



**THE
GLOBAL
CITY**

Our global offer to business

London and the UK's competitive strengths
supporting investment and growth

Sixth edition



Foreword



Lady Mayor of the City of London,
Dame Susan Langley



Policy Chairman,
City of London Corporation,
Chris Hayward

For the sixth consecutive year, the UK ranks as the world's leading international financial centre. This report's findings reflect the strengths of the UK's holistic offer to global business. Pre-eminent sustainable finance expertise, combined with a superb innovation ecosystem, and underpinned by top global talent – the UK's proposition stands apart.

And while other centres excel in specific areas, the UK's consistently strong performance across disciplines, as well as its openness to international partnership and investment, together reinforce its enduring status as a global hub. Amid geopolitical upheaval, the UK remains uniquely placed to provide firms with the markets, services, stable environment and talent they need to succeed.

But we must not be complacent. Global economic headwinds are challenging growth opportunities. In 2024, UK financial services' (FS) contribution to UK GVA (£214bn) was just 3% higher than in 2023 – representing the lowest annual growth rate since 2020.

Acutely conscious of these pressures, the City of London Corporation continues to work with HM Government

and other stakeholders to boost investment and growth. Last year, we delivered:

- **The Office for Investment: Financial Services** – created to attract £10bn of international investment to the UK by 2030.
- **The Mansion House Accord** – which brings together the UK's leading pension and annuity providers to boost investment in UK growth companies by £25bn by 2030.
- **The Transition Finance Council** – a pioneering approach to establish London, and the UK, as the world's foremost sustainable finance destination.

This report affirms the continued support the UK enjoys from global leaders, who recognise our comprehensive business offering as well as the scale and diversity of opportunities on offer here.

The UK's leadership in financial services is established and continually renewed. Through effective partnerships and prudent policy development, we can boost growth in the industry and the prosperity of our wider UK economy.

Introduction

This is the sixth edition of our annual report that benchmarks the UK's competitiveness for financial services (FS). This year we have collected data from 102 metrics across five dimensions; Innovative Ecosystem, Financial Activity, Regulatory Environment, Talent and Skills and Business Infrastructure.

London retains its top position in 2026 through consistency in sustainable finance, capital markets activity and tech. Against strong macroeconomic headwinds, the UK's FS industry continues to grow and make significant contributions to the UK economy.



£307bn

UK FS produced £307bn in economic output in 2024 – 12% of the UK's entire economic output



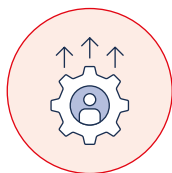
£110bn

UK financial and related professional services (FPS) contributed £110bn in taxes in 2023 – 12% of the UK's total tax revenue



2.4m

UK FPS employs more than 2.4m people in the UK



£181k

UK FS workers are some of the most productive in the country generating an average of £181k per worker in 2024.

The UK as a leading financial centre

The UK is the world's leading international financial centre. It is a global hub for investment, trade, insurance and deal-making.

The UK FS ecosystem offers businesses and investors:

- Highly liquid public capital markets and a strong private asset ecosystem.
- Frictionless cross-border trade and transfers.
- Future facing tech and innovation.
- World class talent and highly skilled employees.



The UK is the world leader in:

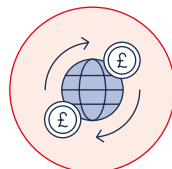
International bond
issuance



\$1.4tn

International bonds issued in 2024

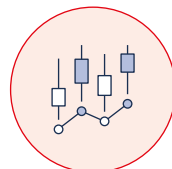
Cross-border
banking



\$5.9tn

Cross-border bank positions, 2025

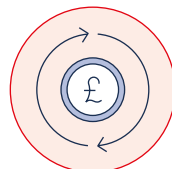
FX
trading



\$4.7tn

Daily average FX trading, 2025

Derivatives
trading



\$4.3tn

Average daily turnover of OTC interest rate derivatives

Source: BIS, 2025

International comparison

The UK's consistency across all dimensions leads to London's position as the top ranking global financial centre (GFC). London is the only GFC to rank in the top 3 of all dimensions.



New York leads in the size of capital markets and benefits from the US being home to the world's largest tech companies and ecosystem, but drops points in Regulatory and Legal Environment, where it ranks 7th.



Singapore benefits from a progressive and fast-moving regulatory environment, strong business infrastructure and access to international talent. However, its capital markets are far smaller than other GFCs and Singapore lags in Sustainable Finance.



Paris ranks behind London and New York in capital market activity and sustainable finance. High taxes, a complex regulatory regime and complex business environment reduce its competitiveness.



