

**fringe**  
society

**Review of the year 2019**

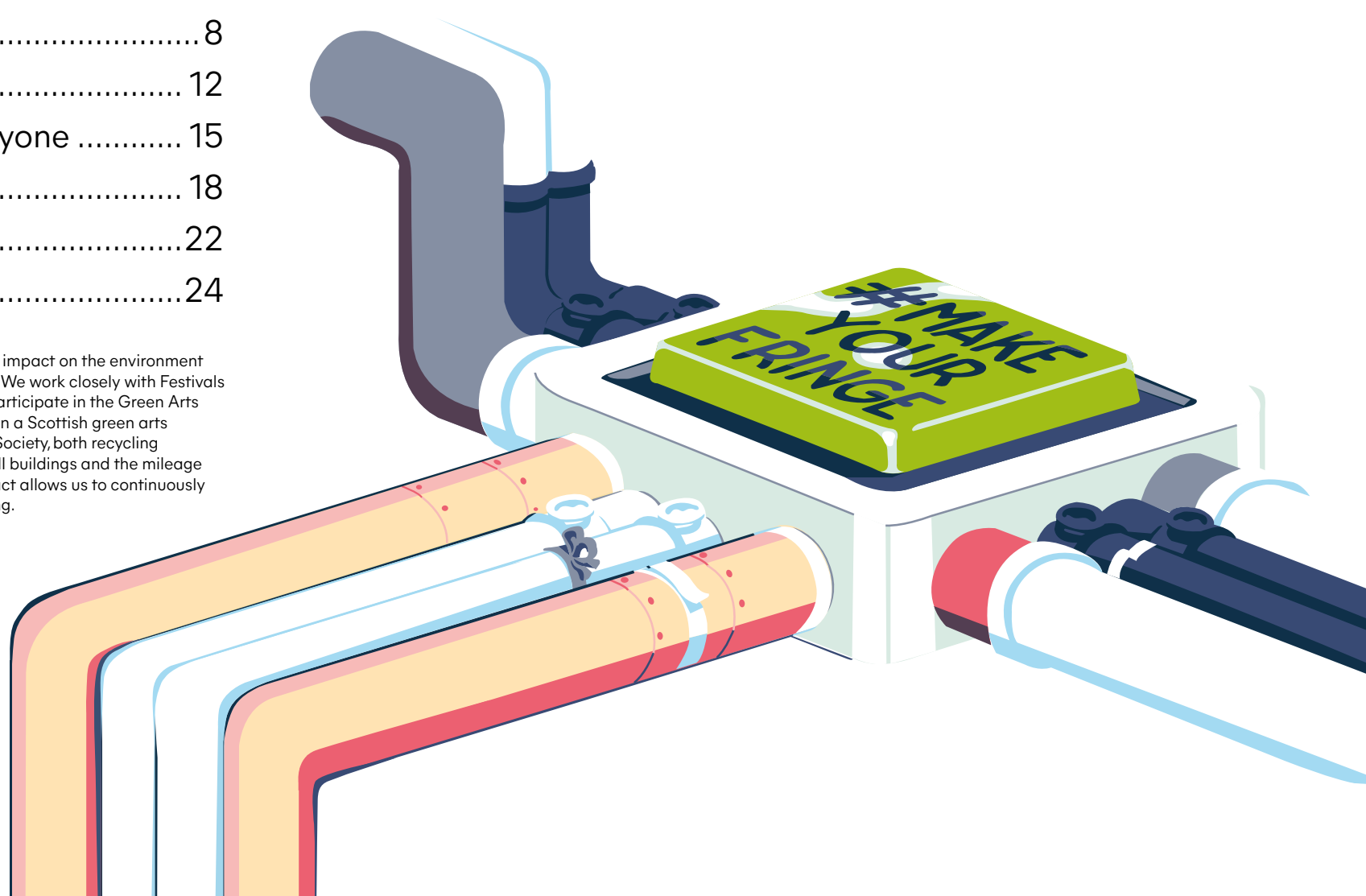


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The Fringe Society is committed to minimising its impact on the environment and the impact of Fringe venues and companies. We work closely with Festivals Edinburgh and Creative Carbon Scotland, and participate in the Green Arts Initiative, a project which aims to build and sustain a Scottish green arts community. We record all waste from the Fringe Society, both recycling and landfill, as well as our energy usage across all buildings and the mileage of our staff and board travel. Measuring our impact allows us to continuously improve our operations and inform future planning.

This publication is printed on 100% recycled stock.







# Who we are

The idea at the heart of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe is simple: anyone with a desire to perform and a venue willing to host them is welcome. No individual or committee determines who can or cannot perform at the Fringe.

It all began in 1947 with eight companies – six of them from Scotland – taking a risk, turning up uninvited and performing on the ‘fringe’ of the inaugural Edinburgh International Festival. Over 70 years later, the Fringe has grown to become the single greatest celebration of arts and culture on the planet. In 2019, more than 3,500 shows took place in a variety of venues – from concert halls to high schools and hair salons – right across Edinburgh.

The Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society is the charity that was established by artists to act as the custodian of the Fringe. We exist to support, advise and encourage everyone who wants to participate; provide information and assistance to audiences; and celebrate the Fringe and what it stands for all over the world.

**The Society  
was established by  
artists for the benefit  
of artists in 1958.**

# Chair's introduction

Welcome to the Fringe Society Review of the Year 2019. And what a Fringe it was too, as artists, audiences, media and industry representatives from 150 nations came together in August to present and explore another amazing programme of work across every conceivable genre. From emerging artists finding their feet to familiar faces we all know and love, the city was buzzing with creativity.

As well as being the world's greatest celebration of arts and culture, the Fringe is also an internationally renowned arts market. We were delighted to welcome a record 1,661 producers, programmers and talent agencies from around the world who came to the Fringe to find work, tour it and support artists far beyond August. The ripple effect of the 2019 Fringe will be experienced all over the world, for many years to come.

My warmest appreciation and admiration to the myriad individuals who made this year's Fringe – the performers, writers, venues, producers, technical and front-of-house staff, journalists and many, many more. Without their imagination, dedication and hard work, it wouldn't have got off the ground.

