

Briefing for Edinburgh International Festival – ‘Make it Happen’

What	World Premiere and Opening night of the Edinburgh International Festival (EIF). Attendance and speech at opening of ‘Make it Happen’.
When	Friday 1st August 2025, 18:30 – 22:10
Where	Festival Theatre, 13 / 29 Nicolson Street, Edinburgh EH8 9FT.
Who	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fran Hegyi OBE, Executive Director, EIF • Nicola Benedetti, Festival Director EIF • James Graham, Writer ‘Make it Happen’
Why	Engagement with EIF, provide ministerial speech for their festival launch.
Key messages	Pleased to celebrate the ongoing success of the Edinburgh International Festival which has received an increase in core funding through Creative Scotland’s Multi Year Funding, alongside support provided by the Scottish Government’s EXPO Fund - £100k in 2025/26 in support of Make it Happen.
Speech details	Speech (3 Minutes) attached separately [redacted - section 38(1)(b)]
Official support	[redacted - section 38(1)(b)]
Media handling	Photographer, [redacted - section 38(1)(b)]
Twitter (X)	@culturescotgov @edintfest
Dress code	Smart casual/ Business
Entrance and greeting party	<p>Cabinet Secretary will be met at the entrance to the Festival Theatre b [redacted - section 38(1)(b)]</p> <p>Key contact is [redacted - section 38(1)(b)]</p> <p>[Mr Robertson on Guest list and will receive ticket on arrival]</p>
Briefing contents	<p>Annex A - Event programme</p> <p>Annex B - Attendees</p> <p>Annex C - Key messages – Edinburgh Festivals</p> <p>Annex D - Edinburgh International Festival</p>

EVENT PROGRAMME

TIME	EVENT
18:30	Arrival and welcome drinks, speeches in Events Room Speeches: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nicola Benedetti, • James Graham • Cabinet Secretary
19:30	– Performance ‘Make it Happen’ <i>Interval</i> – International Lounge in Event Rooms
22:10	– End of performance and After Party – Foyer bars on F1 and F2 levels Informal speech – Roy Luxford, Creative Director, EIF Drinks and canapes
Mr Robertson is welcome to attend the After Party but can choose to depart any time after the end of the performance.	

Make it Happen

This is an important new commission being produced by three major Scottish institutions; Edinburgh International Festival, National Theatre of Scotland and Dundee Rep Theatre. Presented in association with Playful Productions and Neal Street Productions

Behold the rise, fall and fail of the biggest bank in the world – The Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS).

At the helm is Fred 'The Shred' Goodwin, armed with an unshakeable belief in the wisdom of the 'founder of modern capitalism', Adam Smith. The once prudent RBS soars and then plummets, placing Scotland at the heart of the global financial crash of 2008.

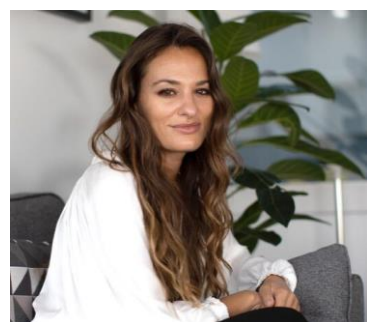
Set in Edinburgh, Make It Happen sees legendary actor Brian Cox return to the Scottish stage for the first time in a decade as Adam Smith, the ghost of fiscal past. Following his outstanding portrayal of the title character in Lanark at the International Festival, Sandy Grierson takes on the role of Goodwin. Written by James Graham (Sherwood, Dear England), hailed as one of the most influential and finger-on-the-pulse writers of our time, and directed by the award-winning Andrew Panton, this epic new satire delves into the unchecked growth, spiralling greed and nail-biting hubris that brought the world's economy to its knees.

ATTENDEES


Fran Hegyi OBE, Executive Director, EIF

Francesca (Fran) Hegyi OBE is the **Executive Director of the Edinburgh International Festival**. She previously studied and worked in Edinburgh and has over 20 years of experience in the culture and arts industry. Francesca was recognised in the 2018 New Year's Honours list for her work as the Executive Director of Hull's UK City of Culture Programme in 2017. Alongside her role at EIF she is deputy industry co-chair of the UK Government's Creative Industries Council and a member of the Soft Power

Council.


Nicola Benedetti, Festival Director Edinburgh International Festival

Nicola Benedetti is the Festival Director for the Edinburgh International Festival. She took up the position in October 2022 having previously had a long-standing relationship with the Festival as a performer, including a residency in 2021. Nicola is both the first Scottish and the first female Festival Director since the Festival began in 1947.

She has won GRAMMY and Brit Awards and was named BBC Music Magazine's 2021 'Personality of the Year,' awarded in part for her online support of musicians during the pandemic, a reflection of her passionate work as an ambassador for music education.


James Graham, Writer 'Make it Happen'

James Graham is an award-winning screenwriter and playwright whose stage work includes the Olivier Award for Best Play-winner Dear England and the Critics' Circle Theatre Award-winner Best of Enemies. For television, he created and wrote Sherwood, which won the Royal Television Society Award for Best Drama and two BAFTAs and the Emmy-nominated Brexit: An Uncivil War.

KEY MESSAGES

Edinburgh Festivals

- Scotland's festivals are at the heart of our culture sector and national life. They are an invaluable platform for our artists and performers to develop and support their ambition and creativity by providing focal points for activity and opportunities to showcase their work.
- At every stage of their planning and their delivery, Scotland's Festivals are renowned for ambition, creativity and excellence at home and overseas.
- The 2025/26 Budget provides an important foundation for the work of festivals, recognising the importance of stability and certainty through long term sustained funding to support Festival's core activities and their ambitions for the future.
- As well as their outstanding work on stage, festivals provide hundreds of millions of pounds to the Scottish and local economies, supporting a pipeline of jobs and businesses.
- Increasing investment in festivals, as part of a broader uplift in funding for culture, underlines the value the Scottish Government places on the arts.
- Through this increased investment we want to drive up opportunities for participation in creative pursuits, support the festivals commissions and collaborations on new and exciting works, ensuring Scotland's cultural output have platforms at home and abroad.
- Festivals, like the entirety of the culture sector, have been hit hard in recent years by a series of challenges. Recovery from the pandemic and addressing the challenges brought by Brexit have been made more difficult by increased costs and inflation, together with a challenging public funding environment.
- Whilst increased funding has provided greater long term stability, festivals continue to face challenges around transport, accommodation, connectivity and long term sustainability beyond funding to areas like workforce planning and skills development.
- We are committed to working with festivals in Edinburgh, as well as across Scotland through a Strategic Partnership to address these challenges

EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL (1-24 AUG 2025)

Founded in 1947, the Edinburgh International Festival is an unparalleled celebration of the performing arts and an annual meeting point for peoples of all nations. Committed to virtuosity and originality, the International Festival presents some of the finest performers and ensembles from the worlds of dance, opera, music and theatre.

Funding

Creative Scotland MYF Funding - £11.175m

- 2024/25 - £3.25m
- 2025/26 - £4.25m
- 2026/27 - £4.25m

City of Edinburgh Council - £1.92m per year from 2024/25 to 2026/27

Scottish Government EXPO Funding - £100k in 2025/26

EIF received a one-off grant of £1.6m from the previous UK Government in 2023 to support artists from the rest of the UK. Creative Tax Reliefs remain a source of valuable, stable resource accounting for around 13% of EIF's total income in 2024.

Attendance

127,000 attendees in 2024 (up from 120,000 in 2023) with 52% of bookers last year attending for the first time.

Key Issues

- EIF has secured status as being the first charity and arts organisation in the UK (and according to them, the world) to be awarded BSI Net Zero Pathway certification.
- EIF have defended being targeted by Art Workers for Palestine for Baillie Gifford sponsoring the festival, which led to the loss of Baillie Gifford as sponsor of several literary festivals, including EIBF and Wigtown in 2024.
- [redacted - section 33(1)(b))] EIF have been positive about their award and the wider investment in Scotland's culture sector. A statement from Fran Hegyi on the day of the MYF outcome welcomed the increased investment in the sector, particularly the firm foundation it provides to plan ahead with greater confidence.
- [redacted - section 33(1)(b))]
- [redacted - section 33(1)(b))]

2025 Festival

The 78th edition of the Edinburgh International Festival runs from August 1 to 24, 2025, under the theme "The Truth We Seek", inviting audiences to reflect on truth through music, theatre, opera, and dance. The festival features 133 performances, showcasing world, UK, and European premieres (including 7 world premieres, 8 UK or Scottish premieres, and 2 European premieres) and involving over 1,700 artists from 42 countries.

[redacted - section 33(1)(b))]

The festival also emphasizes affordability and accessibility: over 50,000 tickets are priced at £30 or less, there are £10 “Affordable Tickets,” thousands of free options for community groups and NHS staff, and 33 accessible performances, including audio-described, BSL-interpreted, captioned, and relaxed shows.

This year *Make It Happen*, a World Premiere starring Brian Cox, is a joint commission with NTS and Dundee Rep [redacted - section 33(1)(b))]

Programme highlights include:

- EXPO FUNDED: *Make It Happen*, a new play by James Graham starring Brian Cox, exploring Scotland's role in the 2008 financial crash
- *Mary, Queen of Scots*, a new ballet production by Scottish Ballet blending classicism and punk aesthetics
- *The Veil of The Temple*, an eight-hour choral epic led by the Edinburgh Festival Chorus in the Opening Concert
- *Orpheus and Eurydice*, a boundary-pushing opera with circus elements from Opera Queensland and Circa
- *Book of Mountains and Seas*, a genre-defying stage work blending opera and puppetry, by Huang Ruo and Basil Twist
- Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony performed from memory by Aurora Orchestra in its EIF debut
- *Figures in Extinction*, a dance-theatre piece confronting the climate crisis by Nederlands Dans Theater
- *Breaking Bach*, where hip-hop meets Baroque classical performed by the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment
- Family-friendly and participatory events such as *The Big Singalong* at Princes Street Gardens, *Dance People* outdoor promenade performance, and accessible concerts including a first-ever dementia-friendly offering.

**Opening Premiere of Make It Happen - Speech
Edinburgh International Festival, Friday 1st August 2025**

Good evening

It is an honour to be here as we gather to celebrate a bold, exciting, thought provoking new work.

The Edinburgh International Festival, National Theatre of Scotland and Dundee Rep, each dynamic, forward thinking, highly regarded cultural institutions should take great pride in their collaborative work to bring us this curtain raiser for the 78th Edinburgh International Festival.

And I have no doubt tonight's performance will take its place among the great premieres in the history of the International Festival.

Since its founding in 1947, the Edinburgh International Festival has continually created space to explore challenging issues, and to develop shared understanding among artists and audiences in thought provoking ways.

Last year, 127,000 attendees experienced 133 performances from 42 countries; with more than half attending their first Edinburgh International Festival.

It is testament to this Festival's enduring power to surprise and delight, to the guiding vision of Nicola Benedetti as Festival Director, and to Edinburgh's place in the world as the perfect stage for creativity.

The outstanding national and international reputations of the Edinburgh International Festival, the National Theatre of Scotland and Dundee Rep speak for themselves.

And I am sure being here this evening to witness the product of many, many months of planning, preparation and production between these institutions is incredibly exciting for all of us.

I have no doubt Make It Happen will have a bright future as a production in its own right, furthering our country's unwavering commitment to artistic excellence.

The Scottish Government's commitment to culture is just as unwavering. In the last Budget we delivered an additional £100 million for our cultural sector—driving stability, sustainability and growth.

That funding underwrites Creative Scotland's Multi-Year programme, which has increased EIF's core grant to over £4 million a year, as well as investing in venues, touring, talent development and major co-commissions like this one.

We know that every pound invested in our festivals returns many times that value in visitor spend, job creation and global profile—and tonight's premiere is a powerful illustration of that return.

The Scottish Government is proud to have played its part in supported this co-production, through our Festival EXPO fund.

As you take your seats this evening, remember that the drama you will witness on this stage speaks to who we are as a nation—bold, inventive and outward-looking.

It reminds us that culture and creativity are not side-shows to economic policy but central drivers of growth, community and international influence.

On behalf of the Scottish Government, I congratulate EIF, NTS, Dundee Rep, James Graham, Brian Cox and every artist, technician and supporter whose talent and dedication have brought Make It Happen to life.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in celebrating this extraordinary work, and here's to a Festival season filled with discovery, inspiration and the truth we seek.

Enjoy the show.

National Library of Scotland Media Event

7 August 2025

Key message	NLS is one of the world's leading research libraries and is grant in aid funded by the Scottish Government's Culture portfolio budget. NLS are dedicated to preserving, sharing, and celebrating Scotland's history, culture and global connections.
What	Thursday 7 August marks the 100 th anniversary of the Library's creation via an Act of Parliament. DC Thomson have created a special centenary comic especially for the occasion and NLS are having a media event to celebrate.
Why	The Scottish Government values the National Library of Scotland's commitment to delivering a strong public service and supporting ministerial priorities.
Who	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amina Shah, National Librarian and Chief Executive, NLS
Where	The National Library of Scotland, George IV Bridge, Edinburgh EH1 1EW
When	<p>Thursday 7 August 2025 09:00 – 09:20</p> <p>Media expected at 09:30, however, NLS will have their own photographer on sight from 09:10.</p>
Likely themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SG's continued support for NLS.
Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> [redacted - section 38(1)(b)]
Supporting official	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> [redacted - section 38(1)(b)]
Attached documents	<p>Annex A – National Library of Scotland's centenary activity Culture sector funding.</p> <p>Annex B – Culture sector funding and NLS Budget allocation for 2025-26.</p> <p>[redacted section 30 (b)(i)]</p> <p>[redacted section 30 (b)(i)]</p>

National Library of Scotland's centenary activity

- A Centenary exhibition, *Dear Library*, which will celebrate libraries and what people love about them, which will run from 19 June 2025 – April 2026: This will include:
 - Allowing visitors to browse through bookshelves filled with recommendations gathered from a public callout and from well-known Scottish figures. The exhibition will also contain depictions of librarians and libraries in popular culture, protest banners and badges reflecting libraries under threat, footage from the Moving Image Archive bringing libraries of the past to life, as well as items loaned from specialist libraries from around Scotland: the Nature Library, Glasgow Women's Library, Innerpefferay Library, Skye Zine Library and the Library of Mistakes.
 - In the Treasures gallery, founding items gifted to the Library in 1925 will go on display in a special Centenary exhibit. The Glenriddell Manuscript, which contains some of Robert Burns's most important works and spans most of his literary career, as well as the Order for the Massacre of Glencoe, which resulted in one of the most infamous events in Scottish history, will be on public view. Displays relating to the Library's history and collections will also take place at the National Library's Glasgow home, Kelvin Hall.
- NLS's Centenary champions are Val McDermid and Damian Barr.
- Outwith: National Library around Scotland, a national programme which will see NLS bring collection items to Aberdeen, Perth and Shetland between September 2025 and June 2026. This will include Mary Queen of Scots' last letter to go on display in Perth Museum.
- Community engagement to show how the National Library can be accessed remotely.
- Love Libraries, NLS sector-wide campaign for people to show love for their local libraries, this resulted in a burst activity around Valentine's Day 2025.
- Announcement of public consultation of draft strategy for 2025–2030.

