

OTAS INSIGHT · EVENT SECURITY · FULL REPORT

Plan for the crowd without tickets

At your events

 OPERATIONAL TACTICAL STRATEGIC

UK · By OTAS Insights · 9 minute read

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In short: people without tickets are part of your event, even when they never get in. Forecast them, not just ticket sales. Tell people before they travel that there is no entry without a ticket. Plan the space, staff and routes outside the door. Agree in advance what you will do if numbers grow, and who decides.

READ THIS FIRST

OTAS Insights shares facts and lessons to start a conversation among event professionals. It is general information, not legal or professional advice. It does not replace your own risk assessment or the advice of the police and your local authority. The case facts come from the published reports linked below.

Five things to take away

- 1 Ticket sales do not tell you how many people will come.
- 2 The street outside is part of your plan.
- 3 Say "no ticket, no entry" early and often.
- 4 Agree trigger points with the police and the venue before the day.
- 5 Review ticketing, entry and messages after the event.

Version box

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This report sets out the OTAS Insight "Plan for the crowd without tickets" in full, with the case, the plan, actions by level and a briefing card. It uses the same facts and sources as the article.

1. The case: two nights in October

Two events in late October 2026 had the same problem. More people came than the event could let in, and many had no ticket. In London, hundreds gathered outside the Ballon d'Or ceremony on Monday 26 October [1][2]. In Lancashire, 150 to 200 students waited outside a nightclub Halloween ball that was already full [3]. This Insight uses both nights as the case. The core is a way to plan for the crowd without tickets at any event. All times are GMT.

THE TWO NIGHTS

London: about 300 people outside [2]. Start moved from 20:00 to 20:45 [1].

Lancashire: 150 to 200 students outside [3]. Event ended at 22:00 [3].

1.1 London, Monday 26 October 2026

- **The event.** It was the first Ballon d'Or held in London in its 70-year history, at the London Palladium [1].
- **The crowd.** Hundreds of people gathered outside to see the players arrive [1]. One report put the number at about 300 [2]. Barriers were in place to keep people without a ticket out, and BBC Sport reported that some were climbed and pulled down [1].
- **The streets.** The same day, nearby Oxford Street became free of traffic for nearly 1 km [4]. Traffic and the crowd at the entrance delayed guests, and the start moved from 20:00 to 20:45 [1].
- **The police.** The Metropolitan Police said a policing plan was already in place. More officers were sent to help at 17:13, as large crowds had gathered outside [2].
- **The organisers.** They said "the number of football fans who gathered around the venue was significantly higher than anticipated" [1].

1.2 Lancashire, reported 26 October 2026

- **The event.** A college Halloween ball at a nightclub drew far more interest than expected. Many young people came without tickets and expected to pay on the door [3].
- **The decision.** Once the venue was full, it asked the police for advice at about 21:00. It then ended the event at 22:00 so the crowd outside could disperse [3].
- **The outcome.** The venue said there were no fights and no reported disorder. It will review ticketing, entry and communication with the organisers [3].

	London, Monday 26 October 2026	Lancashire, reported 26 October 2026
The event	The first Ballon d'Or held in London, at the London Palladium [1]	A college Halloween ball at a nightclub [3]
The crowd outside	Hundreds of people [1]. One report put the number at about 300 [2]	150 to 200 students, and many came without tickets [3]
On the night	More officers were sent to help at 17:13 [2]	The venue asked the police for advice at about 21:00 [3]
Effect on the event	The start moved from 20:00 to 20:45 [1]	The event ended at 22:00 so the crowd outside could disperse [3]
Afterwards	Organisers said the number was "significantly higher than anticipated" [1]	No fights and no reported disorder. A review of ticketing, entry and communication [3]

Table 1. The two nights, as reported. All times are GMT.

2. What it means for event operations

One was a world-famous awards night. The other was a college social. The pattern is the same, and it can happen at any event.

- **Demand is more than sales.** The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) lists ticket sales as only one input to a crowd forecast. Others include publicity, the fame of those taking part and transport problems [5].
- **The crowd outside needs a plan.** HSE says the same crowd principles apply on streets and open spaces, even at free events [5]. A crowd at the door also affects the event inside, as the late start in London showed [1].
- **The city can change on the day.** A new traffic-free street, a closed road or a train that does not stop can move people onto routes you did not plan for [4][8].
- **An early finish can be a planned option.** In Lancashire, it gave the crowd outside a reason to leave [3]. It works best when it is agreed in advance.

WHY THIS MATTERS

One was a world-famous awards night. The other was a college social. The pattern is the same, and it can happen at any event.

3. A plan for the crowd without tickets

3.1 Forecast the people, not just the tickets

Start with ticket sales, then add the people who will come anyway. Look at past events, similar events and interest online. Ask what is new this time. A first-time event, a famous name, a sold-out party shared on social media or a free street nearby can each add people at the door [5].

THE DOOR MESSAGE

"Sold out. No tickets on the door."

On the ticket page, in posts and on signs at the approach [6].

3.2 Tell people before they travel

Where arrivals may exceed capacity, HSE advises making clear in the advertising that it is a ticket-only event. It also points to announcements at stations, local radio and social media on the day [6]. Keep the message short: "Sold out. No tickets on the door." Put it on the ticket page, in posts and on signs at the approach.

3.3 Plan the space outside the door

Walk the streets around the venue. Decide where people without tickets will stand, how routes for guests and cars stay clear, and where an overflow space could go. HSE suggests agreeing with the police and other agencies how extra people could be redirected before they reach the venue [6]. Think about neighbours, shops and traffic too.