It was also a great year for the Fringe Society and its staff, who worked hard to make the Fringe the best possible experience for all who chose to participate and attend; their achievements and ambitions can be found in the pages of this

review. I would like to pay tribute to our sponsors, partners, funders and Fringe Angels, Patrons and Friends, whose generous support helps make this vital work possible.

After eight fantastic years and eight memorable Fringes, I am stepping down as Chair of the Fringe Society Board of Directors in August. It has been an honour to work alongside my colleagues on the Board and Society staff, under the superb leadership of Shona McCarthy and her predecessor Kath Mainland. They work tirelessly to support participants, to welcome audiences and help them navigate the Fringe, and ensure that inclusivity is at the heart of everything we do.

Over the last eight years, the Fringe Days Out scheme has enabled more than 9,000 visits to the Fringe from charities and community groups across Edinburgh, helping those who may have felt excluded from the festival to experience its magic. Fringe artists have generously donated more than 200,000 tickets to children and young people in foster and kinship care in the Edinburgh area. The Fringe Society has determinedly championed accessibility, both in its own activities and across the Fringe landscape. Fringe Central has opened its doors to thousands of creatives and hosted more than 900 artistic and professional events, with the sole aim of nurturing Fringe artists during their time here and in their careers afterwards.



It's remarkable that, in the time I've been Chair of the Fringe Society Board, more than 150,000 fearless souls have brought 26,129 shows from 95 countries to perform on this unrivalled stage. The spirit and energy of the Fringe has grown stronger every year, and long may it continue.

There is truly no place on earth like Edinburgh in August and I am immensely proud to have played my part in this incredible festival.

**Tim O'Shea**  
Chair

# Chief Executive's introduction

2019 was another wonder-filled year when Edinburgh welcomed creatives from across Scotland, the UK and the world to share their stories, imagination, insights and humour on our stages and streets right across the city.

The Fringe is a vital, ever-changing, perfectly imperfect mix of people and shows: some well-resourced, some not at all, some looking for their big break or their next step, some to have their voice heard or be part of this community of possibility.

Whatever the reason, the Fringe Society exists to make your experience as an artist, audience member or resident a positive one. We have made public commitments to making the Fringe the best experience for all, and we are proud that some of our progress has been recognised through Attitude is Everything's Big Ambition Award for our work towards making the festival as accessible as possible, Euan's Guide's inaugural Hello Award for our warm welcome to all visitors, and Lonely Planet placing the Fringe as the number one experience in the UK.

We have made tangible strides in our work across Edinburgh with our 32 community partner organisations, and our work in schools and other places of learning is growing wings. We want the Fringe to be the most accessible festival in the world. Providing an access booking service, British Sign Language interpretation on the High Street, a Changing Places toilet, sensory backpacks and venue access training is a start,

but we still have work to do. We'll continue to champion and drive forward access as a top priority over the next few years.

Our world is changing rapidly and at the Fringe Society we're changing how we do things to reduce our carbon footprint and re-use, recycle and reduce materials. We can't do it overnight, but by working on this shared agenda with Fringe venues, artists and our fellow Edinburgh festivals, we will collectively make a difference.

As I've said many times, we don't have a growth agenda for the Fringe; our audience development strategy is based on the mantra of 'one more show not two more feet', encouraging those already here to engage more with the festival. And it's working. In 2019 more than 850,000 tickets were issued to Edinburgh residents and more than 900 shows from Scotland performed on Fringe stages. It's great to see the people of Edinburgh continuing to take the festival into their hearts.

We are equally proud that, on our stages and in our audiences, we continue to strive for diversity and inclusion. As the performing arts showcase for Scotland, the UK and the world, it is a cause for celebration that Edinburgh feels like a much more culturally and creatively diverse city every August. We will continue to focus on striking the right balance between deepening our local roots and reaching out a hand of friendship to the world.



Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Tim O'Shea who, after two terms of office, is stepping down as Chair of the Fringe Society Board of Directors later this year. His leadership, vision and unwavering support have proved indispensable over the last eight years. On behalf of the Society Board and staff, I would like to extend to him our heartfelt thanks and to wish him all the very best for the future. We know he will remain a lifelong friend and supporter of the Fringe.

**Shona McCarthy**  
Chief Executive





# Fringe Blueprint

Taking inspiration from the eight companies that established the Fringe more than 70 years ago, we have made eight firm commitments that together make up the Fringe Blueprint, a statement of intent that informs everything we do in the run-up to our 75th anniversary in 2022.

## The eight commitments are:

- 1 The open Fringe**  
Remove barriers to entry to ensure that everyone is welcome at the Fringe and anyone can take part.
- 2 The world's Fringe**  
Develop the Fringe's international reputation as the place to discover talent.
- 3 The affordable Fringe**  
Tackle the rising cost of attendance at the Fringe to ensure the festival is affordable for all.
- 4 The Fringe home**  
Secure a new home for the Fringe to provide year-round assistance to participants and support a vibrant Fringe community.
- 5 The inspirational Fringe**  
Foster a lifelong passion for the arts among Scotland's young people and champion creative learning in our schools and colleges.
- 6 The street Fringe**  
Support and develop the world's greatest street festival at the heart of the Fringe.
- 7 The green Fringe**  
Reduce the festival's carbon footprint and champion initiatives that limit our impact on the environment.
- 8 The Fringe story**  
Tell the remarkable story of the Fringe and build awareness of, and support for, our charitable mission all over the world.

Much like the Fringe itself, we can't achieve any of this on our own. It will require a huge collective effort – from participants, audience members, government, councillors, businesses, partners and funders – but together we can make this extraordinary festival of creative freedom the best possible experience of live arts for audiences and artists alike.

For more information and to find out how you can help, visit [edfringe.com/blueprint](https://edfringe.com/blueprint).



# Supporting artists, producers and venues

The Fringe Society was established by artists for artists and, since 1958, we have worked to support and encourage everyone who takes part in this unique and wonderful festival, be they artists, companies, venues, media or industry representatives. That work has evolved over time, but the underlying principle remains the same: to ensure that everyone with a story to tell has an opportunity to tell it at the Fringe.