Culture Sector Funding

The Scottish Government has demonstrated our commitment to the culture sector with an increase of over £34m in 2025/26. This takes us to over £50m more in culture funding than in 2023/2024.

- The increase of more than £34m results in the biggest increase in culture funding in the history of this Parliament after Covid recovery support and takes the total uplift to date to £50m.
- Scottish Ministers already increased culture sector funding by £15.8m in 2024/25, as the first step to achieving **the First Minister’s commitment to invest at least £100 million more annually in culture and the arts by 2028/29.**
- This commitment to additional funding despite the challenging budget situation signals our confidence in the Scottish culture sector and is the starting point of a journey of three phases – sustain, develop, and innovate.
- Through this increased investment we want to drive up opportunities for participation in creative pursuits, support the production of new works, and ensure that Scotland’s cultural output has platforms at home and abroad.
- The Scottish Government are enormously sympathetic to the need for financial support for the artistic and cultural sector in Scotland. The Scottish Government will support the cultural sector to fulfil its potential.

NLS Budget allocation for 2025/26:

National Collection	Total Resource £m	Total Capital £m	Total Budget £m
NLS	17.767	2.7	20.467

- **NLS received a 5.9% increase to their resource budget.** [redacted section 30 (b)(i)]
- [redacted section 30 (b)(i)]
- [redacted section 30 (b)(i)]
- [redacted section 30 (b)(i)]

Briefing for Edinburgh Art Festival

What	Opening of Edinburgh Art Festival (EAF) 2025.
When	Thursday 7th August, 12:30 – 13:30
Where	EAF Festival Pavillon, 45 Leith Street, Edinburgh, EH1 3AT.
Who	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kim McAleese, CEO Edinburgh Art Festival • Lucy Cargill - Senior Development Manager • Eleanor Edmondson - Curator
Why	Engagement with EAF, provide ministerial speech for their festival launch.
Key messages	Pleased to celebrate the 21st edition of Edinburgh Arts Festival. EAF received £200k in 2025/26 through EXPO, an increase on the £110k provided in 2024/25. EAF is also a recipient of Creative Scotland Multi-Year Funding (£130k in 2025/26 and £170k in 2026/27 and 2027/28).
Speech details	Speech (5 Minutes) attached separately [redacted - section 38(1)(b)]
Official support	[redacted - section 38(1)(b)]
Media handling	Photographer, possible attendance by local journalists.
Twitter (X)	@culturescotgov – EAF no longer use Twitter/X
Dress code	Smart casual/ Business
Entrance and greeting party	Cabinet Secretary will be met at the entrance by [redacted - section 38(1)(b)] [redacted - section 38(1)(b)]
Briefing contents	Annex A - Event programme Annex B - Key messages – Edinburgh Festivals Annex C - Key lines - Edinburgh Art Festival

EVENT PROGRAMME

TIME	EVENT
12:30 - Arrival	
13:00 – Speeches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet Secretary • Kim McAleese
13:30 – Depart [redacted - section 38(1)(b)]	
14:00 – End of event.	

This is the 21st edition of Edinburgh Art Festival (7–24 Aug 2025.)

The Festival is partnered with 45 partners and venues, over 300 artists, with flagship presentations by Linder at Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, Andy Goldsworthy at NGS, Wael Shawky at Talbot Rice Gallery, Mike Nelson at Fruitmarket.

Edinburgh Art Festival Pavillon will be held in Outer Spaces at 45 Leith Street. Outer Spaces is a charity collaborating with artists, arts organisations, and property owners to activate the nation's empty commercial spaces. Since 2021, they have matched artists with vacant commercial property on a scale that has not existed in Scotland before.

The Outer Spaces network can access free space and development opportunities, exploring new models and directions for curating, commissioning and collaborative working.

For information -programme for the rest of EAF Opening afternoon. EAF Partner Exhibition Receptions:

- 2–3pm: Wael Shawky at Talbot Rice Gallery (drinks reception)
- 3–4pm: Siân Davey at Stills (drinks reception)
- 4–5pm: Mike Nelson at Fruitmarket (drinks reception)
- 6.30pm: Linder Performance at Botanics

KEY MESSAGES**Edinburgh Festivals**

- Scotland's festivals are at the heart of our culture sector and national life. They are an invaluable platform for our artists and performers to develop and support their ambition and creativity by providing focal points for activity and opportunities to showcase their work.
- At every stage of their planning and their delivery, Scotland's Festivals are renowned for ambition, creativity and excellence at home and overseas.
- The 2025/26 Budget provides an important foundation for the work of festivals, recognising the importance of stability and certainty through long term sustained funding to support Festival's core activities and their ambitions for the future.
- As well as their outstanding work on stage, festivals provide hundreds of millions of pounds to the Scottish and local economies, supporting a pipeline of jobs and businesses.
- Increasing investment in festivals, as part of a broader uplift in funding for culture, underlines the value the Scottish Government places on the arts.
- Through this increased investment we want to drive up opportunities for participation in creative pursuits, support the festivals commissions and collaborations on new and exciting works, ensuring Scotland's cultural output have platforms at home and abroad.
- Festivals, like the entirety of the culture sector, have been hit hard in recent years by a series of challenges. Recovery from the pandemic and addressing the challenges brought by Brexit have been made more difficult by increased costs and inflation, together with a challenging public funding environment.
- Whilst increased funding has provided greater long term stability, festivals continue to face challenges around transport, accommodation, connectivity and long term sustainability beyond funding to areas like workforce planning and skills development.
- We are committed to working with festivals in Edinburgh, as well as across Scotland through a Strategic Partnership to address these challenges

EDINBURGH ART FESTIVAL (7- 24 AUG 2025)

Edinburgh Art Festival (EAF) is the UK's largest annual festival of visual art. It was founded in 2004 through an ambitious partnership of galleries committed to ensuring that high quality presentations of visual art remained at the core of Edinburgh's summer festival experience.

The festival works with local and international partners to present an ambitious and meaningful programme of exhibitions, events and projects. Since its beginnings, the festival has featured exhibitions from artists at a pivotal point in their career, alongside the best emerging talent, major survey exhibitions of historic figures and a programme of new commissions.

Funding

Creative Scotland EAF received £470k from through MYF - £130k in 2025/26 and £170k in 2026/27 and 2027/28. This is an increase of over 60% on their previous funding agreement from Creative Scotland (£100k per year).

Scottish Government – EAF received £200k in 2025/26 through EXPO, an increase on the £110k provided in 2024/25.

[redacted - section 33(1)(b)]

Attendance

130000 visitors to their 20th anniversary programme in 2024 across 30 venues.

[redacted section 30 (b)(i)]

[redacted section 30 (b)(i)]

2025 Highlights

2025 will present over 40 exhibitions and projects across more than 20 venues in Edinburgh.

[redacted section 30 (b)(i)]

.For Edinburgh Art Festival 2024, the festival and the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh invited the Colombian cultural foundation Más Arte Más Acción (MAMA) to create a public artistic intervention—a large table around a tree—to explore human-plant relationships amid rapid biodiversity loss. This builds on MAMA's 2022 work for COP26 in Glasgow. The project also supports a future collaboration with the British Council to bring Brazilian artist UYRA to the UK in 2025 [redacted section 30 (b)(i)]

EXPO Commissions:

CJ Mahony & Lewis Hetherington: A major new commission by queer Scotland-based artists across theatre and visual art, exploring materiality, storytelling, and collaborative practice. 'who will be remembered here' is a new interdisciplinary film that creates a sense of kinship and intimacy with queer and LGBTQIA+ people who have lived throughout Scottish history but whose lives have been rendered invisible due to traditional heritage presentation. Four writers appear in four Historic Environment Scotland locations across the breadth of Scotland, commissioned to reflect the different languages of Scotland (BSL, English, Scots, Gaelic).

Partners: Historic Environment Scotland (HES), Edinburgh International Book Festival (EIBF), Edinburgh World Heritage, Lavender Menace, Waverley Care, Outer Spaces.

- **Outcomes:**
- First major collaboration and solo show in Scotland for artists, presenting queer Scottish histories to international audiences.
- Experimental work across disciplines (visual art and theatre-making).
- Representation of marginalised languages.
- Collaboration with EIBF for a new book and discussion event.
- Long-term civic engagement in Edinburgh.

Hamish Halley: A new commission and collaborative residency with Hugo Burge Foundation (cultural residencies in the Scottish Borders), culminating in a solo show in August 2025. Based in Glasgow, Halley will develop a poignant video piece intertwining two narratives from an LGBTQIA+ perspective: cleaning his grandparents' home after their passing and the transition of the Perth Museum's collection into a new space. He will engage Edinburgh communities through workshops, discussions, and participatory events.

Partners: Hugo Burge Foundation

Outcomes:

- First solo show in Scotland for an early-career queer artist, developed across multiple institutions.
- Mentorship and development support from EAF curators.
- Community engagement in Edinburgh and Scottish Borders.
- Showcase in People's Story Museum, connecting with international craft audiences.

EAF x Edinburgh Science Art Commission: A reflective and forward-thinking event to close EAF25, featuring key voices from the Global Majority in contemporary art and cultural discourse from Scotland, alongside international thinkers and activists.

Partners: Edinburgh Science Festival, Edinburgh International Storytelling Festival

- **Outcomes:**
- Cross-dialogue between Edinburgh-based festivals

- Opportunity for interdisciplinary collaboration.
- Expanded exposure for participating artists.
- Future collaborations with Edinburgh Science Festival for a 2026 commission.

Mas Arte Mas Acción: Continuing our collaboration with the Colombian collective, we will install their sculpture permanently in RBGE for EXPO25/26 and develop an international climate change programme with São Paulo Biennial and at COP30 in Brazil later this year.

Partners: São Paulo Biennial, Pinacoteca São Paulo, Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh.

- **Outcomes:**
- International learning exchange and skill-sharing opportunities.
- Ministerial presence with EAF at COP30
- Artist career development in the Global South.
- Cross-disciplinary collaboration between art, science, and ecology.

Other highlights include:

- Linder at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh: A major new performance and exhibition exploring folklore and queer history by the internationally acclaimed artist.
- Lewis Walker: Bornsick: A powerful performance and exhibition examining identity and heritage, closing the festival.
- JUPITER RISING x EAF: A one-night-only festival event at Jupiter Artland featuring pioneering artists and performances.
- CJ Mahony and Lewis Hetherington: Film works addressing contemporary issues and narratives.
- New Public Art Commissions: Innovative installations and artworks situated in public and historic sites across the city, engaging communities in fresh ways.

**Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Europe and External Affairs
Opening of Edinburgh Arts Festival 7 August 2025
(795 words – 5 minutes)**

Good afternoon and welcome to the 21st edition of the Edinburgh Arts Festival.

It is a pleasure to be in the EAF's new Pavilion—brought to life in partnership with Outer Spaces—where art and community meet in unexpected but welcome ways.

This is just one of many spaces that you'll be able to take part in the festival.

Over the next two and a half weeks, more than 300 artists will share their work across 45 partner venues, transforming galleries, museums—and even empty shopfronts—into stages for creativity.

I am always excited to see the festival's new commissions, like CJ Mahony and Lewis Hetherington's interdisciplinary film that will be remembered here for bringing to light queer histories in Scotland's landscapes and languages.

We will also see thought-provoking projects from Trans Masc Studies and Alice Rekab, and I encourage you to visit Hamish Halley, the festival's Early Career Artist in Residence, at the People's Story Museum. His residency weaves personal and collective narratives that remind us why art matters.

And the festival matters beyond August - it is a vital part of Scotland's cultural ecosystem, an institution of national and international significance.

By supporting emerging and mid-career artists, driving commissioning through its festival-led programme and partnering with organisations large and small, EAF ensures that new ideas find a platform.

From the intimate installations in historic closes to the flagship presentations by Linder at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, Wael Shawky at Talbot Rice Gallery, and Mike Nelson at the Fruitmarket, this Festival is a showcase of ambition, excellence and innovation.

And as part of that story, I am grateful to the EAF for also working with communities across Edinburgh to provide them with access to world-class work that they otherwise wouldn't.

The Festival's year-round Civic Programme is sensitively delivered in partnership with social justice organisations and community groups.

Whether through participatory workshops, public talks or interventions in civic spaces, this programme deepens EAF's impact—ensuring that art engages with the issues that matter most to Edinburgh's residents.

And, speaking of residents, EAF are great neighbours to have, and that is important as the success of Edinburgh Arts Festival depends on collaboration.

So I am grateful to Outer Spaces, whose pioneering work in activating vacant properties made this Pavilion possible.

I thank all partner venues—from our world-renowned galleries to the small local projects—whose doors are open to artists and audiences alike.

To the hundreds of curators, technicians, designers and freelancers whose craft often goes unseen: your dedication is the backbone of this Festival.

And it's your dedication that allows us to be here to witness art and culture as catalysts for conversation, understanding and change. We in Scottish Government know that stability and long-term planning are vital for festivals to be a showcase for the best of our arts and culture.

That is why the Scottish Government has committed £200,000 in EXPO funding for both EAF 2025 and EAF 2026.

That funding is alongside Creative Scotland's Multi-Year Funding, which has increased EAF's core grant by over 60%.

These investments allow the Festival team to commission new work, nurture talent, and extend art's reach beyond the summer months.