Germany's high quality of life and attractiveness to international talent contribute to Frankfurt ranking third in the Talent and Skills dimension. However, the highest corporate tax rate amongst GFCs detracts from Frankfurt's overall score.



Japan's large equity capital markets and strong cross-border banking business are counteracted by negative net FS exports and a lack of international companies operating in Japan. Restrictive immigration policies also bring down Tokyo's talent and skills score.



Hong Kong's low taxes and accommodative regulatory policies boosted its score this year. Hong Kong has taken longer than other GFCs to recover from the Covid pandemic, but is now more open to international talent with low cost and highly available visas.

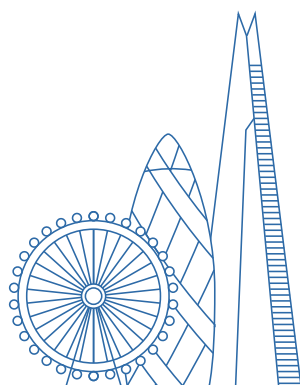
Innovative ecosystem

London ranks:

2nd
in Innovative Ecosystem

1st
for Sustainable Finance

2nd
for Tech and Innovation



Tech and Innovation

£5.3bn

invested in UK Fintech by
PE/VC investors in 2024.

The UK is the second largest GFC
for fintech investment in the world.¹

359

fintech deals in 2024.

More than Japan, Singapore and
Hong Kong combined.²

197

Unicorns created in the UK up to
Q3 2025.

56 UK unicorns are fintechs.
79 UK unicorns IPO'd and 47
have been acquired.³

Sources: (1) S&P Capital IQ 2025, (2) S&P Capital IQ 2025, (3) Dealroom 2025, (4) Climate Bonds Initiative 2025, (5) S&P Capital IQ 2025, (6) Refinitiv 2025

Sustainable Finance

£25bn

of green bonds issued in
the UK in 2024.

Consistent with 2023.⁴

£13.5bn

of private investment in UK
Green Tech companies in 2024.

Almost double the amount
invested in 2023.⁵

69

M&As involving British
sustainable companies in 2024.

Evidence of the strength of
sustainable innovation in the UK.⁶

Regulatory and Legal Environment

London ranks:

3rd
in Regulatory and
Legal Environment

- The UK is one of the **most open economies** for FS firms in the world. And one of the least complex markets to do business in.¹
- English law is used in **40%** of global business and financial transactions. The UK is the second largest legal market in the world.²
- Although the UK has the **highest number of tax treaties** amongst GFCs, the tax regime is one of the most complicated in the world. Corporate and personal tax rates are higher than other GFCs, and personal taxes are levied at lower earnings levels.³

Sources: (1) OECD, Fraser Institute, TMF 2025, (2) LegalUK, (3) Global MNC 2025

Talent and Skills

London ranks:

2nd
in Talent and Skills

- London has the most internationally diverse population amongst GFCs with **49% of workers born overseas**.¹
- The UK has the narrowest gender gap amongst GFCs and is **ranked fourth globally** for gender equality.²
- London has the **most comprehensive cultural offering in the world**. London leads in the number of theatres, restaurants, hotels, museums, and heritage sites.³
- However, the UK needs to improve in **employee training** and boost **digital skills**.⁴

Sources: (1) ONS 2025, (2) WEF 2025, (3) Mori Memorial Foundation 2025, (4) IMD 2025

Financial activity

London ranks:

2nd
in Financial activity

- The UK is the world's leading net exporter of financial services. **Net FS Exports grew 12% in 2024 to £127bn**.¹
- The UK is the largest GFC for both the amount outstanding and gross issuance of international debt securities. In 2024, the UK's outstanding international debt securities were more than **\$1tn higher** than the US, and **gross issuance increased by 22% to \$1.4tn**.²
- Despite the UK being Europe's leading GFC for private investment, the USA is far ahead. **PE & VC invested £57bn in UK companies** in 2024, whereas the US saw **£271bn in private investment**.³

Sources: (1) UNCTAD 2025, (2) BIS 2025, (3) S&P Capital IQ 2025

Resilient Business Infrastructure

London ranks:

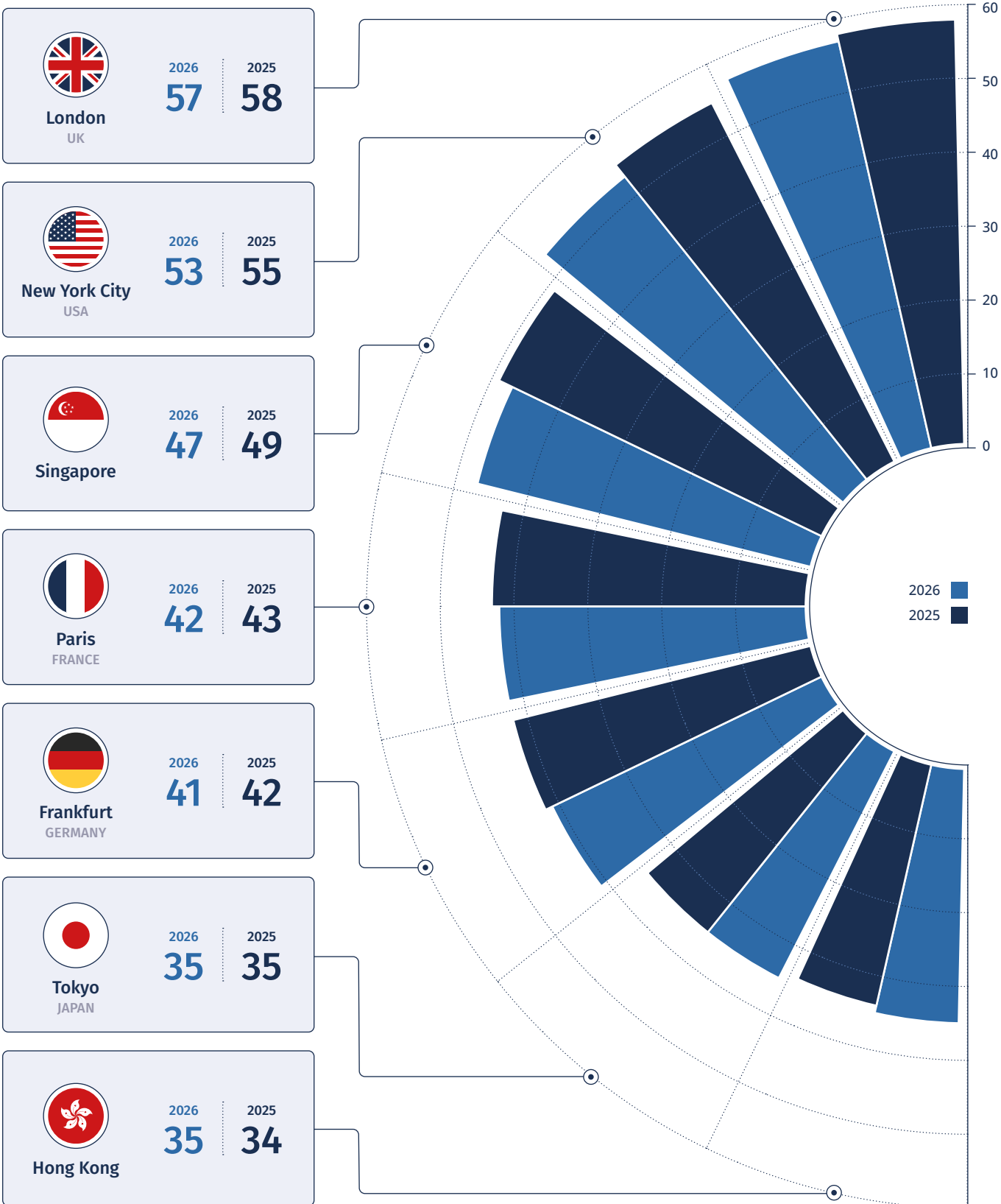
3rd
in Resilient Business Infrastructure

- Competition for **high quality office space** has driven office vacancy rates down across London. Office vacancy rates across Central London are just 8%, the lowest in five years. Grade A office space is in high demand with a 1% vacancy rate in the City and 0.6% in the West End. This has pushed rents up to a five year high.¹
- The UK is a **major data centre hub** in Europe and ranks **third in the world** for number of data centres. This supports growth in AI and the digital economy.²
- London has the **slowest internet speeds** amongst the GFCs.³ Addressing London's data infrastructure and speed is critical to further developing the UK's AI and tech ambitions.