## A home for artists

Fringe Central provides a place in August where all Fringe participants can access pastoral and practical support from Society staff, and escape the thrum of the Fringe. As part of their registration fee, Fringe participants have access to the Fringe Central Events Programme, a series of more than 100 creative and professional development sessions exploring themes such as diversity, sustainability, mental health and wellbeing. Inclusivity was at the heart of this year's programme and we worked with various partners to ensure representation from voices of different backgrounds and experiences. The Fringe Central Youth Panel, a group of young people with an interest in the arts, was involved in every stage of the programme's production.

We presented events in partnership with 57 different organisations, including COMMON, who work to achieve greater socio-economic diversity in the creative industries, and PiPA, champions of parents and carers in the performing arts. Fringe artists came together at Fringe Central to discuss topics affecting both the festival and the wider cultural landscape, at meet-ups such as Going Solo Together (for one-person shows) and Artists of Colour.

Olivier Award-winning artist and director Sheila Atim delivered the Fringe Central opening address, sharing her experiences as a first-time Fringe performer and artist of colour, championing diverse voices across the festival. In front of a crowd of around 200 artists, industry, media and stakeholders, her speech set the tone for yet another vibrant Fringe.

**The sheer scale and diversity of this festival presents us all with the creative freedom that really is hard to come by anywhere else in the world, and it's something that I am very excited and privileged to be a part of.**

Sheila Atim, actor and director  
Fringe Central Welcome Address



Sheila Atim



## **Developing artists' careers**

As well as connecting with audiences, many artists use the Fringe to advance their professional careers, honing their craft and meeting other artists and arts industry professionals. Our Artist Development team supports Fringe participants year-round, advising them how to make the most of the many creative and professional opportunities the Fringe presents. This year, 673 artists and companies came to us for bespoke advice on setting career goals, attracting industry attention and touring post-Fringe.

Our Media team also offered expert, one-to-one advice to artists looking to market their show, from creating a social media plan to crafting the perfect press release and handling critical reviews.

## **A global marketplace for talent**

The Arts Industry Office continues to support producers, programmers and other industry professionals to find the shows and talent that best suit their programming requirements, keeping alive the Fringe's reputation as the planet's most important international arts marketplace.

The Arts Industry Office worked with more than 1,600 accreditees from 54 countries in 2019. As well as providing practical support such as ticketing assistance and access to networking events, we offered bespoke programmes for visiting delegates, matched industry professionals with tour-ready work, and piloted new projects including Screen Fringe (in partnership with Screen Scotland), which connects TV and film executives with screen-ready Fringe talent.

**We welcomed  
more than  
8,000 artists  
to Fringe Central.**



## **Mentoring the next generation**

Our Emerging Producers Development Programme offers funding, mentoring and networking opportunities to UK-based independent producers working across all disciplines and genres. This year, working again with the British Council, we recruited 17 applicants to the programme, with a focus on increasing representation of disabled and black, Asian and minority ethnic participants. In addition to bursary support, events and workshops organised by the Fringe Society, participants were invited to engage with similar initiatives run by Canada Hub, British Council and Arts Council Wales, creating an atmosphere of collaboration and networking among each programme's participants.

We continue to celebrate emerging journalistic talent at the Fringe, supporting two awards: the Fringe Young Writers' Award for writers aged 16 to 21, and the Allen Wright Award for Fringe journalists under the age of 30. This year's winners were Deborah Chu (reviews), Katie Hawthorne (features) and Ariane Branigan (Young Writers' Award).

## Sustainability

The Fringe Blueprint (see page seven) outlines eight commitments that inform our work in the run-up to the Fringe's 75th anniversary. These include measures to make the Fringe more environmentally sustainable, which broadly fall into two categories: things we're directly responsible for as the Fringe Society and things we're doing to influence the wider Fringe landscape.

From a Society perspective, we have reduced the print run of the Fringe Programme from 395,000 in 2017 to 350,000 in 2019 and plan to reduce it further in future, while also investing in digital alternatives.

We have used technology to engage with artists around the world and reduce the need for travel by developing our online FringeCasts. These friendly, interactive video discussion sessions are broadcast live from our Edinburgh offices through YouTube. The series has massively improved our ability to reach participants abroad, with viewers tuning in from 51 countries and every continent on earth except Antarctica.

We inform, influence and encourage venues and artists to reduce their carbon footprint. We provide several free services to help participants reduce waste at the end of the Fringe, including a 'swap shop' for unwanted props, sets and costumes; paper recycling for unused flyers and promotional materials; and a food bank donation point. We've built sustainability into our guidance for both venues and artists presenting work at the Fringe, and provided alternatives to paper flyering such as the Inspiration Machine (see page 18) and our Twitter-based #QuickFlyer Fridays, where artists can pitch their shows digitally.

We encourage Fringe artists to keep the dialogue going, developing better solutions through collaboration and discussion: sustainability was a key strand of our Fringe Central Event Programme, delivered alongside partners including Staging Change and Creative Carbon Scotland. We are also part of Creative Carbon Scotland's Green Arts Initiative, which encourages, supports and recognises venues that want to reduce their environmental impact.

Maintaining the Fringe's global outlook while minimising the festival's carbon footprint is a challenge, but we will ensure that sustainability is embedded across all our activities. We will continue to provide a platform for artists from a diverse range of backgrounds and experiences, including many whose work deals directly with environmental issues, while supporting them to create work sustainably.

## Accommodation

Fringe artists have cited rising accommodation costs as a major barrier to participation, and we have worked hard to tackle the problem. This year, we approached student accommodation providers in Edinburgh – including Queen Margaret University, Napier University and UniteStudents – to secure artist accommodation below market value. Together they provided more than 5,600 affordable bed nights to Fringe artists in August, with plans to expand further in 2020.

We also worked with an artist-only accommodation provider – Theatre Digs Booker – and encouraged Edinburgh residents to host a Fringe artist at an affordable rate and experience a new side of the Fringe. These initiatives were supported by an exclusive Fringe participants' affordable accommodation portal on edfringe.com.