With this investment, I am glad that we can protect the value that visual and contemporary arts offer us.

They help us reflect on—and respond to—the pressing challenges of our time.

Through bold imagery, experimental forms and thought-provoking installations, artists hold up a mirror to society, inviting us to question injustice, climate breakdown and social inequality.

In galleries and on our streets, and in these troubled times, these works remind us that creativity is not a luxury.

It is a necessity, urging each of us to imagine alternative futures and to act on the truths they reveal.

They challenge our assumptions, spark our imagination and connect us across differences.

In a week when Edinburgh will welcome partners from around the world for Climate Conversations ahead of COP30, let us remember that creativity has a crucial role to play in addressing global challenges.

And nowhere is this clearer than through environmental art commissions like

Mas Arte Mas Acción at the Botanic Gardens or in the reflective dialogues sparked by EAF's cross-festival collaborations.

So, let us celebrate every exhibition, performance and discussion that lies ahead. Explore the Pavilion, wander through the city's venues, soak it all in and take the time to absorb all the provocations, answers and challenges the festival has to offer.

Before I hand back over to Kim, I want to thank all the artists whose work transforms our city, to the Festival team for their tireless commitment, and to each of you for joining us for the opening of this year's Edinburgh Arts Festival.

Thank you and enjoy the festival!

Global Ink Social – The Lounge, (Room 2.55), Level 2, Edinburgh Futures Institute – 12 August 2025

What	The Global Ink Social is an opportunity to meet local and overseas industry professionals and Edinburgh International Book Festival to celebrate international collaboration. This will be an opportunity to support the festivals. The Cabinet Secretary will announce the Book Festival’s intention to host the Global Ink 2026 International Conference supported by the Scottish Government’s Expo Fund – an investment in international exchange, sector innovation, and the global promotion of Scottish literature.
Where	The Lounge, (Room 2.55), Level 2, Edinburgh Futures Institute
When	Cabinet Secretary arrives: 18:20 Global Ink International Industry Day: 14:30 – 20:00 Global Ink Social: 18:15 – 20:00
Key Message(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scotland is an open, connected and outward-looking country with a long and proud history of intellectual, cultural and economic exchange. • Scotland's distinguished literary culture is a notable part of our national identity and raises our cultural profile around the world. • I know from my recent visit to the Harper Collins warehouse that many publishing businesses sell overseas and are constantly innovating and taking advantage of technological development and that broadly we share a confidence that both the tech and creative industries can grow while maintaining the cultural assets of Scotland and the wider UK. • As part of our International Culture Strategy, we have committed to carrying out a feasibility study into the establishment of a support service for cultural export and exchange – this will help to inform how we can best support international activity in the sector and to overcome challenges to it.
Who	Hosted by Festival Director Jenny Niven
Why	An opportunity to support the Edinburgh International Book Festival in building relationships with industry professionals to promote Scottish literature internationally.
Supporting official	[redacted - section 38(1)(b)]
Briefing contents	<p>Speaking note provided separately</p> <p>Annex A: Event Programme Annex B: Guest List/Attendees Annex C: Literature, Publishing and Cultural Export Support Top Lines</p>

	Annex D: Festival Top Lines and CabSec Engagements Annex E: Festival 2025 Highlights Annex F: Festival Key Issues and Funding
Media Handling	[redacted section 30 (b)(i)]
Social Media	@edbookfest
Greeting Party and specific meeting point on arrival	[redacted - section 38(1)(b)]
Specific entrance for Ministerial car/parking arrangements	[redacted - section 38(1)(b)]

EVENT PROGRAMME

Time	Details
18:15 – 20:00	GLOBAL INK SOCIAL Drinks and canapés reception. Informal networking with speakers, international delegates, cultural partners, and publishers.
18:20	ARRIVAL [redacted - section 38(1)(b)]
18:25	INFORMAL WELCOME Jenny Niven introduces Cabinet Secretary to key guests, [redacted - section 38(1)(b)]
18:35	OPENING REMARKS from the Cabinet Secretary (3–5 minutes), welcoming international guests and announcing the Book Festival's intention to host the Global Ink 2026 International Conference . Jenny Niven will explain the rationale and vision.
20:00	EVENT CONCLUDES The Cabinet Secretary depart [redacted - section 38(1)(b)]

The **Global Ink: International Industry Day** preceding the reception included 2 sessions:

1 Books That Travel, in partnership with Publishing Scotland, featuring alumni from Publishing Scotland International Fellowship Programme, considered what's selling across global markets, what's translated and who decides what crosses borders?

Chair: James Crawford (Scotland), Chair, Edinburgh International Book Festival
Speakers:

- Andrea Morstabilini (Italy), Writer and Foreign Non-Fiction Editor, Iperborea
- Julia Eisele (Germany), Founder and Publisher, Eisele Verlag
- Iris Tupholme (Canada), Senior Vice-President and Executive Publisher, HarperCollins Canada

2 Born Digital: Web Novels and the Global Reading Revolution







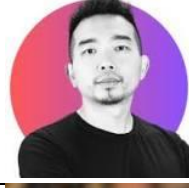

Web novels are changing publishing, spawning new genres, and inspiring blockbuster film, TV, and gaming adaptations. What is the future of reading and what can publishers learn from these new technologies, platforms and fan communities?

Chair: Alastair Horne, Lecturer in Publishing Studies, University of Stirling

Speakers:

- Sean Xie, Representative of Beijing International Book Fair
- Seunghye Sun, Ph.D. FRSA, Director, Korean Cultural Centre UK (The Korean Culture Centre UK took part in this event after conversations at the 2024 EIBF programme launch at Scotland House in London.)

GUEST LIST/ATTENDEES

	<p>Jenny Niven, Director, Edinburgh International Book Festival</p> <p>Senior literary programmer who joined Book Festival in September 2023 as Director. Brings 20 years of experience in literature in Scotland and internationally, championing the value of the arts and culture and working collaboratively to develop literature and to bring innovative projects to life.</p>
	<p>Andrea Morstabilini, Writer and editor at Iperborea, Milan</p> <p>His debut English-language novel, <i>A Blood as Bright as the Moon</i>, will be published by Titan Books in September 2025.</p>
	<p>Julia Eisele, Publisher and founder of Eisele Verlag, Munich</p> <p>Formerly with Random House and Bonnier, she publishes emotionally rich fiction by international bestsellers including Madeline Miller and Rebecca Makkai.</p>
	<p>Iris Tupholme, Executive, HarperCollins Canada</p> <p>She publishes internationally acclaimed authors such as Colum McCann, and Robin Sharma, and is a key figure in Canadian literary life.</p>
	<p>James Crawford, Chair, Edinburgh International Book Festival</p> <p>Author, broadcaster, and Chair of the Edinburgh International Book Festival. He has written and presented <i>Scotland from the Sky</i> (BBC) and is a former Chair of Publishing Scotland.</p>
	<p>Seunghye Sun, Director, Korean Cultural Centre UK</p> <p>A cultural diplomat and art historian, she is a leading voice in Korea's digital storytelling revolution, championing web novels and immersive literature.</p>
	<p>Sean Xie, Senior representative, Beijing International Book Fair</p> <p>He has led major international publishing initiatives and oversees one of the world's largest book fairs, drawing 1,700 exhibitors and 300,000 visitors annually.</p>
	<p>Alastair Horne, Lecturer in Publishing, University of Stirling</p> <p>His research focuses on smartphone storytelling and Japanese cellphone novels; formerly Innovations Manager at Cambridge University Press.</p>

The *Global Ink Social* brings together senior figures from the global literary, publishing, festival, and diplomatic sectors

[redacted - section 38(1)(b))]

LITERATURE, PUBLISHING AND CULTURAL EXPORT SUPPORT TOP LINES**LITERATURE**

- Scotland is an open, connected and outward-looking country with a long and proud history of intellectual, cultural and economic exchange.
- Scotland's distinguished literary culture is a notable part of our national identity. We have produced many writers, from the literary giants of the past to contemporary, cutting edge writers.
- This rich literary heritage and vibrant contemporary talent enriches our lives profoundly. It also attracts visitors to Scotland and raises our cultural profile around the world.
- The Scottish Government supports literature, languages and their promotion in Scotland and internationally. It supports the large public agencies (SDI, HIE, VisitScotland) as well as Creative Scotland, the national arts development body which supports key organisations including the Edinburgh International Book Festival and Publishing Scotland, the National Theatre for Scotland, Book Week Scotland, the post of Makar (or National Poet) and funds the Scottish Libraries Information Council which supports public libraries.

PUBLISHING

- I know from my recent visit to the Harper Collins warehouse that publishing businesses are constantly innovating and taking advantage of technological development and that broadly we share a confidence that both the tech and creative industries can grow while maintaining the cultural assets of Scotland and the wider UK.

CULTURAL EXPORT SUPPORT

- With so many publishers also selling overseas – 90 per cent in the last 2022 according to the last Publishing Scotland snapshot, the Scottish Government also promote Scottish culture and fostering international connections.
- We continue to help artists access new markets, building business relationships, and highlighting Scotland's cultural presence abroad through the Scottish Government's international network of offices.
- The Scottish Government recognises that working and exporting internationally is vital to Scotland's culture and creative sectors. While the export of goods plays a considerable role, much of the export activity in the sector is focussed on the export of services.
- Our International Culture Strategy identified a need to provide greater support in this area – representatives of our culture and creative sectors have highlighted the need for greater support for international activity, including cultural exports and exchange in recent years.
- As part of our International Culture Strategy, we have committed to carrying out a feasibility study into the establishment of a support service for cultural export and exchange – this will help to inform how we can best support international activity in the sector and to overcome challenges to it.

FESTIVAL TOP LINES

- The Edinburgh International Book Festival is the world's largest literature festival featuring the greatest writers and thinkers from around the globe.
- The 2025 festival will be the second year under the leadership of Jenny Niven as Director and at its new long term home at the Edinburgh Futures Institute, a landmark development at the University which will drive change through interdisciplinary research and collaboration.
- Delighted to hear from writers from around the world on the theme of Repair at the Gala Launch on 9 August and welcome meeting industry professionals from around the world at the Global Ink Social on 12 August.
- The Scottish Government and our agencies provide significant funding to a number of Scotland's festivals and we will continue to do everything we can to protect our world-class festivals.
- Since 2008, Edinburgh International Book Festival has received over £1.7m from our EXPO fund and over £1m from our Platform for Creative Excellence (PLaCE) joint fund with City of Edinburgh Council.
- In 2025-2026, Scottish Government is providing £200,000 in EXPO funding to the Edinburgh International Book Festival – £100,000 will support the staging of an ambitious, multi-layered programme of commissions at the 2025 Festival, entitled *Music, Poetry and Performance*.
- Today I'm delighted to announce the Book Festival's intention to host the **Global Ink 2026 International Conference** supported by £100,000 from the Scottish Government's Expo Fund in 2025-26 – an investment in international exchange, sector innovation, and the global promotion of Scottish literature.

Israel / Palestine – Cancellation of Jewish performances at Fringe

Before the start of August, two Jewish comedians had Edinburgh Fringe shows axed over 'safety concerns' cited by venues. Rachel Creeger and Philip Simon were set to perform at the Whistlebinkies venue.

[redacted section 30 (b)(i)]

A Scottish Government spokesperson said:

“There is no place in Scotland's civic and cultural life for any form of hatred, antisemitism or islamophobia.

“While venues are responsible for their own bookings, the Scottish Government fully supports individuals' rights to freedom of expression and we are clear that there is no place for any form of discrimination or prejudice in Scotland.

“From the outset of the conflict, the Scottish Government has repeatedly called for an immediate and sustainable ceasefire by all sides and an urgent increase in humanitarian aid to Gaza. We condemned Hamas’ barbaric attacks on 7 October and have called for the immediate release of hostages. The Scottish Government supports a two-state solution where Israelis and Palestinians can live in peace.

“We deeply value our relationships with Scotland’s diverse faith and belief communities, including our Jewish communities, and welcome their contributions which enrich our nation’s civic life. Ministers and officials regularly engage with the Jewish community on a range of issues and will continue to do so.”

Festival Gala: Repair 9 Aug 18:00-19:30 Edinburgh Futures Institute

This event opened this year's Festival with perspectives and provocations from a diverse line-up of writers, including Najwan Darwish, Jenni Fagan, Amitav Ghosh, Rachel Kushner, and Cacica Juma Xipaia, who each read a newly-commissioned piece of writing, responding to the 2025 theme of Repair. Hosted by Jenny Niven.

Global Ink: Edinburgh International Book Festival’s International Industry Day 12 Aug 14:30-20:00, The Lounge, (Room 2.55), Level 2

Global Ink is the festival’s flagship industry event, bringing together industry professionals from Scotland, the UK, and around the world. It’s an event for authors, publishers, translators, festival organisers, and anyone passionate about working across borders. Two thought-provoking panel discussions feature leading international figures from across the literary world addressing the topics of Books that Travel and Born Digital – Web Novels and the Global Reading Revolution. The Global Ink Social will be a relaxed networking reception to celebrate the spirit of international collaboration.

FESTIVAL 2025 HIGHLIGHTS

The Edinburgh International Book Festival 2025, held from 9–24 August at the Edinburgh Futures Institute, brings together nearly 700 events with 641 writers from 35 countries across six continents, under the inspiring theme “Repair”, which explores how we might heal societal, environmental, and political fractures. The programme features a rich blend of fiction, non-fiction, poetry, spoken word, workshops, theatre and music, including a first-ever Young Adult strand, a new Kids Zone, cookery showcases with renowned chefs, and digital access via livestreams and AI captions.

Highlights include appearances by international literary figures such as Hanif Kureishi, Alice Oseman, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, FFM Nicola Sturgeon, and Najwan Darwish, alongside interactive community outreach across Scotland and a dedicated Front List series at McEwan Hall. This year’s Book Festival reaffirms its status as the world’s largest celebration of the written word, fostering critical conversation, creativity, and global connection.

