Visits to London's leading attractions, 2015–2025

Pandemic loss, recovery and free admission among ALVA member attractions

London Tourism Office

2026-11-01

Abstract We describe visits to five of London's leading ALVA member attractions from 2015 to 2025, relative to 2019, and compare the ten most visited London members in 2025 by admission type. Visits collapsed in 2020–2021 and had largely recovered by 2025; free admission dominates the 2025 top ten.

1 Introduction

Visitor numbers guide how a tourism office spends its effort. This paper uses the Association of Leading Visitor Attractions (ALVA) annual tables [1]–[3] to describe how visits to five of London's best-known attractions fell during the COVID-19 pandemic and recovered, and how the ten most visited London ALVA member attractions in 2025 differ by admission type.

2 Methods

`data/visits.csv` holds yearly visits for the British Museum, the Natural History Museum (South Kensington), Tate Modern, the National Gallery and the Tower of London, 2015–2025, from ALVA's yearly tables [1], [4]–[6], [2], [7]–[11], [3]. For each attraction and year we compute an index, visits divided by the same attraction's 2019 visits, times 100; 2019 is the last full year before the pandemic. `data/attractions.csv` lists the ten London members with the most visits in 2025 [3] with ALVA's admission code; we sum visits by admission type. ALVA counts only its members, so these attractions are a description, not a sample of all London sights. 2020–2021 are pandemic years, and from 2024 the Natural History Museum count includes its reopened gardens.

3 Results

3.1 Loss and recovery

The five attractions' combined visits were lowest in 2021, at 20% of 2019; in 2025 they reached 94% of 2019 (Figure 1).

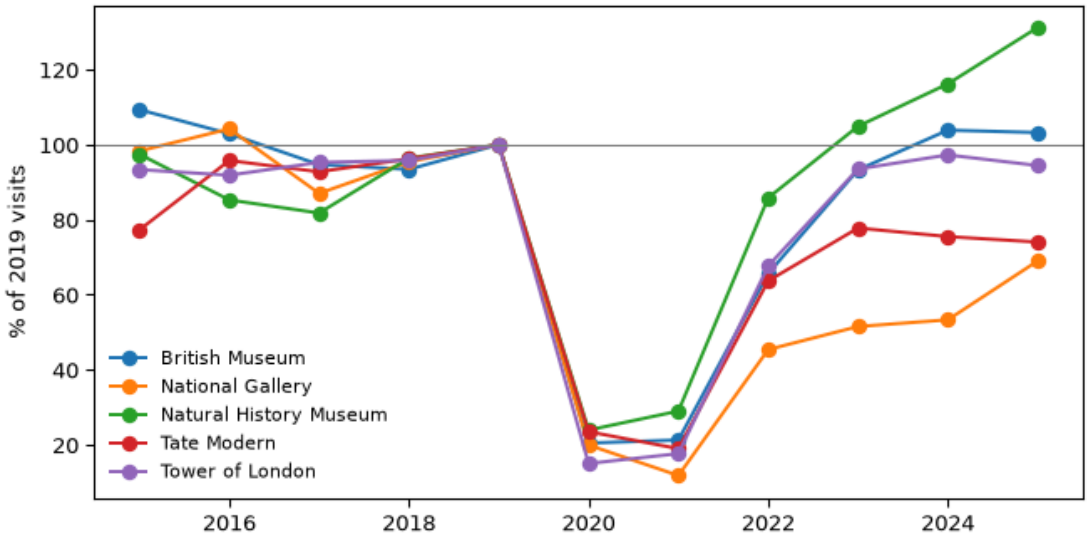


Figure 1: Visits as a percentage of each attraction's 2019 visits, 2015–2025 (ALVA).

3.2 Admission type

8 of the ten most visited London ALVA member attractions in 2025 have free general admission; together they drew 87% of the ten's visits (Table 1).

Table 1: Ten most visited London ALVA member attractions in 2025, by admission type.

admission	attractions	visits
Free (paid exhibitions)	8	34,510,234
Paid	1	2,817,852
Other	1	2,364,348

4 Conclusions

By 2025 visits to these five attractions had largely, but not uniformly, recovered from the pandemic. Free admission dominates London's most visited ALVA member attractions. These are descriptive counts of ALVA members only.

References

Bibliography

[1] Association of Leading Visitor Attractions, "Visits made in 2015 to visitor attractions in membership with ALVA." Accessed: Oct. 30, 2026. [Online]. Available: https://www.alva.org.uk/details.cfm?p=606

[2] Association of Leading Visitor Attractions, "Visits made in 2019 to visitor attractions in membership with ALVA." Accessed: Oct. 30, 2026. [Online]. Available: https://www.alva.org.uk/details.cfm?p=610

[3] Association of Leading Visitor Attractions, "Visits made in 2025 to visitor attractions in membership with ALVA." Accessed: Oct. 30, 2026. [Online]. Available: https://www.alva.org.uk/details.cfm?p=423

[4] Association of Leading Visitor Attractions, "Visits made in 2016 to visitor attractions in membership with ALVA." Accessed: Oct. 30, 2026. [Online]. Available: https://www.alva.org.uk/details.cfm?p=607

[5] Association of Leading Visitor Attractions, "Visits made in 2017 to visitor attractions in membership with ALVA." Accessed: Oct. 30, 2026. [Online]. Available: https://www.alva.org.uk/details.cfm?p=608

[6] Association of Leading Visitor Attractions, "Visits made in 2018 to visitor attractions in membership with ALVA." Accessed: Oct. 30, 2026. [Online]. Available: https://www.alva.org.uk/details.cfm?p=609

[7] Association of Leading Visitor Attractions, "Visits made in 2020 to visitor attractions in membership with ALVA." Accessed: Oct. 30, 2026. [Online]. Available: https://www.alva.org.uk/details.cfm?p=615

[8] Association of Leading Visitor Attractions, "Visits made in 2021 to visitor attractions in membership with ALVA." Accessed: Oct. 30, 2026. [Online]. Available: https://www.alva.org.uk/details.cfm?p=616

[9] Association of Leading Visitor Attractions, "Visits made in 2022 to visitor attractions in membership with ALVA." Accessed: Oct. 30, 2026. [Online]. Available: https://www.alva.org.uk/details.cfm?p=617

[10] Association of Leading Visitor Attractions, "Visits made in 2023 to visitor attractions in membership with ALVA." Accessed: Oct. 30, 2026. [Online]. Available: https://www.alva.org.uk/details.cfm?p=618

[11] Association of Leading Visitor Attractions, "Visits made in 2024 to visitor attractions in membership with ALVA." Accessed: Oct. 30, 2026. [Online]. Available: https://www.alva.org.uk/details.cfm?p=619