**More than 5,600  
bed nights were  
provided to artists at  
below-market rates.**

# Fringe Days Out

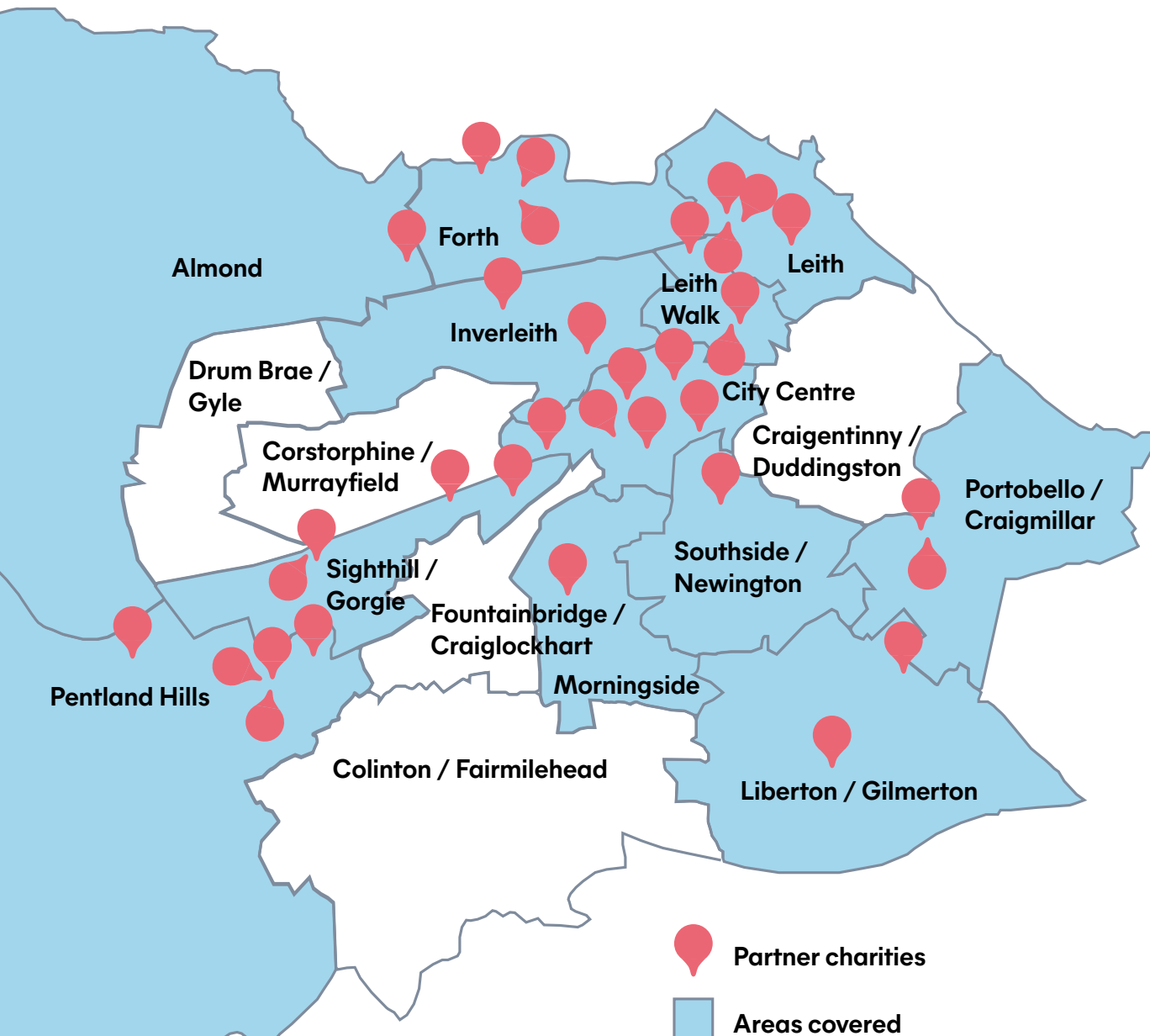
Our Fringe Days Out project is designed to help new, often marginalised local audiences take part in the Fringe and the arts in general, introducing many to potential creative careers.

In 2017, we analysed our ticketing data to find out which Edinburgh neighbourhoods engaged least with the Fringe; the results correlated strongly with areas of economic and social deprivation. We recognised that buying tickets to arts events is not feasible in lower-income households, and that people living in these areas may regard the Fringe as 'not for them'.

We wanted to challenge this idea and ensure these barriers would not exist for anyone who wanted to explore the Fringe. Looking again at our data, we identified community groups and charities based in those areas and approached them to see how we could help people in their communities experience the festival.

**The Edinburgh Festival Fringe is the biggest arts festival in the world, and it's on our doorstep... Financial accessibility is a huge barrier to many people we support and we couldn't have organised "Fringing 9-5" without the support we get from the festival.**

Sam Maggs, Project Manager, Gig Buddies



Fast forward to 2019, and we've partnered with 32 such organisations, who distribute Fringe vouchers and bus tickets to those at risk of social isolation – from single parents to disabled audiences, elderly people and ethnic minority communities. Voucher recipients choose what shows they go to see and when, giving them the same options as all other audience members. We ensure that living outside the city centre is not a barrier either: working with Lothian Buses, we provide free bus passes, removing transport costs.

We appointed a full-time Community Engagement Officer to boost our Fringe Days Out efforts, forging connections with organisations trusted in their communities. These established relationships are invaluable: it is our partners' conversations with their service users that encourage them firstly to attend the Fringe and then to be adventurous in choosing further shows.

Fringe Days Out is a tremendous success. We distributed over £45,000 in Fringe vouchers this year; that equates to 3,800 visits to the Fringe, many by people unfamiliar with both the festival and the city centre. Since 2017, Fringe Days Out has enabled over 9,000 visits to the Fringe; we aim to increase the programme's value to £100,000 by 2022.

