



# LONDON

AT THE CUTTING EDGE FOR ASSOCIATION EVENTS





# WHY LONDON

## *London's cutting edge sectors mean business for association events*

Exciting new developments in London's technology and medical landscape have made the city even more attractive as a conference destination for international associations.

As a leading events destination, London is attracting a growing number of international scientific and medical association conferences in particular. In 2015 alone, associations ranging from orthodontics to occupational hygiene held their conferences in London, including Europe's largest: the congress of the European Society of Cardiology.

Although in the past, some conference organisers felt that London was not always actively seeking large conferences, the associations landscape has since changed, and London today successfully competes with the best destinations worldwide.

So, what is it that makes London a world-class host city for association conferences? Recent developments in the city's economic activity and intellectual capital are a key factor.



# 01

# INDUSTRY EXPERTISE

*A better economic, research and knowledge base*

London is a world-leading centre for business and finance, hosting 40% of the European Headquarters of the world's top companies. But recently the city has seen rapid growth in the technology and life sciences sectors, which are supported by the city's unbeatable knowledge and research base – London is home to 45 universities and colleges and is the only global city with four universities in the top 50 of the 2015 Times Higher Education World Rankings. For associations, choosing a conference destination where their sector is flourishing can add a significant business reason for their choice of city.





## Technology

London has the largest technology ecosystem in Europe, and the fourth largest in the world, with its Tech City being comparable to Silicon Valley. Home to over 40,000 digital technology businesses including giants such as Amazon and Google, London has also produced 13 of Europe's 40 billion-dollar unicorn technology companies – including Zoopla, JUST EAT and Rightmove. London also dominates in terms of financial technology start-ups, and its vibrant fintech community is now the world's largest.

Since 2014, London has celebrated this flourishing sector with the annual London Technology Week, Europe's largest gathering of tech events. Hosting more than 40,000 delegates and over 200 events, London Technology Week has featured major global brands including Bloomberg, Accenture, Stack Exchange and Goldman Sachs, as well as home-grown London-based tech companies such as Funding Circle and Blippar.



The Francis Crick Institute  
Justin Piperger Photography / Wadsworth3

**40,000** **DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY  
BUSINESSES**

## Life Sciences

But the biggest boost to London's appeal as a conference destination is the wave of new investment in the life sciences sector, as exemplified by MedCity, a collaboration between the Mayor of London and the capital's three academic health science centres, with the aim of nurturing an environment in which the life sciences industry can thrive. London's life sciences sector is booming, fuelled by investment in cutting-edge research centres including:

- The Francis Crick Institute: located close to the Eurostar terminal, this is a powerful consortium of six of the UK's most successful scientific and academic organisations.
- White City Campus: a new technology campus for the world-renowned Imperial College.
- UCL East: a cross-discipline enterprise and innovation centre with a focus on health and biological technologies, located on the site of Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park
- The Institute of Cancer Research: the world's second largest cancer research campus.

According to Caroline Windsor of TFI Group, and co-chair of ABPCO:

**“The medical community likes to showcase their conferences in cities that are centres of excellence, and with the advent of developments such as MedCity, associations now have more reasons than ever for bringing their conferences to London”.**

Becky Graveney, Head of Associations at London & Partners, London's official convention bureau, says:

**“London has seen major improvements in terms of our research and industry base, which now makes us stand high above other cities competing to win association conferences. Our incomparable supply of new research centres, particularly in the life sciences sector, has turned London into an intellectual capital and a world-leading hub of innovative research and development that attracts top scientists from all over the world”.**

These improvements are building upon the progress in London's other assets as a conference destination.



# 02

# CONFERENCE INFRASTRUCTURE

*From airports to accommodation, London has it covered*

London is Europe's most accessible city, with five airports offering direct flights to 348 destinations and the Eurostar connecting the city to Paris and Brussels in just over two hours. Then there's Crossrail, the new high frequency railway for London scheduled to be fully operational from 2019. The new service will provide easier, quicker and more direct travel opportunities across the capital, with journeys from Heathrow to Custom House for ExCeL London exhibition and conference centre in just 45mins. London is also well supplied with over 1,000 venues, from the traditional to the quirky, including larger spaces such as ExCeL London, QEII Centre and Central Hall Westminster. And, with over 125,000 hotel rooms, the city offers a wide variety of accommodation options too.