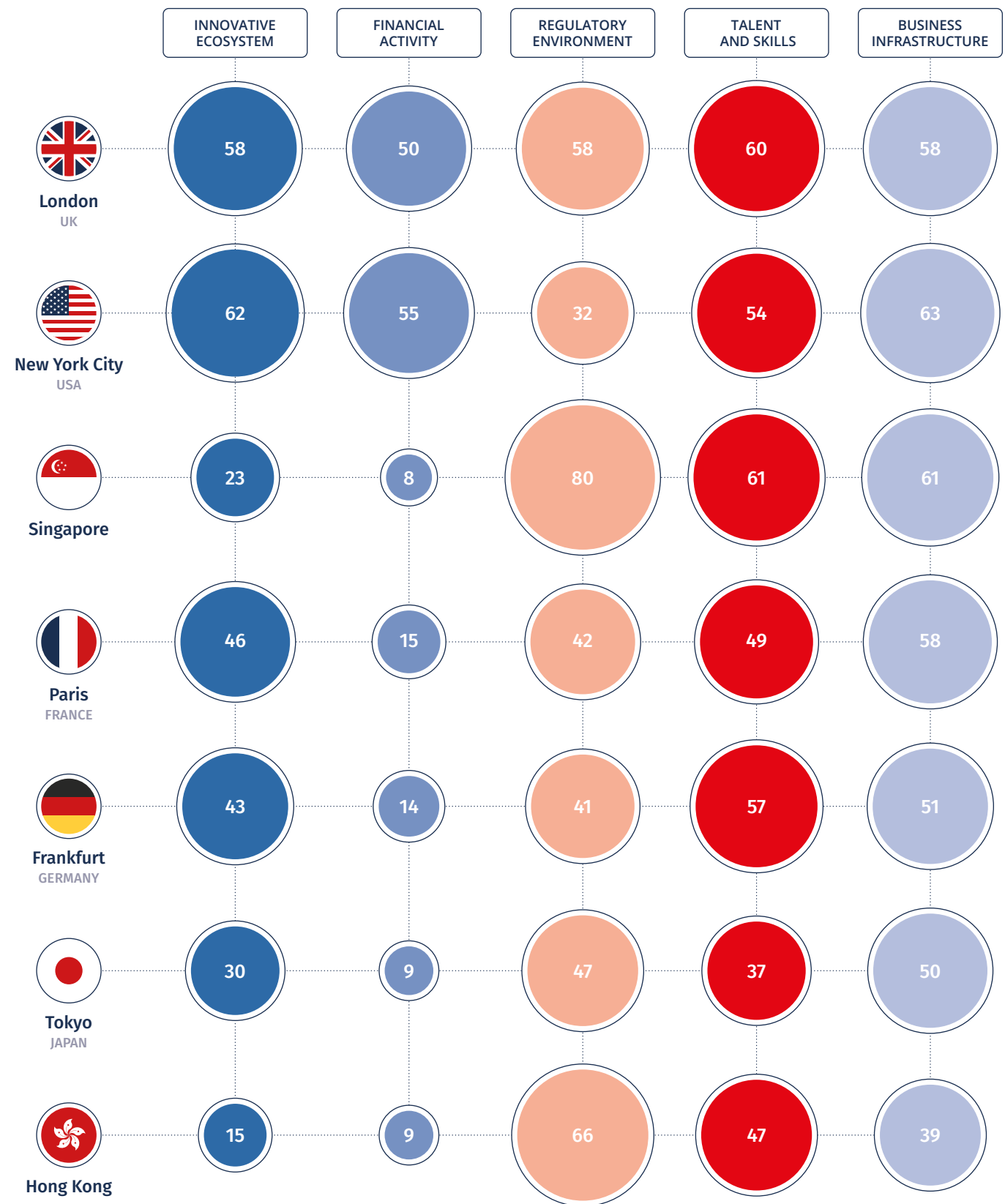
Sources: (1) Colliers, bnpparibas 2025, (2) Statista 2025, (3) Opensignal

Global Financial Centre scores

OVERALL AVERAGE SCORE



DIMENSION SCORES



Cover images (L-R):

Top: Tokyo, Paris, Hong Kong

Middle: London

Bottom: New York City, Frankfurt, Singapore

Methodology:

The methodology used for this analysis can be found on theglobalcity.uk

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**THE
GLOBAL
CITY**

About the Global City campaign

The Global City campaign is the City of London Corporation's overarching initiative to promote the UK as a world-leading international financial centre. It showcases the UK as a great place for financial and professional services firms to invest, locate and grow.

theglobalcity.uk



About the City of London Corporation

The City of London Corporation is the governing body of the Square Mile dedicated to a vibrant and thriving City, supporting a diverse and sustainable London within a globally successful UK.

We aim to:

- Contribute to a flourishing society
- Support a thriving economy
- Shape outstanding environments

By strengthening the connections, capacity and character of the City, London and the UK for the benefit of people who live, work and visit here.

cityoflondon.gov.uk