## Fringe in the community

Fringe Days Out's versatility means it is easily adapted to suit the needs of our partner organisations. We worked with the Citadel Youth Centre in July to present Fringe at the Citadel, a free family fun day complete with circus and music workshops, street performances and a Fringe pop-up box office. More than 120 people attended, using ticket vouchers to book more than 40 Fringe shows.

We launched a digital project with LGBT Youth Scotland: four young people spent a week documenting the Fringe on camera and social media, receiving training with Society staff and interviewing Fringe artists. Their finished film was screened at an event in their community, helping share the group's experiences of the Fringe and help break down barriers to attendance among their friends.

Gig Buddies enables adults with learning disabilities and / or autism to enjoy the great things going on in their community. They took several of their members on a marathon 9am to 5am festival trip; their Fringe Days Out vouchers allowed them to arrange a day of shows, socialising and even some clubbing.

**I've lived in Edinburgh my whole life and never been up town for the Fringe, we've had a great day and the wee ones have really enjoyed it.**

Mum, Home Link Family Support







# Ensuring access for everyone

Inclusion is integral to our work, whether we're building diversity into our Fringe Central Events Programme (see page eight) or ensuring financial barriers don't stand in the way of people experiencing the festival (see page 12). PLACE programme funding contributes significantly to this work – PLACE is a partnership between the Scottish Government (through Creative Scotland), the City of Edinburgh Council and the Edinburgh festivals.

## Children and young people in care

This ticketing scheme enables Fringe participants to offer tickets to children and young people in and around the care system in Edinburgh, who might otherwise be unable to attend the festival. Thanks to Fringe artists' generous support, tickets to some 1,000 Fringe shows were offered to children and young people in foster and kinship care across the city. More than 3,200 tickets were booked in 2019.

## Inspiring Edinburgh's young people

We believe working with schools and teachers is vital – they're helping inspire the next generation of artists and Fringe-goers after all. Through engagement with educators in Edinburgh and beyond, we're hoping to boost cultural participation, develop better understanding and key skills, and foster lifelong passion for the arts among Scotland's young people, opening up potential career paths.

Our Teachers' Theatre Club – a collaboration with the Edinburgh International Children's Festival – gathered together nearly 30 educators from across Edinburgh, encouraging them to see and critically assess live performance in order to inspire and encourage their learners to do the same. We also worked with another teachers' group to better understand the barriers to bringing classes to the Fringe, and provided information, vouchers and additional support for students (including sensory backpacks).

The Fringe Society wants to give every primary schoolchild in Edinburgh the opportunity to meaningfully engage with the Fringe. This year, we ran a pilot project with six Edinburgh schools in the Liberton and Gracemount area, giving Primary 6 classes free Fringe vouchers and transport to visit the festival. We also provided workshops to support schools in navigating the programme and picking a show. A total of 357 children and 65 adults took part, and we aim to expand this programme to Castlebrae and Firrhill next year.

Also new for 2019 was Schools on the Street, in which over 100 children and young people experienced the excitement of performing on the Royal Mile as part of the Virgin Money Street Events.

## Breaking down barriers to attendance

The Fringe Society is collaborating with a range of partners to identify ways of breaking down barriers to participation and attendance. One such partner is Edinburgh University PhD student Jessica Brough, who in 2018 created a list of Fringe shows with a cast / company of 50% or more performers of colour on stage. This was to recognise the importance of artists seeing people like themselves in the audience, and audiences seeing themselves represented on stage. Brough tweeted the list in case others might find it useful; it went viral, and Fringe of Colour was born.

Fringe of Colour returned in 2019 with added purpose, asking venues to donate tickets for eligible shows to young people who'd benefit from seeing diversity and representation on stage. We provided a significant level of support to help the project scale up: donating ticket vouchers, helping identify relevant shows and supporting the booking process. Fringe of Colour has gone on to win several awards; we're eager to help it go even further in the future.

**A quarter of Fringe shows donated tickets to children in foster and kinship care.**



## **Making the Fringe more accessible**

While there is much progress still to make, we made strides in improving the accessibility of the Fringe to artists and audiences with disabilities in 2019. Our Venue Access Awards, which encourage Fringe venues to improve both their overall accessibility and the access information they provide, grew from 33 to 39 participating venues. 61% of Fringe shows were in a level accessible space this year, and we'll keep looking for ways to increase this number.

We also made great improvements in presenting information accessibly. For D/deaf audiences, we produced more than 50 British Sign Language-interpreted video flyers for shows that incorporated BSL. We improved access information on both [edfringe.com](https://www.edfringe.com) and our app. We also focused two episodes of our FringeCast series – livestreamed advice sessions for prospective Fringe artists – on how to create accessible performances, and hosted similar events during August at our Fringe Central participants hub (see page eight).

We saw a striking increase in the use of our access bookings service, which provides information and ticketing assistance to customers with access requirements. Nearly 1,200 customers used the service, a 20% increase on 2018, and the number of people booking complimentary personal assistant tickets more than doubled. We've committed to introducing online booking for all access customers, including wheelchair users, by 2021.

Our free-to-borrow sensory backpacks, introduced in 2018, help make the festival more enjoyable for autistic children and adults. We increased the number of backpacks and collection points; this year, the backpacks were loaned out nearly 90 times in total.

We hosted a Fringe Disabled Access Day in July 2019, providing an opportunity for disabled people and their families to find out more about the services we offer at the Fringe Shop and Box Office.

These initiatives were recognised with two awards in 2019. In March, we received the Big Ambition Award from Attitude is Everything, who praised our access bookings service and sensory backpacks; and in August, Euan's Guide recognised our commitment to accessibility with their inaugural Hello Award for 'a venue that creates a warm welcome for all of its visitors'.

