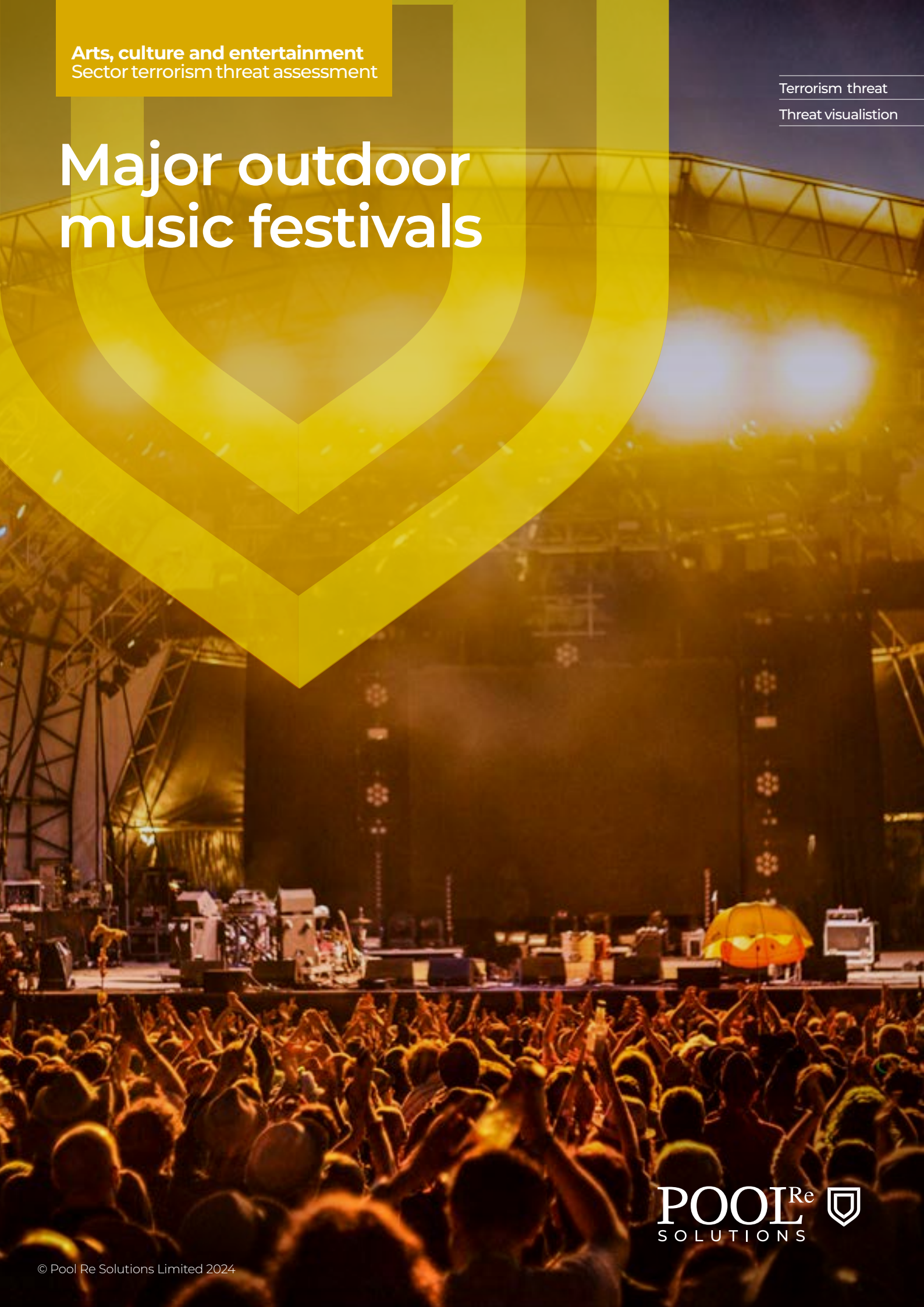


Major outdoor music festivals



Terrorism threat to Major outdoor music festivals

- It is almost certain that terrorist actors would have the intent to conduct attacks against major outdoor music festivals. This is due to the high number of attendees at festival events that are staged over large areas of land, and the symbolic value that would be associated with an attack against a high-profile event with global media coverage and VIP acts.
- It is highly likely that any terrorist attack conducted against a major outdoor music festival in the UK would be conducted by an individual or small cell using a low sophistication methodology. E.g., Bladed or Blunt Force Weapons, Vehicle as a Weapon, or Fire as a Weapon.
- There is a realistic possibility that terrorist actors in the UK could have the capability to conduct a high-sophistication attack at a major outdoor music festival in the UK. E.g., Improvised Explosive Devices (IED), Person Borne Improvised Explosive Devices (PBIED), or Firearms attack. The complicated nature of plotting a high-sophistication terrorist attack makes it highly likely that there will be greater opportunity for UK police and security services to disrupt potential attacks.
- There is a realistic possibility that terrorist actors in the UK could seek to target groups of people in proximity to outdoor music festivals using a Vehicle as a Weapon. Major outdoor music festivals in the UK have a high attendance and subsequently multiple queuing areas and festival entrances and exits at which people congregate. The threat posed by Vehicle as a Weapon attacks would be dependent on road-access to the site at each specific festival.
- The large crowds that gather at major outdoor music festivals almost certainly provide an attractive target for indiscriminate terrorist attacks. As such, it is likely that any terrorist attack against an outdoor music festival would be conducted by an Islamist-inspired individual due to the ideologically driven intent to conduct indiscriminate attacks against members of the public in the UK.
- The assessments in this report were made using the PHIA Probability Yardstick, for further information please see the Assessment Methodology [section below](#).

Previous terrorist incidents related to major outdoor music festivals in the UK and overseas

- Terrorist actors in the UK have previously demonstrated the intent to conduct attacks at outdoor music festivals, including:
 - **2024 Isle of Wight**; A 15-year-old was found guilty of four terrorism charges and for possession of a knife. The individual reportedly planned to conduct a terror attack against the Isle of Wight Festival. The individual had developed a deep interest in Islamist terrorism and supported Islamic State. He later researched an education institute on the Isle of Wight as a possible alternative to his initial target.¹
- Terrorist actors have previously demonstrated the intent and capability to conduct attacks at outdoor music festivals globally, including:
 - **2023 Israel**; Hamas terrorist conducted a high-sophistication attack against the Supernova festival in Southern Israel during a complex series of attacks conducted by Hamas throughout Israel. Hamas terrorists entered the festival with Firearms and "heavy artillery". Media reporting suggests that there were at least 260 fatalities.²

Other potential threats to major outdoor music festivals in the UK

- Whilst major outdoor music festivals provide robust security procedures in order to mitigate the threat from crime and terrorism, the high-number of event attendees entering and exiting the site would be likely to increase the opportunity for malicious actors to covertly traffic the items required to conduct a low-sophistication attack into the site. E.g., Bladed or Blunt Force Weapon or Fire as a Weapon.
- There is a realistic possibility that terrorist actors in the UK could prioritise targeting members of the public within queuing areas and/or festival entrances and exits in order to target large crowds whilst avoiding detection by security staff when entering the festival.
- It is highly likely that the terrorism threat to outdoor music festivals would be driven by the profile and attendance of each festival. E.g., It is highly likely that terrorist actors in the UK would prioritise attacks against major music festivals (Glastonbury, Reading and Leeds, Download, etc.) rather than smaller regional festivals, due to the greater media coverage, high attendance, and high-profile acts likely to attend such festivals.
- There is a realistic possibility that major outdoor music festivals with an overt political bias could attract the attention of individuals and groups with terrorist intent. E.g., Festivals such as Glastonbury that overtly affiliate to left wing political ideology and promote causes such as LGBTQIA+, anti-racism, and environmental causes, could attract the attention of individuals that adhere to an extreme right-wing or Islamist ideology.

