

Role requirement: Director, Festivals Edinburgh

Festivals Edinburgh Context

Edinburgh's Festivals are world-class cultural assets for Scotland with an international reputation and appeal unmatched by any other cultural event on the globe. They are distinctively Scottish and yet profoundly international.

[Festivals Edinburgh](#) is the high-level organisation, created and driven by the directors of [Edinburgh's 11 major international festivals](#), to take the lead on their joint strategic development and work to sustain their leadership role locally and globally. Our mission is simple - to work collaboratively to maintain and develop Edinburgh's position as a world leading sustainable festival city.

In 2022, for the first time in their long history, the Edinburgh Festivals came together with key stakeholders to launch a joint Vision for the future. [Edinburgh: City of Imagination](#) is a vision for a resilient and ambitious Festival City by 2030 – based on the unique value the festivals bring in connecting people, inspiring creative ideas, and bringing places alive in concentrated moments of communal celebration. Our 2030 Vision recognises that in order to renew and rebuild after recent damaging years, there is a need to adapt in this changed era while holding onto fundamental purposes.

Globally minded and locally rooted, our festivals returned in 2023 with over 4,000 events featuring artists from 70 countries – including 2,000 from across Scotland – and attracting an increased level of international industry and diplomatic interest. Local audiences remain the lifeblood of the festivals with a breakdown of around 50% from Edinburgh and Scotland, and 50% from the rest of the UK and the wider world. A post-pandemic study has shown that the festivals are an even stronger draw thanks to their unique, 'must see' reputations, which support regrowth of jobs and livelihoods. As well as realising more economic impact with a lower carbon footprint, their engagement with local communities and schools has also risen by more than a third since 2018.

These results have been hard-won: ticket buying habits have been disrupted by the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis; pressures on public funding and private sponsorship have increased; and affordability challenges are escalating for artists, festival workers and organisers. Changes are now underway both in the strategies of festivals and in culture and tourism policies, including the planned introduction of a Visitor Levy by City of Edinburgh Council and the national campaign for all political parties to reinvest in culture, building on Scottish Government commitments to increase funding by £100m over coming years.

While the Edinburgh Festivals have re-established their position as a magnet for artists, audiences, industry and policymakers, the ecosystem remains fragile - and thus we require a concerted collective effort to sustain and develop these irreplaceable cultural assets. We are looking for a new Director to lead the organisation in this next stage of development, as it takes the steps needed to achieve the long-term ambitions mapped out by the 2030 Festival City Vision.

Director, Festivals Edinburgh

This is an exciting and challenging opportunity to make a substantial contribution to the future success of Edinburgh's Festivals, and play a key role in shaping the future of how festivals and stakeholders work together.

Transformation and renewal in our operating environment brings unique opportunities to develop strong relationships with new leaders due to be appointed in 2024 at City of Edinburgh Council, VisitScotland and Scottish Government; and to work in partnership towards planned new investment from a pioneering Visitor Levy for Edinburgh that will benefit Edinburgh's culture and heritage, city management and promotion.

The Festivals Edinburgh Director will report to the Chair of the Board of Directors, which represents the 11 Festivals, and will be responsible for a team of 3 year-round staff, 4 seasonal staff and £550,000 annual budget.

You will have exceptional influencing skills, be able to broker and manage partnerships, and be a passionate advocate. You will be able to command the respect of peers and partners, and work collaboratively and authoritatively to deliver success.

Remuneration for this role is £78,000 per annum plus 3% employer pension contribution, as a full-time PAYE employee on an open-ended contract of 35 hours per week. While the responsibilities of the Director are framed as a role for an exceptional individual, Festivals Edinburgh is open to creative solutions as to how the responsibilities could be met – for example, we would consider proposals for different approaches including job-sharing, secondments, relationships with associates or relevant organisations, or other ideas.