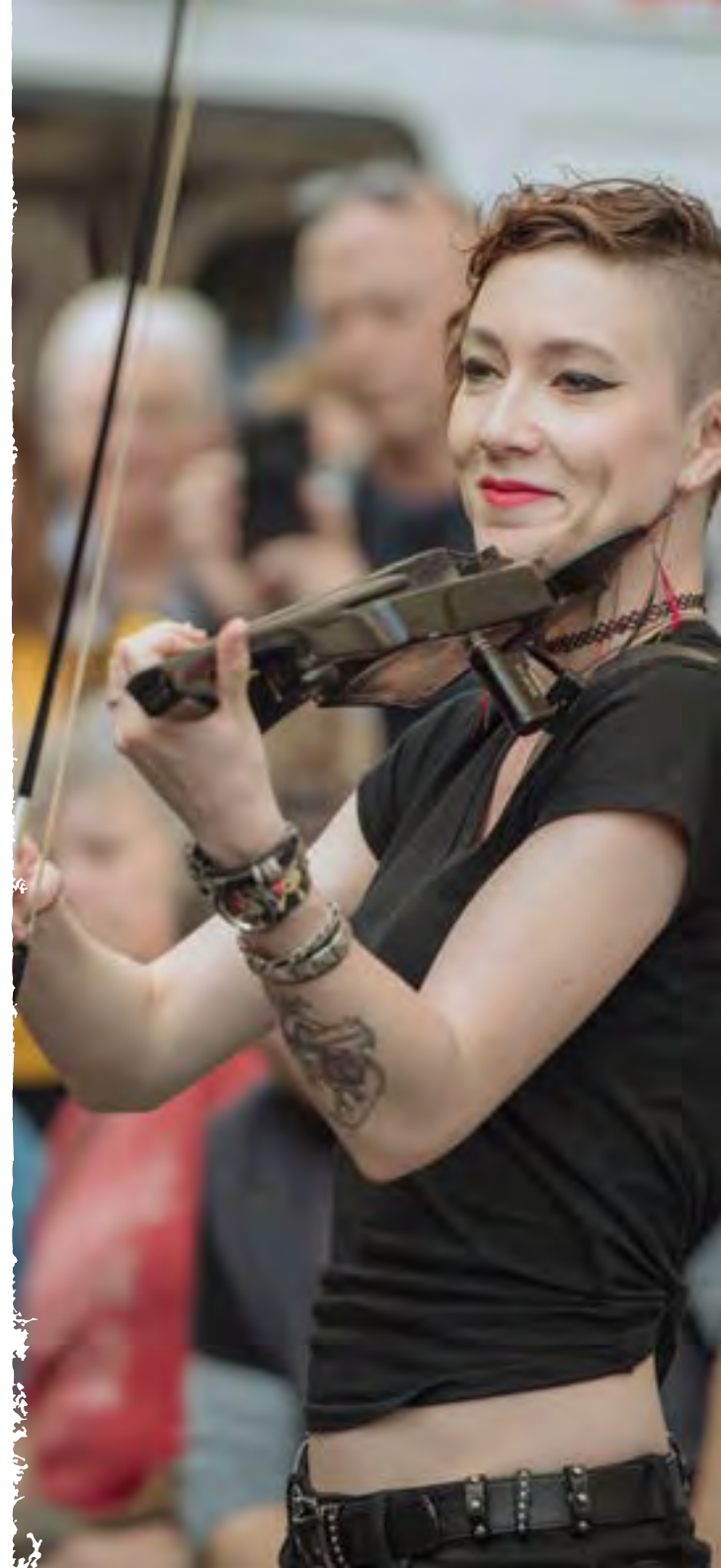
**The Society  
was awarded the  
inaugural Hello Award  
from Euan's Guide.**

## **Virgin Money Street Events**

Our world-class street events programme is one of the most visible aspects of the Fringe: an array of entertainers from around the globe, representing an incredible variety of artforms, performing for all in the open air. They're an essential part of the Fringe atmosphere and an invaluable option for people with limited budgets, so we work especially hard to make the street events welcoming to everyone.

This year, we extended our BSL-interpreted street events from a single weekend to every Saturday of the Fringe, as part of an expanded offering for D/deaf audiences that also included loaning captioning units to venues and training two theatre captioners in partnership with the Federation of Scottish Theatre.

We also reunited with Neatebox's Welcome App, which allows disabled customers to pre-book their visit to the Fringe Shop or the street events on the High Street, so we can deliver a better level of service when they arrive. We continued to partner with Birds of Paradise theatre company to deliver awareness and attitude training for Society staff, along with open sessions for Fringe venue staff, ensuring they provide a positive experience for all disabled audience members.





# Celebrating the Fringe

## One more show not two more feet

One of our core objectives at the Society is to celebrate the Fringe and what it stands for around the world. We inspire artists, audiences, arts industry, media and other stakeholders to come and take part in this phenomenal festival – or, in the case of our sister fringes (of which there are more than 200 worldwide), to establish cultural events of their own. On our own shores, we were delighted that the Fringe was placed at number one in Lonely Planet’s Ultimate UK Travelist, bringing together ‘500 of the most memorable, beautiful, surprising and compelling experiences in the UK’.

We saw record levels of engagement from the people of Edinburgh, with over a third of audience members now coming from the city. This year, we focused our marketing efforts on deepening the engagement of those already coming to the Fringe, encouraging attendees to delve further into the programme, see an extra show and discover the unexpected highlight that could #MakeYourFringe.

Our approach was grounded in robust market research: 78% of respondents to our 2018 audience survey said they came to the Fringe to take a chance and see shows they wouldn’t see anywhere else. However, with nearly 40% of audience members also struggling to navigate the programme, there was a clear need to assist audiences in discovering work that was most relevant to them. Rather than attracting more people to the city, we set out to encourage those already here to see more work – what we referred to as ‘one more show, not two more feet’.

We developed several new ideas to help audiences get the most out of their Fringe. Our Inspiration Machine was an interactive, arcade-style machine that delivered randomised show suggestions at the touch of a button – more than 600 artists enhanced their regular programme listings with 10-second video promos for the machine, and it was spun more than 100,000 times by Fringe-goers over the course of the festival.

**Our new  
Inspiration Machine  
was spun more than  
100,000 times.**

The FringeMaker app rewarded audience members who explored different Fringe venues, with nearly 1,500 people taking part. We transformed the first page of the Fringe programme into a recommendations page, where Fringe-goers could jot down their favourite shows or experiences and then swap programmes with other attendees. And our ticket-bookers' competition – conducted with new partners Johnnie Walker – offered audience members a chance to win Fringe vouchers and unique experiences, encouraging them to keep exploring.