2024 OUTCOMES AND ISSUES

Outcome

- The 2024 edition of the festival celebrated its 41st anniversary of its founding, there were over 500 events from over 550 authors from all over the world.
- 2024 was the first year of Jenny Niven’s tenure as EIBF Director after Nick Barley’s departure after 14 years in the role.
- In 2024 70,000 tickets were sold with over 100,000 visitors in total to their new home at the Edinburgh Futures Institute.
- The theme of the festival was Future Tense.
- In 2024-2025, Scottish Government provided £1.8m in EXPO funding in addition to £750,000 for the PLaCE Programme to all festivals. EIBF received £105,000 of funding from the EXPO fund in 2024 for an innovative series of programmes exploring James Hogg’s iconic text, *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, on the 200th anniversary of its publication in 1824. EIBF also received £75,000 in PLaCE Transition Funding in 2023/24 for 2024 activity.

FESTIVAL 2025 ISSUES

Funding

The Book Festival receives substantial support from Creative Scotland, which has committed a £1.88 million multi-year grant covering three years—more than doubling its previous core funding.

In addition, the Scottish Government awarded £300,000 to support the festival's schools and community literacy outreach over the next three years, that provides access to the festival to 5000 children annually from all over Scotland.

In addition to SG funding following Baillie Gifford's exit in 2024, EIBF has worked to diversify support—securing contributions from Sir Ian Rankin and philanthropic gifts, alongside ticket revenue and support from the People's Postcode Lottery.

Key Issues

Funding

[redacted - section 33(1)(b)]

Liz Lloyd

Regarding claims that additional £300k funding is linked to the appointment of former FM aide Liz Lloyd, these claims are untrue. Ministers took the decision on 28 March 2025 to provide this one-off funding for Edinburgh International Book Festival following discussions with the EIBF since August 2024.

The Edinburgh International Book Festival have confirmed this appointment to their Board as an unsalaried and unremunerated Director came through a fully advertised, formal open recruitment process, along with other board directors and was formally appointed in June. The appointment process was open, fair and impartial and the appointment was based on merit. Confirmation was sought that there would be no unmanageable conflict of interest as a result of the appointment.

Applications under the ACOBA rules in relation to Special Advisers (SpAds) are considered by the Director of Propriety and Ethics and decided by the Permanent Secretary. Ms Lloyd informed the organisation of her intentions, and it was agreed that there is no conflict in her taking up the role.

EXPO FUNDING 2025-26

The EXPO panel, administered by Creative Scotland, approved and announced an award of £200,000 to the Edinburgh International Book Festival on 21 June 2025. *Music, Poetry and Performance* will see an ambitious, multi-layered programme of commissions at the 2025 Festival.

This funding will also support the Edinburgh International Book Festival to host **Global Ink 2026**, a landmark international conference, building on the Edinburgh

International Book Festival's international network and offering unparalleled opportunities for the Scottish cultural community, **which the Cabinet Secretary will announce at this event.**

[redacted section 30 (b)(i)]

Global Ink 2026

Edinburgh International Book Festival to host landmark international conference next year – Global Ink 2026:

- Edinburgh International Book Festival will host an international conference of literature festival professionals in August 2026.
- The event will build on the success of the Festival's existing Global Ink programme and respond to growing international demand for in-person collaboration and sector-wide leadership.
- The three-day conference will bring together up to 20 leading international Festival Directors alongside a vibrant online audience, with sessions addressing key global challenges such as funding sustainability, programming in politicised environments, and cultural collaboration.
- The 2026 conference will integrate with the Festival's public programme and will platform export-ready Scottish writers, creating international and commercial opportunities and strengthening Scotland's cultural presence on the global stage.
- The event is supported by £100k of existing EXPO funding from the Scottish Government – an investment in international exchange, sector innovation, and the global promotion of Scottish literature.
- The initiative continues EIBF's long-standing leadership in international festival networks, including founding the Word Alliance and active membership in Global Association of Literary Festivals (GoALF) and the British Arts Festivals Association (BAFA).
- The conference affirms Edinburgh's global role as a convening hub for literary and cultural innovation – and signals EIBF's ambition to lead relevant international conversation at a time when connection, creativity, and resilience are more vital than ever.

Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture

Book Festival Global Ink Social Speaking Points – 12 August 2025 (3-5 minutes)

- **Welcome attendees** to the **Global Ink Social** and thank **Jenny Niven** and the Edinburgh International Book Festival team.
- **Celebrate Global Ink** as a platform for meaningful international collaboration — acknowledging the diversity of delegates present, from emerging publishing students to global literary leaders. Highlight key international guests, including the **2025 Momentum delegates**, speakers from the **Beijing International Book Fair** and the **Korean Cultural Centre**, visiting **Festival Directors**, and **diplomatic representatives**.
- **Emphasise the value** of **international literary exchange** as a vital part of Scotland’s creative economy — supporting innovation, cultural diplomacy, and global engagement.
- **Announce the headline**: The Edinburgh International Book Festival today announces an expansion of its acclaimed Global Ink programme for 2026, made possible through **EXPO funding** from the Scottish Government.
- The expanded Global Ink programme, running from Monday 17 - Wednesday 19 August 2026, and which brings together professionals from Scotland, the UK, and around the world, will now include **a new landmark international conference in August 2026**.
- The conference, which is supported by £100,000 of existing EXPO funding, will build on the success of the Book Festival’s existing programme.
- This initiative will position **Global Ink as a vital convening platform, promoting new work and supporting writer development**.

- The event will also **platform export-ready Scottish writers, creating international and commercial opportunities and strengthening Scotland's cultural presence on the global stage.**

MADE IN SCOTLAND OPENING RECEPTION, EDINBURGH FRINGE SOCIETY

Wednesday 13 August, 10:40 – 12.00

What does this stem from	Mr Robertson is attending this event as part of his Edinburgh Festivals' August programme of events.
Key Message	We value the significance of the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, stewarded by the Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society, and remain committed to supporting this world-renowned event. £540,000 of Scottish Government EXPO funding was provided to the Fringe for Made in Scotland 2025 from the 2024/25 budget as this funding is provided a year in advance of the showcase.
Who	Tony Lankester , Chief Executive of Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society (EFFS) Mr Robertson will be met on arrival by [redacted - section 38(1)(b)]
What	Networking reception and speech Attendees in the room include artists, Fringe venues, key stakeholders/supporters of the Fringe and international arts industry members.
Why	Edinburgh's Fringe Festival is one of Scotland's world-leading cultural brands with expertise, vision, impact and international recognition unmatched by any other cultural events on the globe.
Where	The Methodist Church – The Great Hall and The Well 25 Nicolson Square, Edinburgh EH8 9BX
When	Wednesday 13 August - 10:40-12:00 (speeches end at 11.20 after which Mr Robertson is free to depart should he need to)
Official(s) attending	[redacted - section 38(1)(b)]
Media Handling	Twitter/X images to go out on @culturescotgov
Annexes	Speech attached separately Annex A: Running Order and Guest list Annex B: Made in Scotland and Fringe Facts and Figures Annex C: Edinburgh Fringe Lines & Background Annex D: Loan, Core Funding & Short Term Lets

RUNNING ORDER

10:30 - doors open

10:40 – Mr Robertson arrives

11:00 - speeches commence

- [redacted - section 38(1)(b))]
- Tony Lankester, CEO Fringe Society (Tony intro to Mr Robertson)
- Mr Robertson
- [redacted - section 38(1)(b))]
- [redacted - section 38(1)(b))]

11:20 - end of speeches, events resumes mingling and networking with guests, Made in Scotland delegates, partners and artists. Mr Robertson free to leave from this point on.

GUEST LIST

[redacted - section 38(1)(b))]

MADE IN SCOTLAND**Made in Scotland**

- 2025 will be the 17th iteration of the Made in Scotland (MiS) showcase. It is supported by £540,000 of Scottish Government funding via our EXPO fund, and will present 16 shows across 7 venues, spanning theatre, dance and music.
- Through the budget uplift, EFFS have received £670,000 this financial year through EXPO for their 2026 Made in Scotland showcase.
- The Made in Scotland (MiS) programme is a collaboration between EFFS, the Federation of Scottish Theatre, Scottish Music Centre and Creative Scotland.
- Established in 2009, this essential programme of work has now supported 299 shows, and has nurtured and encouraged international creative dialogue and been the catalyst for many exciting international collaborations.
- Between 2009 and 2025, Made in Scotland shows have received 81 awards (117 including nominations and runner-ups).
- 2024's Made in Scotland Showcase featured 14 shows across 10 venues throughout Edinburgh.
- Since its inception, the programme has supported productions across multiple genres: 147 theatre productions, 69 dance productions, 99 music productions, and 46 for children and young audiences.
- Over 130 Made in Scotland productions have gone on to tour to more than 50 countries across six continents with the support of the Onward Touring Fund, with some shows continuing to tour year-on-year since their Fringe debut.
- Made in Scotland has become a template for other national showcases at the Fringe, with 14 international showcases presented last year.

Onward Touring Fund

- As well as supporting the showcase each year, Made in Scotland provides funding to enable Scottish-based artists, bands and ensembles to take up new international touring opportunities resulting directly from being seen at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. A total of 197 awards have been granted through the Onward Touring Fund since 2009, enabling shows to transfer to 53 countries.
- Since the last Fringe, 10 artists have been supported in touring work that was presented at the Fringe, taking shows from Edinburgh to France, Ireland, Copenhagen, New Zealand, USA, Italy, China, Australia, India, Norway, Korea, Iceland, Amsterdam and Finland.

Success stories

From last year's Made in Scotland showcase alone:

- Love Beyond by Ramesh Meyyappan (co-produced by Raw Material and Vanishing Point in association with Aberdeen Performing Arts), which the CabSec saw last year, won The Scottish Theatre Awards on the Fringe and went on to perform at the Hong Kong International Arts Festival – No Limits in March this year with the support of the Onward Touring Fund.
- Eoin McKenzie's The Show for Young Men has toured to Almaty, Kazakhstan; San Luis Potosi, Mexico; and undertaken a multi-city tour in Australia and New Zealand.
- Originally part of the 2019 showcase, 111 with Joel Brown (Candoco Dance Company) and Eve Mutso (former Principal Dancer of Scottish Ballet) performed in San Luis Festival, Mexico, illustrating the importance and impact of ongoing support for Scottish work to reach international audiences.

Background for Made in Scotland

- Launched in 2009, Made in Scotland was designed to raise the international profile of Scottish artists through the promotion of Scottish work at the Festival Fringe. Nearly 300 productions have been supported since the programme's creation (including this year's productions). Since its inception, Made in Scotland shows have toured to over 52 countries across six continents, many continuing to be in demand for international touring.

ANNEX C - FRINGE FESTIVAL LINES & BACKGROUND

Top Lines and new funding

- The Fringe is one of Scotland's signature events. From humble beginnings in 1947, it has grown to become the world's largest performing arts festival, making it a significant economic contributor to Edinburgh, and Scotland as a whole.
- The Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society will receive £300,000 from the Scottish Government in 2025-26 to help grow the significant benefits the Fringe delivers for Scotland's economy, society and culture sector.
- This agreement recognises the Fringe Society does not neatly fit into the funding streams available to other culture organisations. It also underlines there is ample opportunity for the Fringe Society to work more closely with all the other organisations who play an important role in making the Fringe the annual success that it is
- The funding will enable work in two areas agreed between the Scottish Government and the Fringe Society:-
 - 1) to develop the capabilities of the Society's data and digital infrastructure to make it more accessible for artists, audiences and venues.
 - 2) to explore how the Scottish Government and the Fringe Society can help Scottish artists and the sector as a whole capitalise on international opportunities, by targeting agreed priority countries and regions.
- Through this support, the Scottish Government is committed to working with the Fringe Society and all partners who deliver it, to help safeguard the future of the Edinburgh Fringe as a world leading cultural asset, built on the principle of free access for all
- [redacted section 30 (b)(i)]
- With £670,000 for next year's Made in Scotland through EXPO and the £300,000 2025 Grant, almost £1m of funding will be provided in 2025/26 to support both the Fringe society and the entire Fringe ecosystem.

Additional Funding

- £540,000 from the 2023/24 EXPO fund to support Made in Scotland, and £670,000 for 2026/27 already allocated in the 2025/26 EXPO round.
- City of Edinburgh Council - £75k per year from 2024/25 to 2026/27 supporting the Fringe's street performances.
- Creative Scotland - the Fringe Society has not received regular funding from Creative Scotland since 2018, and their MYF application was unsuccessful.
- UK Government - £7m of capital funding provided in 2023 by the previous UK Government to fund their new HQ development.
- In 2024 the previous UK Government converted £1m of this to revenue to support a two-year UK Keep it Fringe fund – further details below.

Issues

Fringe and Scotland Office MOU

- On 7 August 2025, a reception was held at the Filmhouse titled “*Keep it Fringe: Global Connections with the Secretary of State for Scotland*”. The event, originally billed as a keynote speech on Scotland’s cultural sector, also included the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the UK Government and EFFS.
- The Secretary of State’s speech highlighted UK Government funding for the cultural sector and creative industries in Scotland, with a focus on targeting markets such as the USA. He referenced forthcoming Ministerial visits to multiple countries and linked this activity to the “Brand Scotland” initiative, though the associated fund is relatively small (£250k, with grants of £3k–£20k).
- [redacted section 30 (b)(i)]
- The Brand Scotland fund has supported events including the Filmhouse reception, a Berlin event with the National Youth Orchestra of Scotland (jointly bid for by the British Embassy Berlin and SG’s Berlin Office), a “Travelling Museum of Whisky” in Bolivia, a Scottish heritage showcase in Switzerland, and St Andrew’s Day events.
- [redacted section 30 (b)(i)]
- The Cabinet Secretary met FCDO Minister Catherine West on 8 August, providing an opportunity to promote SG’s Brand Scotland work. Minister West has expressed support for ensuring UK posts promote SG’s Brand Scotland vision alongside the Scotland Office campaign.