EXCeL LONDON



Inge Hanser of CPO Hanser Service GmbH, a European PCO, says:

**“There have been definite improvements. There are better conference facilities now, notably ExCeL London, but also in the centre of London. The Olympic Games had a huge impact: more hotels, better transportation, making London even more attractive”.**

But London’s conference professionals, with their longstanding experience of hosting events, also play a major part in the city’s success.

Alain Pittet of Congrex Switzerland, a Europe-wide PCO, has noticed this:

**“London’s conference professionals offer an excellent standard of service. The staff at London & Partners and venues such as ExCeL London really understand the needs of PCOs and associations. We always notice how well the different stakeholders in London all work together”.**

Inge Hanser adds:

**“I have the strong impression that London congress professionals have become more flexible in their negotiating. They’re listening more to clients and showing a real interest in winning their business”.**

# 348

**DIRECT FLIGHT  
DESTINATIONS**

# 1,000+

**VENUES**

# 125,000+

**HOTEL ROOMS**



# 03

# THE EXPERIENCE

## *Boosting delegate numbers*

Association conferences also tend to attract more delegates when they take place in London, in part due to the city's rich heritage and cultural offering. Most large association events see a 10% - 20% increase in attendance levels when they are held in London.





According to Alain Pittet:

**“Since the Olympic Games in particular, there has been a definite increase in delegate numbers whenever conferences are held in London. To give one example, the International Liver Congress attracted an unprecedented 11,000 delegates when it was held in London in 2014”.**

The 2015 congress of the European Society of Cardiology attracted a record attendance of 32,773 delegates to London. Delegates at London-based events are also more likely to prolong their conference trip to enjoy the city's attractions.

Inge Hanser remarks:

**“Compared with other destinations, in London participants are more likely to extend their trip by a few days for leisure purposes – this is clear to us from the length of some of the participants’ hotel bookings”.**

Associations can now capitalise on London's unique combination of intellectual capital and an outstanding conference infrastructure. No other city offers so much to help association conferences achieve their maximum potential.

# 11,000

**DELEGATES AT  
INTERNATIONAL LIVER  
CONGRESS**

# 32,773

**DELEGATES AT  
EUROPEAN SOCIETY  
OF CARDIOLOGY**

# IN SUMMARY

*The five main factors bringing more association conferences to London:*

## **1. ACCESS TO EXPERT KNOWLEDGE**

London is a world-leading centre for business and finance, hosting 40% of the European Headquarters of the world's top companies.

## **2. LONDON'S FLOURISHING TECH SECTOR**

Tech City, the largest tech ecosystem in Europe attracts a global business community looking to innovate and collaborate.

## **3. NEW INVESTMENT IN LIFE SCIENCES SECTOR**

Cutting edge research centres like The Francis Crick Institute add value to a host of medical congresses, including Europe's largest, the European Society of Cardiology.

## **4. BETTER CONFERENCE INFRASTRUCTURE**

Great transport links, five international airports and new developments like Crossrail (the new high speed railway for London and the South East completing in 2019) make London Europe's most accessible city.

## **5. THE EXPERIENCE FACTOR**

London's rich heritage and cultural offering, with an abundance of world famous attractions means that conferences held in London often attract 10-20% more delegates.



London & Partners is the official convention bureau for London. Our team of association experts can help you access the widest range of venues, hotels and support services available in this vibrant world city.

Services include:

- Free, impartial advice about venues, hotels, PCOs and DMCs
- Site inspections for organisers
- Accommodation housing service
- Introductions to partner suppliers
- Visa and VAT advice
- Bid production
- Promotional tools
- Group discounts on travel to/in London
- Delegate offers
- Visitor information

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Contact London & Partners to discuss a proposal, find out how to make a concept a reality and get some fresh inspiration for your association event in London.

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