughout the almost 40 years of the BDC. This is why we offer a range of benefits, from annual subscriptions to Headspace or Calm and health cash plans to private pension and financial support sessions. To improve their mental and physical health, BDC staff have opportunities to recharge with weekly yoga, quarterly chair massages and biannual sound bath sessions.

Company Breakfasts

Company breakfasts continued to play a central role in our wider calendar of opportunities – both formal and informal – to connect, collaborate and celebrate each other's successes. In 2025, company breakfasts were held in-house, with our teams coming together to share updates and plans for the year, and attend an insightful session on culture and change delivered by keynote speaker Chris Paton.



Over the course of each year, we take the time to ensure the whole team have access to professional development as well as new and innovative ways to connect with themselves and prioritise their mental and physical wellbeing. This is done through finding ways to bring staff together, to talk and more formally, by putting in place policies and practices that support them to live their lives in the way they need and want.

Sherry Thomas
BDC People Manager



Our People



Development

We continued to review and improve our governance, ensuring our policies evolve in addressing the needs of the team. Policies such as Neonatal Care Leave, Jury Service, Positive Work Environment Policy and more were updated.

Professional development and training plans continued to be implemented, with annual goal-setting days across each department feeding into the personal development of each individual.

As part of our Women in Exhibition, isla and AEV (Association of Event Venues) memberships, the team also benefitted from optional learning sessions and conferences covering a wide range of topics from AI, industry trends and self-improvement. Finally, some of the team also completed Carbon Literacy Training, reaching new awareness of the impact of everyday actions on the environment and setting pledges to reduce personal carbon emissions.



New Talent Group

The New Talent Group was reformed during 2025, with 5 of the newer members meeting with Dominic, Max and Sherry to discuss and to feed in new ideas and innovations. Subsequently, initiatives have been set in motion, including updates to the shift work benefits and the addition of non-alcoholic drink variety and social events.

Our Community



As a venue rooted in Islington, we believe our impact should extend beyond the events we host. Giving back to the community is one of the values at the heart of the BDC ethos – whether that was through volunteering at a range of events or fundraising for local charities, in 2025 we continued to strengthen community partnerships and create opportunities for our team, tenants and neighbours to come together.

“One Day at Christmas is more than a date – it’s a chance to bring the community together, welcoming isolated and vulnerable residents to the BDC for festive food, entertainment and connection. It’s incredibly rewarding to see friendships form, with many guests returning year after year with people they first met at the event.”

Cully McDermid

Marketing Executive at Business Design Centre

“The Business Design Centre has been a core partner of Islington Giving for over 15 years, delivering significant impact for local communities and demonstrating their belief in a more equal Islington.

Whether it is hosting 90 corporate volunteers to make Angel Crackers and benefit isolated and lonely neighbours, donating their billboard to raise awareness, or contributing to the goals and impact of Islington Giving by sitting on our board – the BDC’s ongoing commitment to support people in their borough has far reaching impact. Over the years they have helped us to support hundreds of community organisations, reach some of our most vulnerable residents, and enabled us to find new audiences for our work.”

Isobel Miller

Fundraising and Communications Manager at Islington Giving

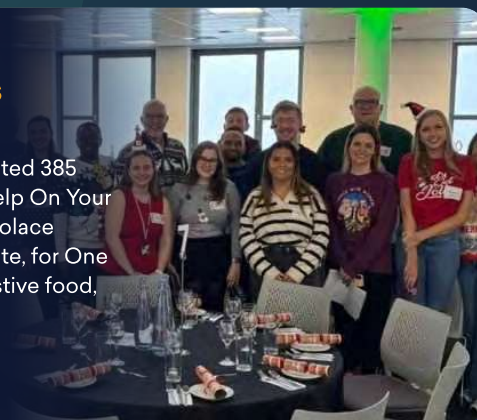


Cracker Day

In support of Islington Giving’s Winter Appeal, the Business Design Centre hosted a corporate day to assemble over 1,600 Christmas crackers in collaboration with the charity, Angel’s Business Improvement District and other local businesses. Sold online and throughout Islington, the crackers provided funds to support programmes and initiatives that help prevent loneliness in the local area.