Keep it Fringe Fund

- The Keep it Fringe fund is a bursary scheme reduce some of the financial barriers that prevent artists from bringing work to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. It is administered by EFFS.
- The fund was launched in 2023 with an initial £50,000 donation from the Fringe Society’s honorary president, Phoebe Waller-Bridge. This was matched with £50,000 from the Fringe Society, gathered via donations and sponsorship, resulting in a £100,000 fund.
- Subsequent support from the previous UK Government, expanded the Keep it Fringe fund in 2024 and 2025 to support 180 shows a year with grants of £2,500 each.
- Keep it Fringe bursaries supported 180 recipients in 2024 with 749 applications received, in 2025 there have been 850 requests.
- [redacted section 30 (b)(i)]

Fringe HQ

- Edinburgh Fringe are in the final phase of refurbishing their new HQ ahead of a move in date of February 2026. The former Southbridge Community Resource Centre on Infirmary Street will be a permanent home for the Fringe and Fringe Society.
- [redacted - section 33(1)(b))]
- [redacted - section 33(1)(b))]

Facts and Figures

Fringe 2025:

- 3,853 shows listed, across more than 50,000 performances at 265 venues.
- Countries represented: 63 (including UK nations).
- International countries represented: 59 (excluding UK nations).
- Scottish shows: over 1,000, with more than 600 coming from Edinburgh.
- Key commercial sponsors: Johnnie Walker Princes Street, TikTok, Cirrus Logic, Innis & Gunn, Playbill, JetBlue, Indeed Flex, and Edinburgh Gin.
- Accommodation partners: Queen Margaret University, University of Edinburgh, Theatre Digs Booker, Heriot-Watt University, and Edinburgh Napier University.
- Keep it Fringe is supported by £1 million from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) over two years (2024 and 2025), supporting 180 recipients of £2,500 bursaries this year from a pool of 749 applications.
- The Fringe Days Out programme continues for its seventh year with 37 community partners, providing Fringe vouchers, bus tickets and additional support to people in Edinburgh who might not otherwise have the opportunity to attend. Since 2017, there have been over 16,000 Fringe visits through the scheme.
- Through the Community Ticketing Initiative (CTI), participating artists and companies donate more than 50,000 tickets annually to people in and around Edinburgh who might not otherwise have the opportunity to attend.

Fringe 2024:

- 3,680 shows listed, across 54,288 performances, at 262 total venues.
- Countries represented: 58 (including UK nations).
- 849 Scottish shows, 608 from Edinburgh.
- 354 free shows and 577 Pay What You Can / Want shows.
- 13 showcases presenting work from abroad at the Fringe.
- Fringe Days Out worked with 37 community partners, including four new ones.

Cabinet Secretary – suggested speaking bullets

Made in Scotland – 13 August 2025 Launch

- 2025 is the **17th edition** of the *Made in Scotland* (MiS) showcase.
- MiS 2025 presents **16 shows** across **7 venues**, covering theatre, dance and music.
- Delivered in partnership by the **Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society (EFFS)**, the **Federation of Scottish Theatre**, the **Scottish Music Centre** and **Creative Scotland**.
- The programme focuses on Scottish artists and designed to raise the international profile of Scottish work at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.
- MiS 2025 is supported by **£540,000** from the Scottish Government via the EXPO fund.
- EFFS have also received **£670,000 (EXPO)** allocated for their 2026 Made in Scotland activity (budget uplift).
- Launched in **2009**; to date MiS has supported **299 shows** across multiple genres.
- Genre breakdown (since 2009): **147 theatre, 69 dance, 99 music, 46 children & young audience** productions.
- Made in Scotland productions have received **81 awards** (and **117** counting nominations and runner-ups).
- **Over 130** MiS productions have toured to **more than 50 countries** across six continents.
- The **Onward Touring Fund** (associated pipeline) has granted **197 awards** since 2009, enabling shows to transfer to **53 countries**.
- Since the 2024 Fringe, **10 artists** supported via MiS/Onward Touring have toured to destinations including France, Ireland, Denmark (Copenhagen), New Zealand, USA, Italy, China, Australia, India, Norway, Korea, Iceland, Amsterdam and Finland.
- *Success story 1 - Love Beyond* (Ramesh Meyyappan) — MiS 2024: won recognition at the Scottish Theatre Awards and toured to the Hong Kong International Arts Festival with Onward Touring support.
- *Success story 2 - The Show for Young Men* (Eoin McKenzie) — moved from the Fringe to tours in Kazakhstan, Mexico and multi-city Australasia engagements.
- *Success story 3 - 111* (Joel Brown & Eve Mutso) — MiS alumnus (2019) continuing to secure international seasons, e.g. San Luis Festival, Mexico.
- MiS acts as a practical export pipeline: a successful Fringe presentation can convert into bookings, commissions and multi-year international touring.

- The programme supports career development (artists, producers, creative teams), sector capacity (producers/companies), and Scotland's cultural export capability.
- Provides a focused, sector-led mechanism to showcase Scottish creativity to international programmers and buyers.
- Delivers measurable cultural diplomacy and export outcomes by turning festival exposure into touring opportunities.
- Strengthens the wider Fringe ecosystem by attracting international attention, commissioning opportunities and longer-term partnerships.
- MiS combines curated presentation with practical follow-up support (onward touring grants and market introductions) — this dual approach is central to converting a Fringe run into sustainable international activity.

ATTENDANCE AT FRINGE: THE UNLIKELY FRIENDSHIP OF FEATHER BOY AND TENTACLE GIRL

THURSDAY 14 AUGUST 2025 - 11.25 - 12.30

What does this stem from	Mr Robertson is attending this Made in Scotland performance as part of his Edinburgh Festivals' August programme of events.
Key Message	We value the significance of the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, stewarded by the Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society, and remain committed to supporting this world-renowned event. £540,000 of Scottish Government EXPO funding was provided to the Fringe for Made in Scotland 2025 from the 2024/25 budget as this funding is provided a year in advance of the showcase.
Who	Due to the late notice of Mr Robertson's availability, it will not be possible to field a representative of the Fringe on arrival. If Mr Robertson has any issues please contact [redacted - section 38(1)(b))] If Mr Robertson needs further assistance please contact - [redacted - section 38(1)(b))]
What	Attend The Unlikely Friendship of Feather Boy and Tentacle Girl as part of the Fringe's EXPO funded Made in Scotland programme.
Why	Edinburgh's Fringe Festival is one of Scotland's world-leading cultural brands with expertise, vision, impact and international recognition unmatched by any other cultural events on the globe.
Where	Central at Assembly Roxy, 2 Roxburgh Place EH8 9SU
When	Arrive 11.15 Show at 11.25 Ends at 12.25
Official(s) attending	[redacted - section 38(1)(b))] 3 tickets have been provided for Mr Robertson and any two guests/PO support he wishes to go with him. QR code is attached to this email.
Annexes	Annex A: Performance details Annex B: Made in Scotland and Fringe Facts and Figures

ANNEX A: PERFORMANCE DETAILS

THE UNLIKELY FRIENDSHIP OF FEATHER BOY AND TENTACLE GIRL

Performers - Vee Smith and Sadiq Ali

“Two friends perform breathtaking aerial shows. They fly, spin, hang from the rooftops and fall out of the sky... But they weren't always so glorious. How did they transform from feeling like outsiders to the fantastical creatures they always knew they had inside them? A touching story of a girl who wants to be a monster and a boy who wants to fly. This dynamic and visually stunning aerial show for ages 8+ explores the universal yearning to belong and the joy of friendship.”

Part of MadeInScotlandShowcase.com

ANNEX B – MADE IN SCOTLAND AND FRINGE FACTS AND FIGURES

Made in Scotland

- 2025 will be the 17th iteration of the Made in Scotland (MiS) showcase. It is supported by £540,000 of Scottish Government funding via our EXPO fund, and will present 16 shows across 7 venues, spanning theatre, dance and music.
- Through the budget uplift, EFFS have received £670,000 this financial year through EXPO for their 2026 Made in Scotland showcase.
- The Made in Scotland (MiS) programme is a collaboration between EFFS, the Federation of Scottish Theatre, Scottish Music Centre and Creative Scotland.
- Established in 2009, this essential programme of work has now supported 299 shows, and has nurtured and encouraged international creative dialogue and been the catalyst for many exciting international collaborations.
- Between 2009 and 2025, Made in Scotland shows have received 81 awards (117 including nominations and runner-ups).
- 2024's Made in Scotland Showcase featured 14 shows across 10 venues throughout Edinburgh.
- Since its inception, the programme has supported productions across multiple genres: 147 theatre productions, 69 dance productions, 99 music productions, and 46 for children and young audiences.
- Over 130 Made in Scotland productions have gone on to tour to more than 50 countries across six continents with the support of the Onward Touring Fund, with some shows continuing to tour year-on-year since their Fringe debut.
- Made in Scotland has become a template for other national showcases at the Fringe, with 14 international showcases presented last year.

Onward Touring Fund

- As well as supporting the showcase each year, Made in Scotland provides funding to enable Scottish-based artists, bands and ensembles to take up new international touring opportunities resulting directly from being seen at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. A total of 197 awards have been granted through the Onward Touring Fund since 2009, enabling shows to transfer to 53 countries.
- Since the last Fringe, 10 artists have been supported in touring work that was presented at the Fringe, taking shows from Edinburgh to France, Ireland, Copenhagen, New Zealand, USA, Italy, China, Australia, India, Norway, Korea, Iceland, Amsterdam and Finland.

Success stories

From last year's Made in Scotland showcase alone:

- Love Beyond by Ramesh Meyyappan (co-produced by Raw Material and Vanishing Point in association with Aberdeen Performing Arts), which the CabSec saw last year, won The Scottish Theatre Awards on the Fringe and went on to perform at the Hong Kong International Arts Festival – No Limits in March this year with the support of the Onward Touring Fund.
- Eoin McKenzie's The Show for Young Men has toured to Almaty, Kazakhstan; San Luis Potosi, Mexico; and undertaken a multi-city tour in Australia and New Zealand.
- Originally part of the 2019 showcase, 111 with Joel Brown (Candoco Dance Company) and Eve Mutso (former Principal Dancer of Scottish Ballet) performed in San Luis Festival, Mexico, illustrating the importance and impact of ongoing support for Scottish work to reach international audiences.

Background for Made in Scotland

- Launched in 2009, Made in Scotland was designed to raise the international profile of Scottish artists through the promotion of Scottish work at the Festival Fringe. Nearly 300 productions have been supported since the programme's creation (including this year's productions). Since its inception, Made in Scotland shows have toured to over 52 countries across six continents, many continuing to be in demand for international touring.

Briefing for Edinburgh International Festival – ‘Mary, Queen of Scots’

What	Edinburgh International Festival. World Premiere and opening night of Scottish Ballet’s Mary, Queen of Scots. Attendance and speech.
When	Friday 15th August 2025, 18.30- 21.45
Where	Festival Theatre, 13 / 29 Nicolson Street, Edinburgh EH8 9FT.
Who	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fran Hegyi OBE, Executive Director, EIF • Nicola Benedetti, Festival Director EIF • Christopher Hampson CBE, CEO/Artistic Director, Scottish Ballet (SB) • Steven Roth, Executive Director, SB
Why	Support for EIF/SB and engagement with leads, donors and other key stakeholders.
Key messages	Delighted to attend Scottish Ballet’s Mary, Queen of Scots, part of the EIF 2025. Scottish Ballet is supported with grant of £4,765,500 from the Scottish Government. The Edinburgh International Festival has also received an increase in core funding through Creative Scotland’s Multi Year Funding
Speech details	Speech (3 Minutes) attached separately Audience will include key EIF stakeholders and media representatives
Official support	[redacted - section 38(1)(b)]
Media handling	Photographer, possible attendance by local journalists.
Twitter (X)	@culturescotgov @edintfest
Dress code	Smart casual/ Business
Entrance and greeting party	Cabinet Secretary will be met at the entrance to the Festival Theatre by [redacted - section 38(1)(b)] Key contact is [redacted - section 38(1)(b)] [Mr Robertson on Guest list and will receive ticket on arrival]
Briefing contents	Annex A - Event programme Annex B - Attendees Annex C - Key messages – Edinburgh Festivals/National Performing Companies Annex D - Edinburgh International Festival Annex E- Scottish Ballet

EVENT PROGRAMME

TIME	EVENT
18:30	Arrival and welcome/food/drinks/speeches in Milburn Gallery (Festival Theatre, Level 4) Speeches: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EIF – Nicola Benedetti/Fran Hegyi • SB – Christopher Hampson to respond and talk about the show • Cabinet Secretary
19:30	Performance ‘Mary, Queen of Scots’ <i>Interval</i> – International Lounge in Event Rooms
21:45	End of performance and After Party –with dancers, creatives, reps from EIF and SB (Festival Theatre, Level 2 foyer).
	Mr Robertson is welcome to attend the After Party but can choose to depart any time after the end of the performance.

Mary, Queen of Scots

This is the premiere performance of *Mary, Queen of Scots* and also the final of SB’s Five in Five Campaign ballets

As her death approaches, Elizabeth I of England is haunted by memories – both real and imagined – of her cousin and rival, Mary, Queen of Scots. Bound by blood yet divided by power, their lives were a dangerous dance of ambition, intrigue and betrayal.

The two queens’ fraught relationship is explored in this world premiere ballet from Scottish Ballet’s choreographer-in-residence Sophie Laplane and co-creator James Bonas. With striking designs by Soutra Gilmour (*Sunset Boulevard*) and a bold new score from the team behind the 2022 International Festival sensation *Coppélia*, *Mary, Queen of Scots* reimagines the story of one of Scotland’s most famous women.

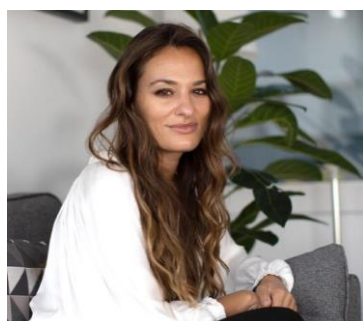
The ballet imagines a Renaissance where punk meets haute couture, and where Mary and Elizabeth’s relationship inspires a rich, resonant journey through memory, history and myth.

This production has also provided an opportunity to embed sustainability at the heart of the creation process. In a groundbreaking step, Scottish Ballet are the first UK ballet company to use The Green Producers Tool, which enables the accurate measurement of environmental impacts associated with making and touring ballet. This vital tool will become an integral part of all Scottish Ballet projects going forward.

ATTENDEES


Fran Hegyi OBE, Executive Director, EIF

Francesca (Fran) Hegyi OBE is the **Executive Director of the Edinburgh International Festival**. She previously studied and worked in Edinburgh and has over 20 years of experience in the culture and arts industry. Francesca was recognised in the 2018 New Year's Honours list for her work as the Executive Director of Hull's UK City of Culture Programme in 2017. Alongside her role at EIF she is deputy industry co-chair of the UK Government's Creative Industries Council and a member of the Soft Power Council.