Responsibilities

Working to and with the Chair and Board of Directors of Festivals Edinburgh in the following areas:

Strategic development

- To lead the strategic development of the organisation
- To lead the development and delivery of the 2030 Festival City Action Plan and the Festivals Edinburgh (FE) Business Plan
- To ensure evidence-based planning, advocacy and messaging

Policy, partnership and public affairs

- To respond to, influence and inform relevant public policy, programmes and opinion
- To promote and advocate for the interests of the Festivals locally, nationally and internationally
- To lead and manage the relationship between Festivals Edinburgh and key stakeholders, policy and decision makers, funders, and partners
- To develop and deliver strong and deep partnerships across the city, Scotland, the UK and internationally that support the Festivals' needs and ambitions

Programme and organisation management

- To conceive, develop and manage key programmes of activity in collaboration with the Festivals, collective working groups and the FE team
- To be entrepreneurial in pursuit of income streams to support Festivals Edinburgh's business model that complement and do not conflict with member festivals
- To ensure that FE operates as a viable, innovative and professional organisation, overseeing all governance, management and compliance functions for Festivals Edinburgh Ltd, and directly managing the three-strong year round staff team.

Knowledge, skills and experience required

Essential requirements:

- Proven track record in a leadership role in the cultural sector, public sector or similar organisation.
- In depth knowledge and understanding of the cultural sector.
- Evidence of successfully setting and controlling significant budgets and efficient use of financial and other resources.
- Experience of developing effective partnerships and collaborations, nationally and internationally.
- Demonstrable experience of leading public and private fundraising initiatives and campaigns.
- Experience in operating effectively with local and national government at the highest level.
- An understanding of the funding context and challenges the festivals operate within.
- Experience in dealing with the media and the ability to act confidently as the public face for FE.

Personal qualities:

- Leadership skills with the ability to inspire, challenge, excite and energise.
- Initiator and collaborator, able to generate new partnerships and work effectively with others.
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills, with ability to build trust-based relationships internally and externally.
- Committed to enhancing the international profile of the festivals and of Edinburgh and Scotland.
- Resilient, with the ability to cope with pressure and high expectations.
- Persuasive - a good negotiator.
- Integrity and good judgment.
- Diplomat, politically astute.

Other role details

- **Location:** Edinburgh is the principal location for delivery of the role, but the role-holder will also be able and willing to travel within Scotland, the UK and internationally.
- **Start Date:** It is anticipated that the role will be filled from the start of October 2024 or as soon as possible thereafter.

Application process

We remind applicants that while the responsibilities of the Director are framed as a role for an exceptional individual, Festivals Edinburgh is open to creative solutions as to how the responsibilities could be met – for example, we would consider proposals for different approaches including job-sharing, secondments, relationships with associates or relevant organisations, or other ideas.

Please send us your proposal detailing how you would fulfil the requirements of the role and why it is of interest, together with your CV (and CVs of any other key individuals relevant to your application) to recruitment@festivalsedinburgh.com with “FE Director Application” in the subject box of the email. Your application will be treated in strict confidence.

The deadline for all applications is **11.59pm on Thursday 6 June 2024**.

Interviews will be held **in Edinburgh on Tuesday 18 June 2024**. We ask applicants to confirm in your application that you are available for interview on this date.

If you have any questions or would like to have an informal conversation about this post with a member of the Board or the current Director, please contact Gary Stewart on Gary.Stewart@festivalsedinburgh.com.

Equality and Diversity Commitment

Festivals Edinburgh is committed to equal, fair and proper employment opportunities.

Please let us know of any queries in relation to the application process or any reasonable adjustments that would help with your application.

We actively encourage applications from currently under-represented groups, targeting in particular people of the Global Majority and d/Deaf or disabled applicants.

We use positive action under section 159 of the Equality Act in relation to disability or race. As part of our commitment to increase the diversity of our workforce, we provide a guaranteed interview to applicants who meet the essential requirements as detailed for this role who are d/Deaf or disabled, or who identify as people of the Global Majority. If this applies to you, we invite you to mention this and refer to our commitment in your application.

Further information

Further information on Festivals Edinburgh is available on our website at <http://www.edinburghfestivalcity.com/about>, including:

- [Edinburgh, City of Imagination: 2030 Festival City Vision](#)
- [Edinburgh Festivals' Collective Impact Study \(2022\)](#)
- [Evaluation Report of Platforms for Creative Excellence Programme \(2023\)](#)
- [Festivals Edinburgh Company Information](#)
- [Annual Report and Accounts \(2022/23\)](#)