Continued

- There is a realistic possibility that staff employed at major outdoor music festivals could pose an insider threat in several ways, including:
 - Temporary staff, in-house staff, and/or third party providers could enable terrorist actors in the UK to access the site with malicious items by allowing such individuals to bypass security mitigations and vetting procedures in place.
 - Stagehands could grant terrorist actors access to high-profile guests or performers in the back-stage areas of a festival.
 - Third party vendors or service providers could exploit vehicular access to a festival site in order to smuggle attack devices or items.
- There is a realistic possibility that the threat posed to major outdoor festivals would be dynamic and dependent on the nature of the acts performing. E.g., It is highly likely that individuals adhering to an Islamist or extreme right-wing ideology would have the intent to conduct an attack against a high-profile LGBTQIA+ performer or the crowd supporting them at any given festival.
- There is a realistic possibility that the threat posed to major outdoor festivals could be heightened if high-profile activists or politicians were present. E.g., Glastonbury festival has previously seen appearances from former Labour leader, Jeremy Corbyn, and climate activist, Greta Thunberg. It is almost certain that terrorist actors in the UK would have the intent to conduct attacks against high-profile individuals.
- Although it is unlikely that any such event would be designated as terrorism, it is highly likely that Non-Violent Direct Action (NVDA) Protest groups would have the intent to stage protests at major outdoor music festivals in the UK. NVDA Protest groups have previously demonstrated the intent and capability to target music festivals, including:
 - **2023 UK;** Three activists from Just Stop Oil interrupted a performance during the Glyndebourne opera festival in East Sussex by letting off glitter cannons and blowing air horns. The festival restarted after a 20 minute delay.

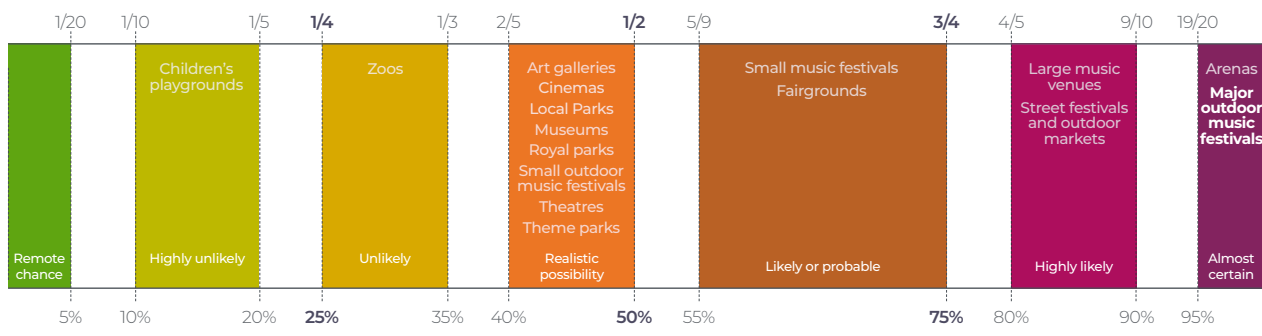
Threat visualisation

The diagram below outlines the intent of terrorist actors in the UK to conduct attacks against major outdoor music festivals within the arts, culture and entertainment sector.

Terrorist intent can be defined as the desire and/or determination of an individual to conduct an attack against any given site.

The intent of terrorist actors to conduct an attack against the arts, culture and entertainment sector in the UK is subject to change based on the assessments outlined in this report.

Note: The terrorism threat to any given site is not based solely on intent, but also the capability of terrorist actors in the UK as outlined in this report. Terrorism threat is also mitigated by the UK's countrywide terrorism risk mitigation infrastructure including both public and private security and safety capabilities.



Assessment Methodology

The assessments made in this report have been made using the Professional Head of Intelligence's "Probability Yardstick" (above). The Probability Yardstick is a standardised instrument used to provide a professional standard for intelligence assessment.

- **Almost certain:** An event has a greater than 90% chance of occurring.
- **Highly likely:** An event has a 76% to 90% chance of occurring.
- **Likely:** An event has a 55% to 75% chance of occurring.
- **Realistic possibility:** An event has a 40% to 54% chance of occurring.
- **Unlikely:** An event has a 25% to 39% chance of occurring.
- **Highly unlikely:** An event has an 10% to 24% chance of occurring.
- **Remote chance:** An event has a less than 10% chance of occurring.

Time spans

- **Short Term:** 0–6 Months.
- **In the next 12 months.**
- **Medium Term:** 12 months–5 Years.
- **Long Term:** 5+ Years.

Continued

Intelligence cut-off date: 06 February 2024

For more information please contact solutions@poolre.co.uk

Bibliography

1. [15-year-old who wanted to attack Isle of Wight festival-goers guilty of terrorism charges - telegraph.co.uk](#)
2. [Israeli music festival: 260 bodies recovered from site where people fled in hail of bullets - BBC News](#)
3. [Just Stop Oil protesters interrupt opera at Glyndebourne festival; Just Stop Oil - The Guardian](#)

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