Nicola Benedetti, Festival Director Edinburgh International Festival

Nicola Benedetti is the Festival Director for the Edinburgh International Festival. She took up the position in October 2022 having previously had a long-standing relationship with the Festival as a performer, including a residency in 2021. Nicola is both the first Scottish and the first female Festival Director since the Festival began in 1947.

She has won GRAMMY and Brit Awards and was named BBC Music Magazine's 2021 'Personality of the Year,' awarded in part for her online support of musicians during the pandemic, a reflection of her passionate work as an ambassador for music education.


Christopher Hampson CBE, CEO/Artistic Director, Scottish Ballet (SB)

Christopher trained at The Royal Ballet School and danced with English National Ballet. Christopher joined Scottish Ballet as Artistic Director in 2012, becoming CEO in 2015. Since then, the company has performed across the world and he has brought in significant dance creators including Crystal Pite, David Dawson, Helen Pickett and Matthew Bourne, while developing in-house talent.

In 2017, he curated the world's first Digital Season — dance to be experienced through digital platforms and has since brought more Scottish Ballet repertoire to screens including the creation of his first award-winning feature film, *The Secret Theatre* in 2020, and *Starstruck* in 2021.

He was awarded CBE for services to dance in the 2023 King's Birthday Honours and in 2023 received an honorary doctorate from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

Steven Roth FRSA, Executive Director, Scottish Ballet



Steven was appointed Executive Director of Scottish Ballet in March 2016 and formally joined the Scottish Ballet Board in December 2016.

He was appointed Chief Executive of West Australian Ballet (the state dance company for Western Australia) in 2007, spearheading the company through the most significant development in its 60+ year history. With a game-changing business case that garnered government, corporate and private support, WAB tripled its annual revenue, increased the dancer troupe from 19–38 and introduced an impressive commissioning program.

In January 2020 Steven was elected as a Fellow of the RSA (Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce).

KEY MESSAGES

Edinburgh Festivals

- Scotland's festivals are at the heart of our culture sector and national life. They are an invaluable platform for our artists and performers to develop and support their ambition and creativity by providing focal points for activity and opportunities to showcase their work.
- At every stage of their planning and their delivery, Scotland's Festivals are renowned for ambition, creativity and excellence at home and overseas.
- The 2025/26 Budget provides an important foundation for the work of festivals, recognising the importance of stability and certainty through long term sustained funding to support Festival's core activities and their ambitions for the future.
- As well as their outstanding work on stage, festivals provide hundreds of millions of pounds to the Scottish and local economies, supporting a pipeline of jobs and businesses.
- Increasing investment in festivals, as part of a broader uplift in funding for culture, underlines the value the Scottish Government places on the arts.
- Through this increased investment we want to drive up opportunities for participation in creative pursuits, support the festivals commissions and collaborations on new and exciting works, ensuring Scotland's cultural output have platforms at home and abroad.
- Festivals, like the entirety of the culture sector, have been hit hard in recent years by a series of challenges. Recovery from the pandemic and addressing the challenges brought by Brexit have been made more difficult by increased costs and inflation, together with a challenging public funding environment.
- Whilst increased funding has provided greater long-term stability, festivals continue to face challenges around transport, accommodation, connectivity and long-term sustainability beyond funding to areas like workforce planning and skills development.
- We are committed to working with festivals in Edinburgh, as well as across Scotland through a Strategic Partnership to address these challenges

National Performing Companies

- Scotland's five National Performing Companies are National Theatre of Scotland (NTS), Royal Scottish National Orchestra (RSNO), Scottish Ballet, Scottish Chamber Orchestra (SCO) and Scottish Opera.
- The National Performing Companies 2025/26 grant allocation from the Scottish Government was £24,607,000. This was made up of £24,136,300 revenue funding and £470,700 from the International Touring Fund.
- Together, the National Performing Companies are beacons of excellence throughout Scotland's performing arts scene – telling the stories of Scotland and promoting Scotland on the national and world stages.
- They significantly empower the Scottish Government's policy aim of Scotland being 'renowned at home and abroad as a creative nation, with a rich heritage, contributing to the world as a modern dynamic country, making a significant contribution to cultural life in Scotland and producing work internationally'
- The National Performing Companies' international activity aims to show the world that Scotland is a modern, innovative country with a vibrant, diverse culture. These international performances raise Scotland's profile, attract artistic acclaim, stimulate pride, and develop interest among those who may be able to bring potential economic and other benefits to the country in partnership with the Scottish Government.
- In 2022/23, the NPCs worked with over 1,600 creative practitioners in 373 venues across Scotland, delivering 2,047 live dance, theatre, opera, orchestral and chamber music performances to over half a million people across all 32 of Scotland's local authorities.¹
- Over the past decade, the available data shows that the NPCs work has been seen live outside the UK by 628,264 people in 154 cities and 33 countries².
- In addition to their groundbreaking and highly successful artistic programming the National Performing Companies (NPCs) also have an ambition to create significant impacts for Scotland's communities, not just as artistic leaders, but as community builders, educators, innovators and agents of social change, through the creation of transformational artistic experiences.
- In 2022/23 16,818 people participated in NPC creative well-being programmes at 40 different community venues across Scotland, from town halls to day care provision spaces and community centres. In addition, 50,045 pupils across 306 Scottish schools were engaged in live interactive creative learning through NPC programmes³.

¹ Measuring the Social Impact of Scotland's National Performing Companies- March 2024

² Measuring the Social Impact of Scotland's National Performing Companies- March 2024

³ Measuring the Social Impact of Scotland's National Performing Companies- March 2024

EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL (1-24 AUG 2025)

Founded in 1947, the Edinburgh International Festival is an unparalleled celebration of the performing arts and an annual meeting point for peoples of all nations. Committed to virtuosity and originality, the International Festival presents some of the finest performers and ensembles from the worlds of dance, opera, music and theatre.

Funding

Creative Scotland MYF Funding - £11.175m

- 2024/25 - £3.25m
- 2025/26 - £4.25m
- 2026/27 - £4.25m

City of Edinburgh Council - £1.92m per year from 2024/25 to 2026/27

Scottish Government EXPO Funding - £100k in 2025/26

EIF received a one-off grant of £1.6m from the previous UK Government in 2023 to support artists from the rest of the UK. Creative Tax Reliefs remain a source of valuable, stable resource accounting for around 13% of EIF's total income in 2024 (approx. £1m a year)

Attendance

127,000 attendees in 2024 (up from 120,000 in 2023) with 52% of bookers last year attending for the first time.

Key Issues

- EIF has secured status as being the first charity and arts organisation in the UK (and according to them, the world) to be awarded BSI Net Zero Pathway certification.
- EIF have defended being targeted by Art Workers for Palestine for Baillie Gifford sponsoring the festival, which led to the loss of Baillie Gifford as sponsor of several literary festivals, including EIBF and Wigtown in 2024.
- [redacted - section 33(1)(b))] EIF have been positive about their award and the wider investment in Scotland's culture sector. A statement from Fran Hegyi on the day of the MYF outcome welcomed the increased investment in the sector, particularly the firm foundation it provides to plan ahead with greater confidence.
- [redacted - section 33(1)(b))]
- [redacted - section 33(1)(b))]

2025 Festival

The 78th edition of the Edinburgh International Festival runs from August 1 to 24, 2025, under the theme “The Truth We Seek”, inviting audiences to reflect on truth through music, theatre, opera, and dance. The festival features 133 performances, showcasing world, UK, and European premieres (including 7 world premieres, 8 UK or Scottish premieres, and 2 European premieres) and involving over 1,700 artists from 42 countries.

[redacted - section 33(1)(b)]

The festival also emphasizes affordability and accessibility: over 50,000 tickets are priced at £30 or less, there are £10 “Affordable Tickets,” thousands of free options for community groups and NHS staff, and 33 accessible performances, including audio-described, BSL-interpreted, captioned, and relaxed shows. This year *Make It Happen*, a World Premiere starring Brian Cox, is a joint commission with NTS and Dundee Rep [redacted - section 33(1)(b)]

Programme highlights include:

- EXPO FUNDED: *Make It Happen*, a new play by James Graham starring Brian Cox, exploring Scotland’s role in the 2008 financial crash. This show has been a sell out and has been incredibly popular with audiences and critics alike.
- *Mary, Queen of Scots*, a new ballet production by Scottish Ballet blending classicism and punk aesthetics
- *The Veil of The Temple*, an eight-hour choral epic led by the Edinburgh Festival Chorus in the Opening Concert
- *Orpheus and Eurydice*, a boundary-pushing opera with circus elements from Opera Queensland and Circa
- *Book of Mountains and Seas*, a genre-defying stage work blending opera and puppetry, by Huang Ruo and Basil Twist
- Shostakovich’s Fifth Symphony performed from memory by Aurora Orchestra in its EIF debut
- *Figures in Extinction*, a dance-theatre piece confronting the climate crisis by Nederlands Dans Theater
- *Breaking Bach*, where hip-hop meets Baroque classical performed by the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment
- Family-friendly and participatory events such as *The Big Singalong* at Princes Street Gardens, *Dance People* outdoor promenade performance, and accessible concerts including a first-ever dementia-friendly offering.

**Scottish Ballet- Mary, Queen of Scots- Draft Speech
Edinburgh International Festival, Friday 15th August 2025**

Good evening, everyone.

I am delighted to join you this evening to celebrate the world premiere of Scottish Ballet's Mary, Queen of Scots.

One of the headline shows of the Edinburgh International Festival, this exciting and bold new production helps cement Scotland's global reputation for artistic excellence, innovation and design.

Since its founding in 1947, the Edinburgh International Festival has continually created space to explore Scotland's history, traditions and stories and to develop shared understanding among artists and audiences in thought provoking ways.

I was delighted to attend the premiere of Make it Happen a fortnight ago, co-produced by our friends at National Theatre of Scotland, Dundee Rep, and of course, the Edinburgh International Festival

I'm equally delighted and enthusiastic to be here this evening.

For outstanding work from our National Performing Companies to shine on this platform, alongside everything else on offer here in Scotland's capital city in August from around the world is testament to their outstanding reputation for artistic excellence, innovation and design.

It also underlines this Festival's enduring power to surprise and delight, to the guiding vision of Nicola Benedetti as Festival Director, and to Edinburgh's place in the world as the perfect stage for creativity.

Supported by funding of £4.7m from the Scottish Government; 2025 has also been an exceptional year for Scottish Ballet.

This included a hugely successful tour of New Zealand.

Some of the highlights of this tour were: partnering with The Royal New Zealand Ballet for three mixed bill performances at the St James Theatre Wellington; and receiving standing ovations at the Kiri Te Kanawa Theatre, in Auckland for *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

Mary, Queen of Scots is already one of the hottest tickets of the EIF and is shaping up to be another spectacular success for Scottish Ballet, furthering our country's unwavering commitment to artistic excellence.

The Scottish Government's commitment to culture is just as unwavering. In the last Budget we delivered an additional £100 million for our cultural sector—driving stability, sustainability and growth.

That funding underwrites Creative Scotland's Multi-Year programme, which has increased EIF's core grant to over £4 million a year, as well as investing in venues, touring, talent development and major co-commissions like this one.

We know that every pound invested in our festivals returns many times that value in visitor spend, job creation and global profile—and tonight’s premiere is a powerful illustration of that return.

As you take your seats this evening, remember that the ballet you will witness on this stage speaks to who we are as a nation—bold, inventive and outward-looking.

It also reminds us that culture and creativity are not side-shows to economic policy but central drivers of growth, community and international influence.

On behalf of the Scottish Government, I congratulate Scottish Ballet and the EIF on bringing this imaginative retelling of the story of one of Scotland’s most famous women to life.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in celebrating this extraordinary new work, and here's to a Festival season filled with discovery, inspiration, the truth we seek and of course ground-breaking stories of two women and two crowns.

Enjoy the show.

Briefing for Grow world premiere – Edinburgh International Film Festival

What	Screening for the World Premiere of <i>Grow</i> at Edinburgh International Film Festival (EIFF)
Where	<i>The Cameo, Edinburgh</i> Screen 1
When	16 August 2025 12:45
Key Message(s)	The Scottish Government is a strong supporter of the Edinburgh International Film Festival and it's great to see an exciting programme of films showcasing the incredible home-grown talent such as <i>Grow</i> , a Screen Scotland supported production.
Who	This screening will be attended by members of the public as it's a payable ticketed screening. [redacted - section 38(1)(b))]
Why	An opportunity to show support for Scotland's screen industry, <i>Grow</i> is a Scottish production which received £370,000 through Screen Scotland's Production Growth Fund – a Scottish Government supported funding stream. Also, EIFF has received £193,000 as part of the EXPO fund 2025-26.
Supporting official	[redacted - section 38(1)(b))]
Briefing contents	Annex A: Event programme Annex B: EIFF Background Brief Annex C: Biographies
Media Handling/ Social Media	[redacted section 30 (b)(i)] No press in attendance however, EIFF will have an in-house photographer at the venue ahead of the screening.
Greeting Party and specific meeting point on arrival (if event is at a non SE Building)	Four tickets are being supplied by EIFF through email in advance for entry to the premiere. Tickets will be used for entry to the screening.

EVENT PROGRAMME

12:45: Grow World Premiere
Runtime: 1hr 50mins

Family friendly, expecting children in the audience

Screening Details

Director: John McPhail

Writers: Nick Guthe, Ruth Fletcher, Christos N. Gage

Producers: Naysun Alae-Carew, Joe Capotorto, Wendy Griffin, Jenette Kahn, Adam Richman

Production Companies: Double Nickel Entertainment, Sky Studios, Orogen Entertainment, Blazing Griffin

Main Cast: Golda Rosheuvel, Priya-Rose Brookwell, Nick Frost, Joe Wilkinson, Tim McInnerny, Jane Horrocks

Screen Scotland support: The film accessed £370,000 through Screen Scotland's [Production Growth Fund](#)

Synopsis

Grow is the story of Dinah Little, a no nonsense, curmudgeonly farmer with a heart of gold, and Charlie, the unknown and unloved niece Dinah begrudgingly takes in after discovering her in an orphanage.