This marketing approach was a great success, resulting in a 6% increase in tickets issued. Significantly, 56% of Fringe attendees lived in Scotland, with more than 850,000 tickets – just over a quarter of total tickets issued – booked by Edinburgh residents. On social media, our new hashtag #MakeYourFringe was tweeted 88,000 times, while the more established #edfringe was used 200,000 times. Their total combined impressions to date has now surpassed 1.68 billion.

## Telling the Fringe story

Cultural advocacy at a political level is a key role of the Society. We held regular meetings with Edinburgh, Scottish and UK elected members in 2019, continuing to highlight the benefits of the Fringe and garner support for the work we do. Senior Society staff met with political leaders including Scotland's First Minister; UK Ministers from the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport; the Mayor of London; and the Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh. We held meetings with Scottish Government officials to discuss policy areas significant to the Fringe, including fair employment, affordable accommodation, sustainability and cultural funding. And we met with representatives in Northern Ireland and Wales to ensure strong UK representation and involvement in the Fringe.

In total, 80% of artists in the 2019 Fringe programme hailed from the UK. Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland each had dedicated country showcases, while Arts Council England announced plans to deliver an England showcase by 2021. Investment in bringing artists to the Fringe is something the Society has long campaigned for.

Companies and artists from Scotland made up 25% of the programme – more than 960 shows, nearly 750 of them from Edinburgh. The Made in Scotland showcase – funded by the Scottish Government Expo Fund and delivered in partnership by the Fringe Society, Creative Scotland, the Federation of Scottish Theatre and the Scottish Music Centre – shone a spotlight on Scotland's theatre, dance and music talent for the 11th year running. The 2019 Made in Scotland programme comprised 22 shows, which between them earned 25 five-star reviews, 60 four-star reviews and seven awards. It also gave rise to its first spin-off festival in Europe: Made in Scotland Festival Brussels.

**The breadth and depth of home-grown talent participating in the [Made in Scotland] programme represents a roll call of gifted Scottish-based performers. It provides artists with an international platform that will enhance Scotland's reputation as the UK's most cultural nation.**

Fiona Hyslop, MSP  
Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs

## The Fringe in Europe

Made in Scotland Festival Brussels brought together six shows drawn from the programme's decade-long history and staged them in venues across the Belgian capital during four days in June. In addition to the six performances (which were all free to attend), the festival included a programme of industry events for local and visiting delegates, including a launch reception hosted by Scotland's First Minister. The festival was made possible through funding from Scotland House in Brussels and was a great success, with more than 1,000 attendees and five of the six shows fully subscribed.

While it formed a significant part of our international engagement in 2019, Made in Scotland Festival Brussels was far from our only activity. Key Fringe Society representatives attended a select number of overseas festivals, conferences and events, increasing awareness of the Fringe and forging new relationships with a diverse range of artists, industry, cultural leaders and organisations.

## A globally connected Fringe

More than 60 nations were represented on stage at the Fringe this year, with more than 200 shows hailing from mainland Europe. Off stage, nearly 500 arts industry figures attended from overseas and 77 media representatives attended from 21 countries.

We're still working hard to remove barriers that make it harder for international artists to present work at the Fringe, including protecting our permit-free status. In 2019, we issued welcome letters to nearly 3,000 people from countries outside the European Economic Area to come to the festival, and we continue to liaise closely with both Festivals Edinburgh and the Home Office to keep these channels open. In line with our commitment to open access, we'll continue to encourage and support participation at the Fringe on an international level, while also promoting the most sustainable methods of transport for artists to get here (see page 11 for more information on our sustainability efforts).

## 72 years in the making

Celebrating the Fringe is only partly about generating excitement for future festivals; we also have an important job to do in remembering and preserving the Fringe's historic legacy. To that end, we're working closely with the National Library of Scotland to develop a fully digitised archive of Fringe programmes, plus assorted other materials such as photos, Annual Reviews and postcards from the Schools' Poster Competition, our educational outreach programme that ran from 1980 to 2018.

In August 2019, the Library opened a 'Back to the '80s' exhibition, featuring a prominent selection of Fringe exhibits from the decade – including a programme, flyers and photography from the festival – put into historical context alongside contemporary materials from the Library's collection.

**A record  
200 shows were  
from mainland  
Europe.**



# We couldn't have done it without you

The Fringe Society is a registered charity which relies on the support of sponsors and partners and the generosity of our Angels, Patrons, Friends and supporters, without whom none of the work covered throughout this review would be possible.

Continuing to deliver and develop our core aims of supporting participants, assisting Fringe audiences and celebrating this wonderful festival to the rest of the world requires the support of many individuals and organisations. We ask you to join us in supporting this creative endeavour and ensuring that the Fringe remains a platform for the arts to develop and thrive.

To find out how you can support the Society, please visit [edfringe.com/support](http://edfringe.com/support) or contact us on +44 (0)131 226 0036.

We are grateful to all our sponsors and partners highlighted opposite, including Virgin Money, Johnnie Walker and Victor and Carina Contini, for supporting our work and sharing our commitment to inclusivity in the arts.

Thanks also to:

Attitude is Everything  
BECTU  
Birds of Paradise  
British Council  
Bross Bagels  
Burness Paull  
City of Edinburgh Council  
Citadel Youth Centre  
COMMON  
Copymade  
Creative Scotland  
Deaf Action  
Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport  
Disability Equality Scotland  
Drake Music Scotland  
Edinburgh Art Festival  
Education Scotland

Enterprise Screen  
Euan's Guide  
Federation of Scottish Theatre  
Festivals Edinburgh  
Fringe of Colour  
Gig Buddies  
Imaginate  
International Society for the Performing Arts  
LGBT Youth Scotland  
Mackie's of Scotland  
Parabola  
PiPA  
Scottish Enterprise  
Scottish Government  
Scottish Music Centre  
Tiso  
Tunnock's  
Volunteer Edinburgh  
The W M Mann Foundation  
World Fringe  
Our Fringe Central and Fringe Days Out partners  
Fringe Angels, Patrons and Friends and all those who donated to the Society at the Fringe Box Office and via the website.