One Day at Christmas

For the third year running, we hosted 385 guests from AGE UK Islington, Help On Your Doorstep, the Stuart Low Trust, Solace Women’s Aid and the Peel Institute, for One Day At Christmas, a day full of festive food, music and entertainment.



Our Community



Twilight Walk

In support of the Brain Tumour Charity, some members of our team took on the Twilight Walk and raised an incredible £2,330 to fund vital research in accelerating a cure for brain tumours.



Angel BID Groups & Islington Anchor Institutes

Being active in the local community has always been key to our business model, and in 2025 we continued to be represented as one of Islington Council's Anchor Institutes across their working groups. We also sit on groups across Angel Islington, our Business Improvement District team, to stay connected and provide support to local businesses wherever possible.



Tenant BBQ, Quiz & Christmas Lunch

The resident event calendar was as busy as ever, with an annual charity quiz night in support of Run Kids Run, a summer BBQ and a Christmas lunch for all the businesses that call the BDC home. In addition to these seasonal events, tenants could take part in a 5-a-side football tournament and regular networking breakfasts, promoting connection with their neighbours and present their services.



Tenant events

From Easter to Eid and Diwali, we created opportunities for our staff and tenant community to come together over shared lunches. With food cooked by colleagues from across the venue and support from our on-site businesses, these moments truly celebrated the spirit of our connected community.

Our Industry, Clients, & Suppliers



Industry Groups

We know that meaningful change can't happen in isolation. As a venue, we have the opportunity not only to improve our own operations, but also to work with organisers, suppliers, partners and industry bodies to help raise standards across the sector. In 2025, the team continued to represent their areas and share key findings, knowledge and questions across the Association of Event Venues (AEV) and Cross Association Working Groups. Our attendance to the UFI Conference, Women in Exhibitions World Summit, AEV Annual Conference and Carbon Literacy training in collaboration with AEO and Olympia also ensured our teams stayed ahead of industry trends and pivoted wherever needed to remain relevant.



Hosting the Industry

We welcomed the events industry to two conferences and one award ceremony – the AEO Conference and People's Awards in January and the Exhibition News Indy Expo in October – allowing our peers to get together and gain key insights on a variety of topics as well as networking opportunities.



Independent Research

Each year, we speak to a variety of our organisers to gain insights and feedback on their experiences at the venue, from creating the contract to live days. This year's annual report showed great average ratings across the board for our staff and facilities:

- Commercial: 9.5
- Marketing Support: 9.5
- Event Management: 9.5
- Venue Experience: 8
- Catering Feedback: 8



Sticky Wicket

Alongside supporting One Day at Christmas, the BDC team joined forces with our on-site AV supplier, Aztec, to take part in Sticky Wicket. Taking place each summer and bringing venues, suppliers and organisers together on the cricket pitch, Sticky Wicket is the events industry cricket tournament held in support of the Lord's Taverners charity.

Looking Ahead

In 2026, our focus will be on turning momentum into measurable progress. That includes continuing our path to Net Zero, embedding new ways to track and improve impact, investing in the visitor experience and building on the people-first culture that defines the BDC. We will also keep working with our partners, clients and community to show what a responsible venue can look like in practice.

“It’s about feeling that you have a venue partner which will compromise on the things that are important. It makes us feel heard especially on sustainability. B Corp is not just about certification. It’s about a way of being as a company and BDC gets this.”

edie 25

“Location and management-wise, I’d say it was the premier venue in London”

Catering Innovation Show 2025

“They make you feel like part of the family. It’s a unique vibe.”

Aesthetics Conference & Exhibition 2025

 Business Design Centre

 @bdclondon

 Business Design Centre