Dinah's farm is in the self-proclaimed 'Pumpkin Capital of the World' where the biggest event of the year is a high-stakes cutthroat giant-pumpkin-growing contest where the entire town gets their pumpkin patches ready to compete for a cash prize and pumpkin glory.

Charlie has a special bond with plants and combined with her feisty personality and determination, decides to grow a gigantic pumpkin for the competition, to attempt to win the coveted prize.

However, Charlie and other pumpkin growers face sabotage and advanced pumpkin technology in the battle of the pumpkin bulge. As she nurtures 'Peter', her pumpkin, and sees him grow, so does a bond between Dinah and Charlie.

Edinburgh International Film Festival

- The Scottish Government is a strong supporter of the Edinburgh International Film Festival and it's great to see an exciting programme of films showcasing the incredible home-grown talent we have here, as well as from further afield.
- Film Festivals play an important part in Scotland's screen industry success story by promoting domestic productions, supporting talent development, showcasing high-quality international films and encouraging more people to go to the cinema.
- We have vibrant creative and screen industries in Scotland and our film festivals provide a fantastic opportunity to highlight this abundance of talent to audiences at home and abroad.
- We continue to engage with Screen Scotland on developments for future editions of the Edinburgh International Film Festival, with the associated opportunities for employment and audiences those will bring.

Edinburgh International Film Festival – Funding

The Scottish Government has demonstrated our commitment to the culture sector with an increase of over £34m in 2025/26. This takes us to over £50m more in culture funding than in 2023/2024.

As part of this increase in culture budget, Scottish Ministers are providing £4m of additional funding specifically for Scottish Festivals. This will support work to expand the Festival EXPO Fund and funding to develop and deliver work under the Strategic Partnership for Scotland's Festivals.

- EIFF has joined the Multi-Year Funding (MYF) portfolio, the EIFF will receive £1.95m over three years.
- EIFF has received £193,000 as part of the Expo fund 2025-26.

Edinburgh Festivals – Top Lines

- Scotland's festivals are at the heart of our culture sector and national life. They are an invaluable platform for our artists and performers to develop and support their ambition and creativity by providing focal points for activity and opportunities to showcase their work.
- At every stage of their planning and their delivery, Scotland's Festivals are renowned for ambition, creativity and excellence at home and overseas.
- The 2025/26 Budget provides an important foundation for the work of festivals, recognising the importance of stability and certainty through long term sustained funding to support Festival's core activities and their ambitions for the future.
- As well as their outstanding work on stage, festivals provide hundreds of millions of pounds to the Scottish and local economies, supporting a pipeline of jobs and businesses.
- Increasing investment in festivals, as part of a broader uplift in funding for culture, underlines the value the Scottish Government places on the arts.

- Through this increased investment we want to drive up opportunities for participation in creative pursuits, support the festivals commissions and collaborations on new and exciting works, ensuring Scotland's cultural output have platforms at home and abroad.
- Festivals, like the entirety of the culture sector, have been hit hard in recent years by a series of challenges. Recovery from the pandemic and addressing the challenges brought by Brexit have been made more difficult by increased costs and inflation, together with a challenging public funding environment.
- Whilst increased funding has provided greater long term stability, festivals continue to face challenges around transport, accommodation, connectivity and long term sustainability beyond funding to areas like workforce planning and skills development.
- We are committed to working with festivals in Edinburgh, as well as across Scotland through a Strategic Partnership to address these challenges.

EIFF 2025 BACKGROUND

The EIFF Programme will feature 43 new feature films, 18 feature film World Premieres including 10 World Premieres competing for The Sean Connery Prize for Feature Filmmaking Excellence. There will be 6 short film programmes including The Thelma Schoonmaker Prize for Short Filmmaking Excellence competition, the presentation of new short form work by the inaugural NFTS Sean Connery Lab and the World Premiere of a new animated film by Renée Zellwegger.

The EIFF will also be hosting its In Conversation events with acclaimed filmmakers Andrew & Kevin Macdonald, Andrea Arnold, Ben Wheatley & Andy Starke and Nia DaCosta.

This year's Festival programme explores the fragile ties that bind communities new and old, thrilling and revelatory journeys inward and outward and light shone in the darkest of places. It showcases new work from filmmakers from Scotland, UK, US, Ireland, Canada, Spain, Greece, Denmark, Croatia, France, Turkey, Australia, Brazil, Japan and beyond.

BIOGRAPHIES

John McPhail – Director



John is a Scottish film director and screenwriter known for his unique contributions to the genre of musical horror, particularly with his film *Anna and the Apocalypse*. Which had its UK premiere at EIFF in 2018.

McPhail studied Cinematography at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. After graduating from the Conservatoire he worked on the BBC television series *Waterloo Road* and was assistant camera operator on the film *Up There* by Zam Salim.

Golda Rosheuvel- Talent



Golda Rosheuvel (born 2 May 1970) is a British actress and singer. She is known for her theatre work and a number of on-screen roles, most prominently for her portrayal of Queen Charlotte in the Netflix period drama series *Bridgerton* (2020–) and its prequel *Queen Charlotte: A Bridgerton Story* (2023).

Jane Horrocks – Talent



Barbara Jane Horrocks is a British actress. She portrayed Bubble and Katy Grin in the BBC sitcom *Absolutely Fabulous*. She is also known for her appearances in films, including *Sunshine on Leith* (2013), *Absolutely Fabulous: The Movie* (2016), as well as the television series *Fifi and the Flowertots* (2005–2010), *Little Princess* (2006–2020), and the Sky One sitcom *Trollied*, as Julie Cook (2011–2015).

Dominic McLaughlin – Talent



Dominic McLaughlin is a Scottish actor who's set to appear in two TV series over the course of the next year, including BBC action adventure series *Gifted*. He will be starring as Harry Potter in the new adaptation.

He began his career at the Performance Academy Scotland, where he has been studying for the last five years.

Priya Rose - Talent



Priya-Rose is a rising young actress from Anglesey, North Wales.

Priya made her TV debut as *Young Becky* in SKY's *The Lazarus Project*, Season 2, and plays the lead role of Charlie in *Grow*.

Jeremy Swift – Talent



Jeremy Swift is an English actor, who has recently been seen in *Mary Poppins Returns* and is well known for his part in *Downton Abbey*, in which he played Mr. Spratt (Maggie Smiths)

**BRIEFING for Federation of Scottish Theatre & UK Theatres reception
20.08.2025**

What	Invitation from Federation of Scottish Theatre (FST) to attend their annual Festival Reception
Where	Our Dynamic Earth, Holyrood Road, Edinburgh EH8 8AS
When	20 August 2025 17:30-19:30 - Short address by Cabinet Secretary at 18:10 (5min)
Key Message(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognising the importance of Scotland's theatres. • The Scottish Government values the importance of the performing arts and their contribution to the wellbeing of the country to promote the arts, provide employment and engage with communities across Scotland. • We want Scotland's theatres and festivals to retain their world-class status and continue to offer widespread accessibility to culture for community and education settings.
Who	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [redacted - section 38(1)(b))]
Why	Show support for the performing arts and Edinburgh festivals.
Supporting official	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [redacted - section 38(1)(b))]
Briefing contents	Annex A Event programme and FST Background Annex B Speakers Annex C Key messages Annex D FMQ on impact of cost crisis on culture sector Annex E Speech (attached separately) [redacted - section 38(1)(b))]
Media Handling	None
Social Media	FST: @FedScotTheatre. Suggested Tweet: FST to use quote from the Cab Sec speech using @scotgov

EVENT PROGRAMME

TIME	DETAIL
17:30	Guests arrive, Refreshments available
18:10	Speakers x 5: [redacted - section 38(1)(b))]
18:15-18:20	Welcome address by Angus Robertson
18:20	[redacted - section 38(1)(b))]
18:25	[redacted - section 38(1)(b))]
18:30	redacted - section 38(1)(b))]
18:32-18:35	redacted - section 38(1)(b))]
19:30	Reception closes

ENTRY: redacted - section 38(1)(b))greet Mr Robertson at the reception desk upon arrival to Dynamic Earth.

BACKGROUND – FEDERATION OF SCOTTISH THEATRE (FST)

FST is the national representation membership and sector support body for over 200 artists and organisations in dance, opera, and theatre across Scotland. FST advocate, connect across, and lead necessary changes within the performing arts.

FST was successful in the application to join **Creative Scotland's Multi Year Fund** programme. Funding details below:

Organisation	Multi-Year Funding Award - year 1 25-26 (£)	Multi-Year Funding Award - year 2 26-27 (£)	Multi-Year Funding Award - year 3 27-28 (£)	Multi-Year Funding Award - year 1 25-26 (£)
FST	£320,000	£320,000	£320,000	£960,000

Last meeting: The Cabinet Secretary last met FST when he attended a virtual Q&A session at FST's members meeting on 11 December 2024.

CO-HOSTS: (i) SOLT and (ii) UK THEATRES

This event is being co-hosting with FST's rUK counterparts Society of London Theatre (SOLT) and their sister organisation UK Theatre, together they advocate to support growth across the sector, including a skilled, diverse and productive workforce

SPEAKERS

redacted - section 38(1)(b))]

redacted - section 38(1)(b))]

KEY MESSAGES**Lines to take on Festivals**

- In 2025/26 Scottish Ministers are providing £4m additional funding for Scottish Festivals
- This includes £3m to significantly increase our EXPO Festival Fund to expand its reach across Scotland in providing opportunities for the wider culture sector and funding to develop and deliver work under the Strategic Partnership for Scotland's Festivals.
- As a first step in this commitment, this week (Saturday 21 June), we announced an increase of £1 million, the first in 10 years, to support the work of the existing EXPO Fund cohort of 14 festivals in Glasgow and Edinburgh.
- The expansion of the EXPO Festival Fund is an investment in festivals and the broader culture sector across the whole of Scotland. It recognises the success of festivals in shaping and supporting hundreds of commissions, enhancing the ambitions of thousands of Scottish artists and attracting audiences in the millions for EXPO-supported work since the fund's creation in 2007.
- From this foundation we will expand the reach of the EXPO fund across the whole of Scotland, and I am working with festivals across the country through the Strategic Festivals Partnership to realise this commitment in the coming months.

EDINBURGH FESTIVALS – UK Government Promise Additional Funding

- Scottish Ministers have been urging the UK Government to recognise the valuable role Scotland's culture sector plays to the Scottish and UK economy and so any additional funding promised by the UK Government is welcome.
- While the additional UK Government funding will be welcome, the Scottish Government have been clear all along that the UK Government needs to engage with us to ensure support is aligned and its impact maximised.

BRIEFING – CULTURE SECTOR FUNDING**CULTURE SECTOR GENERAL - Incl. Festivals, Arts, CS, NGS, Screen, NPC**

- 10 Aug:** Herald: £2.3m in new funding for festivals not yet delivered for 2025.
- 8 Aug:** Herald: Keep it Fringe bursaries for artists not being renewed by UKG.
- 31 Jul:** Scotsman: SG will consider creating legislation around culture, says FM
- 31 Jul:** Herald - FM issues protection of free speech in the arts pledge
- 23 Jul:** Herald: Edinburgh Council deny EIF request to slash licence fees
- 22 Jul:** Herald – Edinburgh International Festival defends sponsorship by Baillie Gifford following campaign by Art Workers for Palestine to boycott them.
- 29 Jun:** Sunday Mail – SG grant additional £300k funding to Edinburgh International Book Festival where Nicola Sturgeon is appearing and her former aide Liz Lloyd is now a director.
- 23 Jun:** UK Government publish Creative Industries Sector Plan – without notifying Scottish Ministers
- 22 Jun:** Scotsman – Missed opportunity if festivals outside of Central Belt don't benefit from expanded SG Festivals EXPO Fund this year
- 16 Jun:** Herald - reports UK Gov promises Edinburgh Festivals new investment

FESTIVALS**Budget 2025/26: Scottish Ministers are providing £4m additional funding for Scottish Festivals**

- This includes £3m to significantly increase our EXPO Festival Fund to expand its reach across Scotland in providing opportunities for the wider culture sector and funding to develop and deliver work under the Strategic Partnership for Scotland's Festivals.
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- From this foundation we will expand the reach of the EXPO fund across the whole of Scotland, and I am working with festivals across the country through the Strategic Festivals Partnership to realise this commitment in the coming months.

FESTIVALS – EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL BOOK FESTIVAL FUNDING

- **Regarding claims that additional £300k funding is linked to the appointment of former FM aide Liz Lloyd, these claims are untrue.**
- Ministers took the decision on 28 March 2025 to provide this one-off funding for Edinburgh International Book Festival. It was taken to protect the schools programme following the loss of corporate sponsors.
- This was months before Ms Lloyd was appointed, which as a matter of public record was in May 2025, and she had no discussions with the Scottish

Government or any involvement whatsoever in any aspect of the decision or the announcement.

- The Edinburgh International Book Festival is one of the country's most significant cultural institutions and is crucial to Scotland's culture and Edinburgh's economy. Its schools programme has been vital in fostering literacy and cultural engagement among young people, with thousands of pupils benefiting annually from free events and resources.
- Supported by the increase in funding for festivals announced in the 2025-26 Scottish Budget last year, this funding secures those benefits for young readers across Edinburgh, helping schools that might otherwise struggle with travel costs, and ensuring they have the same opportunity to take part in one of the world's leading literary festivals.

EDINBURGH FESTIVALS – UK GOVERNMENT PROMISE ADDITIONAL FUNDING

- Scottish Ministers have been urging the UK Government to recognise the valuable role Scotland's culture sector plays to the Scottish and UK economy and so any additional funding promised by the UK Government is welcome.
- While the additional UK Government funding will be welcome, the Scottish Government have been clear all along that the UK Government needs to engage with us to ensure support is aligned and its impact maximised.

CULTURE SECTOR FUNDING

The Scottish Government has demonstrated our commitment to the culture sector with an increase of over £34m in 2025/26. This takes us to over £50m more in culture funding than in 2023/2024.

