

Birmingham has been ranked the most popular destination outside London for meetings,



conferences and events by the fifth annual British Meetings & Events Industry Survey (BMEIS). The business tourism survey provides valuable research each year into the buying trends of more than 600 event organisers from the corporate and not-for profit sectors in the UK.

Birmingham remains ahead of Manchester, Glasgow and Leeds as the preferred UK regional events destination among industry professionals. The 2013/14 survey also revealed that 'access' and 'location' are the top influencing factors in selecting a destination, while city centre hotels enjoy more use than any other type of venue. The survey's findings follow the third annual Meet Birmingham Showcase in November. The two-day event, organised by the city's official business tourism programme Meet Birmingham, provided a comprehensive overview of the region's conferencing offer. It brought together more than 50 regional suppliers and event buyers – who collectively place more than 20,000 events each year.

Ian Taylor, commercial director of Marketing Birmingham, which operates Meet Birmingham, said: "Birmingham's ranking as the preferred business tourism destination outside London highlights the wealth of event spaces that we offer across the region and the continued hard work of our partners to provide the best possible experiences for our visitors. "The findings demonstrate the impact that events, such as the Meet Birmingham Showcase, can have in educating and building important relationships with the people who organise conferences, meetings and events. Business tourism remains crucial to the city, playing a key role in securing a record 33.8 million visitors here last year. The current redevelopment of New Street Station and the expansion of the airport's runway will only help to make the city even more connected and attractive to this valuable market."

During the Showcase, event organisers from across the country – including Somerset, Yorkshire and Hampshire – viewed eleven of the region's venues, met with event support suppliers including PSG Ltd. And took part in more than 40 hours of face-to-face meetings and networking opportunities. Jonathan Burchhardt, account executive from award winning brand communication and live events agency Concerto Live, commented: "There is no substitute for visiting and speaking directly to venues when looking to arrange events, so the Meet Birmingham Showcase proved to be an extremely valuable two days. "I was particularly interested to find out more about the new developments taking place across the Birmingham region. The venue tours and face-to face appointments taught me a great deal about the mixture of facilities available to my clients wanting to host events here." Attendees were among the first to experience the £6 million redevelopment of Conference

Aston, the academic conference centre and hotel based at Aston University. Paul Bunce, marketing manager of Conference Aston, said: "Confidence in Birmingham's meetings, conferences and events market continues to grow. It has led us to refurbish our current venue and open eight new meeting rooms and five new private dining spaces. "The BMEIS findings are a seal of approval for Birmingham's event spaces. Coupled with the latest Meet Birmingham Showcase, they will help us to build on the city's continued success in the business tourism sector."