## Sponsors



## Travel partners



## Partners



## Supporters



## Fringe Days Out supporters



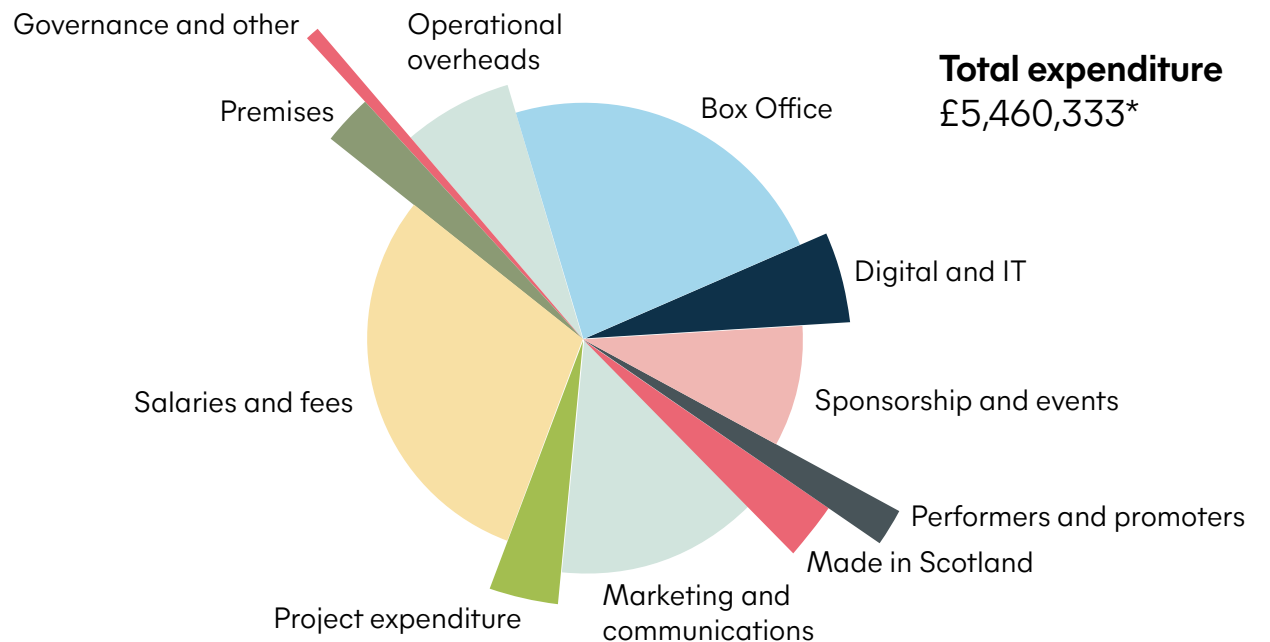
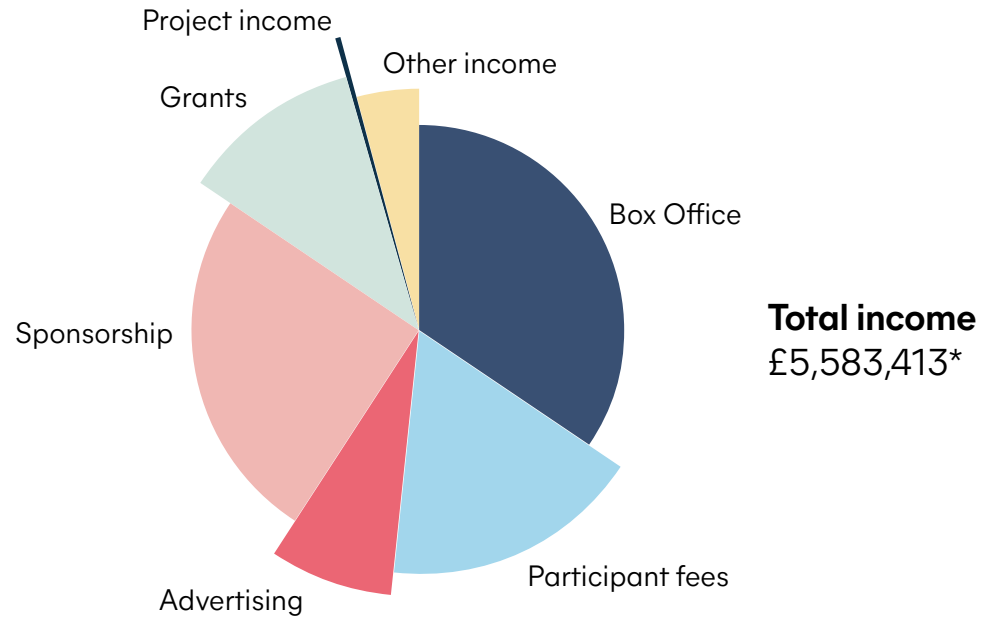
# Charitable activities

The majority of our income is generated through commission and fees connected with the Box Office, advertising associated with our publications and the website, registration fees, sponsorship, and our Fringe Friends scheme. We are grateful for the continued support of the City of Edinburgh Council and from the Scottish Government for Made in Scotland through the Festivals Expo Fund, managed through Creative Scotland, and for support via the PLACE programme (a partnership between the Scottish Government, through Creative Scotland, the City of Edinburgh Council and the Edinburgh festivals).

Other income includes donations, rental income, Gift Aid and a management fee from our trading subsidiary.

The majority of our expenditure goes on providing box office services and infrastructure, supporting artists, promotion and advocacy of the Fringe in its entirety, producing publications and the website, and staffing the Society.

\*Please note that these figures are unaudited.



**Join us in 2020**

**07 – 31 August**



**The Fringe is that place where everyone is welcome. And everyone knows the value of inclusion at the Fringe, and the whole point of this festival is to gather together all these thoughts, ideas, cultures and modes of expression in one place... the criss-cross is where the magic happens.**

Sheila Atim, actor and director