

## **ARE Expo 2026 builds on strong foundations in successful second year**

The Amusement and Retail Entertainment Expo (ARE Expo) returned to Manchester last week for its second edition, once again taking place at the Cotton Sheds within Victoria Warehouse; and continuing to establish itself as a key date in the industry calendar.

The 2026 event welcomed 31 exhibitors, showcasing a broad cross-section of products and services across the amusement and retail entertainment sectors. Building on the foundations laid in its debut year, ARE Expo delivered a particularly strong turnout on its first day, with a steady flow of visitors creating a positive and productive atmosphere across the show floor. While day two was quieter, it continued to provide valuable opportunities for more in-depth conversations and follow-up meetings.

A major highlight of the event was the packed seminar programme, curated and delivered in partnership with The Amusement Network and the Gambling Business Group (GBG). Sessions were well attended throughout, with a strong level of engagement on key topics affecting the industry, from payments and technology to regulatory developments and operational challenges.

ARE Expo also played host to the bacta North West regional meeting, alongside a visit from representatives of the Institute of Licensing, further underlining the show's growing importance as a platform for both commercial and industry-wide dialogue.

The popular first night drinks reception, sponsored by Novomatic Gaming UK, once again provided a valuable networking opportunity in a relaxed setting. The evening also featured a special moment as a large celebratory cake was presented to industry veteran and journalist Joyce Todd, marking a milestone birthday with colleagues and friends from across the sector.

Show organiser Karen Cooke of Swan Events commented:

“We’re really pleased with how ARE Expo has developed in its second year. There was a strong sense of purpose across the two days, with exhibitors and visitors engaging in meaningful conversations about the challenges and opportunities facing the industry. We’re continuing to listen carefully to feedback and are already working on a number of enhancements and new initiatives for 2027, as we look to build further momentum and deliver even greater value for everyone involved.”

As a young event still establishing its position, ARE Expo continues to evolve, with the organising team focused on refining the experience for both exhibitors and visitors. Further details on plans for year three will be announced in the coming months.