3.4 Watch the numbers and agree triggers

HSE describes ways to monitor crowds, including counts, staff on the ground and social media [7]. Decide in advance which signs mean you act, such as a crowd at the door by a set time or guest cars held up. Then agree what each one leads to: a new arrival route, a later start, a call for police support or an early finish. Name who makes each call.

3.5 Review after the night

If demand ran ahead of the plan, review it while it is fresh. Look at ticketing, entry and messages, as the Lancashire venue said it would [3]. Share what you learn with your partners.

4. Signs, options and who decides

Decide in advance which signs mean you act. Then agree what each one leads to. Name who makes each call.

BEFORE THE DAY

Agree trigger points with the police and the venue.
Name who makes each call.

Step	What to agree before the day
Watch the numbers	Counts, staff on the ground and social media [7]
Signs that mean you act	For example a crowd at the door by a set time, or guest cars held up
Options ready	A new arrival route, a later start, a call for police support or an early finish
Who decides	Name who makes each call
After the night	Review ticketing, entry and messages, and share what you learn with your partners [3]

Table 2. Signs, options and who decides, from section 3.

5. Actions by level

Operational

Treat people outside the perimeter as part of the event. Give the same door message every time: "Sold out, no tickets on the door." Report a growing crowd, blocked routes or held-up cars to Event Control at once.

Tactical

Agree trigger points with the venue and the police before the day. Plan staff, welfare and space outside the door. Have options ready to change arrival routes, hold guest cars, ask for police support or end early, and name who decides each one.

Strategic

Forecast demand beyond ticket sales. Check what else changes in the city that day, including road layouts, transport and other events. Put "ticket-only" in the advertising from the start, and review any night when demand ran ahead of the plan.

Checklist by level

- **Operational:** People outside treated as part of the event. Same door message. Routes clear. Report at once.
- **Tactical:** Triggers agreed with the venue and police. Staff, welfare and space outside. Options ready. Who decides named.
- **Strategic:** Demand forecast beyond sales. City changes checked. Ticket-only in the advertising. Review after the night.

6. Briefing card

A short script for the start of each shift, from the Operational actions above.

BRIEFING CARD · ABOUT 1 MINUTE

“This event is sold out. There are no tickets on the door. People without tickets may still come, and they are part of our plan.

Give the same message every time: ‘Sold out, no tickets on the door.’ Keep the routes for guests and cars clear.

If you see a growing crowd, blocked routes or held-up cars, report it to Event Control at once.

Event Control channel: _____

Waiting space outside: _____

Overflow space: _____

Who decides: _____

Any questions?”

Read at the start of each shift at a sold-out or ticket-only event. Fill in the blanks first.

7. Coming up: Halloween and Bonfire Night

Halloween is on Saturday 31 October and Bonfire Night on Thursday 5 November. Both bring busy nights at free and ticketed events. In East Sussex, councils, emergency services and transport providers have asked visitors not to travel to the Lewes bonfire celebrations. Road closures start at 16:45 and trains will not stop at Lewes from 17:00 [8]. Check what your local partners are saying before your own event.

DATES TO CHECK

Halloween: Saturday 31 October

Bonfire Night: Thursday 5 November

Lewes: road closures from 16:45, trains will not stop from 17:00 [8]

8. Questions

Why plan for people who do not have a ticket?

Because they still come. They stand at the entrance, on guest routes and in the streets nearby. A plan for them protects your arrivals, your start time and your neighbours.

How can I tell if more people will come than have tickets?

Look beyond sales. HSE suggests looking at past and similar events, publicity, the fame of those taking part and transport problems. Watch social media in the days before.

Is ending an event early a good idea?

It can be one option among several. In Lancashire, the venue ended early after talking with the police, so the crowd outside could disperse. Agree when you would use it, and who decides, before the day.

Related OTAS Insights

These are links to other OTAS Insights pieces, not to any OTAS Live product or service.

- Vehicle security at winter events, for the streets around your site. <https://otas.live/insights/vehicle-security-at-winter-events/>
- Safety advisory groups, for working with local partners before the day. <https://otas.live/insights/safety-advisory-groups-inspection-what-changes/>

Interest: OTAS Live Ltd, which publishes OTAS Insights, sells event operations services, handbooks and training related to this topic.

How do you plan for the people who come without a ticket?

If you need support with planning for crowds without tickets, [reach out to us](#) to see how we can support you.

References

All web sources accessed 29 October 2026, between 12:25 and 12:40 GMT. Each source is labelled with its publisher.

1. BBC Sport, report on the Ballon d'Or ceremony in London, 27 October 2026. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/football/articles/c6y8lgg21l89o>
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4. Transport for London, Oxford Street traffic-free scheme page. <https://tfl.gov.uk/travel-information/improvements-and-projects/oxford-street>
5. HSE, 'Assess crowd safety risks and identify hazards'. <https://www.hse.gov.uk/event-safety/crowd-management-assess.htm>
6. HSE, 'Put crowd controls in place'. <https://www.hse.gov.uk/event-safety/crowd-management-controls.htm>
7. HSE, 'Monitor the crowd'. <https://www.hse.gov.uk/event-safety/crowd-management-monitoring.htm>
8. BBC News, report on travel advice for the Lewes bonfire celebrations, 18 September 2026. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c317j8wgyk0vo>

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