- The increase of more than £34m results in the biggest increase in culture funding in the history of this Parliament after Covid recovery support and takes the total uplift to date to £50m.
- Scottish Ministers already increased culture sector funding by £15.8m in 2024/25, as the first step to achieving the First Minister's commitment to invest at least £100 million more annually in culture and the arts by 2028/29.
- This commitment to additional funding despite the challenging budget situation signals our confidence in the Scottish culture sector and is the starting point of a journey of three phases – sustain, develop, and innovate.
- Through this increased investment we want to drive up opportunities for participation in creative pursuits, support the production of new works, and ensure that Scotland's cultural output has platforms at home and abroad.
- The Scottish Government are enormously sympathetic to the need for financial support for the artistic and cultural sector in Scotland. The Scottish Government will support the cultural sector to fulfil its potential.

CREATIVE SCOTLAND (CS) - MULTI YEAR FUNDING (MYF)

Creative Scotland have announced the results of their Multi-Year Funding programme.

- A total of 251 cultural organisations are receiving funding from this financial year (2025/26). This is more than double the number of organisations that previously received core funding from Creative Scotland.

- Creative Scotland have been able to support every organisation that met the funding criteria because of the level of funding the Scottish Government has been able to provide.
- Average grant levels will increase by 33% in 2025/26, and 54% in 2026/27, as compared to levels of grant for organisations previously receiving regular core funding.
- 13 organisations who narrowly missed out will join a development programme, including advice and funding, to adapt their applications with the prospect of joining the MYF portfolio in 2026/27.
- If these 13 organisations successfully develop their proposals there will be a success rate of 95% at this final stage of the process.
- Only 5% of applicant organisations have been unsuccessful at this stage of the process, but each of those will be supported to adapt, either through advice, transition funding, or both.
- This result secures the future of key cultural organisations of all sizes across Scotland, which are major assets to our communities and our economy, supporting thousands of jobs and creating new opportunities for freelancers, artists and other creative practitioners.
- There has been a significant increase in the number of community based, locally-focussed organisations coming into the MYF portfolio, better representing the cultural and geographical diversity of Scotland.
- This transformational result has been made possible by the significant increase in the culture budget that we have committed to and demonstrates the value that we place in the sector.
- The Scottish Government will provide an additional £20m to Creative Scotland for its Multi Year Funding programme in 2025/26. This means CS will receive a total of £54m for MYF in 2025/26.
- Subject to budget processes aims to provide a further £20m in 2026/27, taking the total budget to £74m. This will allow Creative Scotland to offer regular funding to the largest ever number of organisations across Scotland ensuring that more people have access to cultural projects which will benefit their health and wellbeing as well as bringing enjoyment.
- MYF organisations have a base in 27 of Scotland's local authority areas, with 35% of organisations operating beyond their home postcodes on a Scotland-wide basis, providing access to the arts in communities across the country.

BUDGET 2025/2026 (other)

We will continue to fund initiatives such as the Youth Music Initiative and Sistema and the additional funding will provide a package of support to the culture sector as a whole including:

- Restarting our **Culture Collective programme** allowing community engaged creative activity driven by the communities they are based in to shape the future cultural life of Scotland, and we will provide funding to our flagship community culture project **Creative Communities** to expand its reach.
- We will provide an uplift of £1m in funding across our five National Performing Companies. This investment takes their core funding to the highest level funding since 2011/12.
- We aim to increase this by a further £20m to the culture sector in 2026/27, subject to usual parliamentary procedure.

- I am delighted to announce a brand-new £4m Scottish Culture & Heritage Capacity Fund. This fund recognises the significant challenges faced by heritage and culture organisations across Scotland.
- Ministers are working through the implications of the UK Spending Review and the UK Government's ten year national infrastructure strategy to get a clearer picture of the longer term capital position available to the Scottish Government.
- As part of a record £34 million uplift for culture in the draft 2025-26 Budget, **Museums Galleries Scotland**, Scotland's museum development body, will receive an uplift from £2.7m in 2024/25 to £4.27m in 2025/26.
- Accredited museums across the whole of Scotland, including Glasgow, are eligible to apply for grants from Museums Galleries Scotland.

REVIEW OF CREATIVE SCOTLAND

With the sector facing new and enduring challenges, it is right for us to ensure Creative Scotland's remit and functions remain relevant, in line with our commitments to invest at least £100 million more annually in the arts and culture by 2028-29, and to continuously improve across all our public bodies.

- To make the best use of this significant new funding, we are reviewing how the culture sector is supported, including an independent Review of Creative Scotland.
- The decision to review Creative Scotland is not as a result of their performance and is normal practice to ensure that the functions and remit of public bodies continue to meet the needs of Scotland.
- The Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture has agreed with Angela Leitch CBE, the chair the Review of Creative Scotland, the remit of the review, informed by responses to the sector survey and engagement. (Monday 19 May 2025)
- We fully expect that Creative Scotland will continue business as usual and there will be no changes in their work, whilst the review is undertaken.
- I recognise that it is essential that the culture sector has an opportunity to engage in the Review, and would encourage those with an interest to share their views.

Speech (attached separately)

Angus Robertson MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External
Affairs and Culture.

Federation of Scottish Theatre
Festival Reception - 20 August 2025

Maximum length: 5 mins

Current length: 4 mins 52 seconds

SPEAKING NOTE

Good evening everyone, and thank you, Kenny, for the warm introduction. I want to express my appreciation for being invited here to give the opening address tonight.

This is my first time attending this reception as Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs & Culture and I am sure everyone will agree it is really heartening to see so many people together tonight to acknowledge and celebrate the achievements of our world-class performing arts sector.

Once again, Scotland's capital city has been transformed into the theatre capital of the world. The sheer number of performances being showcased here – more than 4,000 from across the globe – is truly staggering.

And with so many opera, dance and theatre productions of such diversity to choose from, it is challenging to narrow down what to go and see. To mention a few, I know the First Minister thoroughly enjoyed attending *Make it Happen* and I have had the pleasure of seeing Scottish Ballet's *Mary Queen of Scots*.

But beyond its artistic merit, the performing arts is a driver of inclusion and regeneration. It brings people together—across generations, backgrounds, and geographies especially among young people and marginalised groups.

Economically, the performing arts contributes significantly to Scotland's creative industries. It supports thousands of jobs—from freelancers and performers to technicians and administrators—and

sustains a network of venues and organisations vital to local economies.

I would like to reflect over the next few minutes on the journey we have been on and also set out my plans to support the culture sector.

As I am sure everyone here in the room tonight will agree in recent years, the sector has faced challenges, from the pandemic lockdowns to a difficult cost crisis environment and discussions around ethical sponsorship.

This year, we have taken bold steps to further strengthen the foundations of our culture sector. The 2025–26 Scottish Budget included a record £34 million increase in arts and culture spending, with £4 million specifically allocated to festivals. This includes increases to the Festivals EXPO

Fund, which now reaches £2.8 million and supports 14 major festivals across Edinburgh and Glasgow

But our ambition does not stop there as we are expanding the reach of the EXPO Fund to festivals across all of Scotland, ensuring that every community has the opportunity to celebrate and share its cultural voice.

This uplift has empowered Creative Scotland to deliver their Multi-Year Funding programme and more than double the number of organisations in receipt of core funding. It secures the future of key cultural organisations of various sizes across Scotland, which are major assets to our communities and our economy.

Having already increased culture sector funding by £15.8m in 2024/25, this year's uplift means we are halfway through our five-year commitment to

increase the culture budget by £100 million, and we remain steadfast in our goal to deliver the remaining investment by 2028.

I understand though that even with this delivery of additional funding, you are all still having to be much more creative about managing budgets whilst being brave enough to still take risks and champion lesser-known artists and projects.

I also recognise the significant contribution made by others in Scotland's cultural ecosystem who operate outside these funding streams such as our freelancers, grassroots initiatives and other independent arts organisations. This gratitude also extends to the support of sponsorships, donors, and philanthropists for standing with Scotland's performing arts venues.

The independent review of Creative Scotland will ensure that support structures for the sector are fit for the future and that resources are used as effectively as possible.

Next year's election will be a pivotal moment. Whatever the outcome, I pledge that our support for Scotland's culture sector will remain resolute.

I hope my words tonight have reassured you that this government's commitment to Scotland's culture sector remains strong and steadfast. Through our shared ambition, we can ensure that our cultural spaces remain vibrant, sustainable, fair, and accessible for generations to come.

Thank you again, and I hope you enjoy the rest of this evening's fantastic reception and the remainder of the Festival season in Edinburgh.

Briefing for British Council Scotland Reception

What	British Council Festivals Reception 2025.
When	18th August 2025, 18:45 – 21:15
Where	The Scottish Cafe & Restaurant, National Galleries of Scotland, The Mound Edinburgh, EH2 2EL
Who	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scott McDonald, Chief Executive British Council • Norah Campbell, Head of Arts, British Council Scotland • Claire de Braekeleer, (incoming) Director British Council Scotland
Why	Engagement with British Council.
Key messages	Recognition of the work of British Council in supporting international cultural engagement. Pleased to celebrate the ongoing success of the Edinburgh Festivals as a platform for this engagement.
Speech details	Speech (3 Minutes) attached separately. redacted - section 38(1)(b))]
Official support	redacted - section 38(1)(b))]
Media handling	Photographer present. redacted - section 38(1)(b))]
Twitter (X)	@culturescotgov @BritishCouncil @BCScotland
Dress code	Smart casual/ Business
Entrance and greeting party	Cabinet Secretary will be met at the entrance by redacted - section 38(1)(b))] Key contact redacted - section 38(1)(b))]
AnBriefing contents	Annex A - Event programme Annex B - Attendees Annex C – Key lines – Edinburgh Festivals Annex D - British Council [redacted section 30 (b)(i)] Annex E – Support for Cultural Exports

EVENT PROGRAMME

TIME	EVENT
18:45	– Arrival
19:00	– Speeches: [BSL interpreter and captioner will be present].
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome - Norah Campbell (1 min) • Anne Martin – Gaelic Singer (3 mins) • Keynote - Scott McDonald (5 mins) • Speech - Angus Robertson (3 min) • Thanks - Norah Campbell (1 min)
19:15	– Norah will introduce the Cabinet Secretary to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Claire De Braekeleer, new British Council Country Director for Scotland redacted - section 38(1)(b))]
21:25	– Ends.

British Council Reception:

British Council will host a festival reception to celebrate their international cultural relations work and the vital role of Edinburgh's International Festivals as a major global arts platform and meeting place.

The reception will take place at the National Gallery on the Mound and redacted - section 38(1)(b))]

British Council new country director Claire De Braekeleer and redacted - section 38(1)(b))]

ATTENDEES

**Scott McDonald - Chief Executive British Council**

Previously, he was the President & CEO of the Oliver Wyman Group and sat on the Executive Committee of Marsh & McLennan Companies, including more than 75,000 staff in over 100 countries. Before joining Oliver Wyman, Scott worked in investment banking, the editorial side of the magazine industry, and ran a small publishing company. Scott is a member of the International Advisory Board and the Global Strategy & Leadership Expert Panel of McGill University's Desautels Faculty of Management. He also sits on the European Advisory Board for The Nature Conservancy and the Advisory Group for Yodomo, a UK crafting platform. Scott has degrees in Finance &

Economics from McGill University and International Relations from Cambridge University.

**Norah Campbell - Head of Arts for British Council in Scotland**

Norah works closely with Scottish, UK and international stakeholders and arts partners to facilitate international connections, nurture collaboration, and identify strategic opportunities that result in international Scottish arts initiatives. A graduate of Edinburgh College of Art and Strathclyde University, Norah has over 25 years of experience working in the Scottish arts sector, including programme delivery, venue management, education,

international, consultancy, governance, art policy and strategy. Past roles have included Head of Skills for Creative Cultural Skills, Director of An Tuireann, Chair of Scottish Music Centre, Board Member of Puppet Animation Scotland, and Board Member of Arts Council of Wales.

**Claire de Braekeleer - (incoming) Director British Council Scotland**

Claire is the new British Council Scotland country director. Has been responsible for strategic direction of an arts programme across 15 countries in Central Asia, the South Caucasus, Israel, Russia, Ukraine, and the Western Balkans. Previously she was Director Partnerships for the British Council in Egypt from 2014-17, leading on business pursuit and communications. Based in Moscow from 2012-14

Claire served as Deputy Director, British Council Russia, leading a portfolio across Education, English and Arts.

KEY MESSAGES

Edinburgh Festivals:

- Scotland's festivals are at the heart of our culture sector and national life. They are an invaluable platform for our artists and performers to develop and support their ambition and creativity by providing focal points for activity and opportunities to showcase their work.
- At every stage of their planning and their delivery, Scotland's Festivals are renowned for ambition, creativity and excellence at home and overseas.
- The 2025/26 Budget provides an important foundation for the work of festivals, recognising the importance of stability and certainty through long term sustained funding to support Festival's core activities and their ambitions for the future.
- As well as their outstanding work on stage, festivals provide hundreds of millions of pounds to the Scottish and local economies, supporting a pipeline of jobs and businesses.
- Increasing investment in festivals, as part of a broader uplift in funding for culture, underlines the value the Scottish Government places on the arts.
- Through this increased investment we want to drive up opportunities for participation in creative pursuits, support the festivals commissions and collaborations on new and exciting works, ensuring Scotland's cultural output have platforms at home and abroad.
- Festivals, like the entirety of the culture sector, have been hit hard in recent years by a series of challenges. Recovery from the pandemic and addressing the challenges brought by Brexit have been made more difficult by increased costs and inflation, together with a challenging public funding environment.
- Whilst increased funding has provided greater long term stability, festivals continue to face challenges around transport, accommodation, connectivity and long term sustainability beyond funding to areas like workforce planning and skills development.
- We are committed to working with festivals in Edinburgh, as well as across Scotland through a Strategic Partnership to address these challenges

EDINBURGH FESTIVALS – UK GOVERNMENT PROMISE ADDITIONAL FUNDING

- Scottish Ministers have been urging the UK Government to recognise the valuable role Scotland's culture sector plays to the Scottish and UK economy and so any additional funding promised by the UK Government is welcome.
- While the additional UK Government funding will be welcome, the Scottish Government have been clear all along that the UK Government needs to engage with us to ensure support is aligned and its impact maximised.

EXPO FUND EXPANSION LINES

Lines to take

- The Expanded Festival Fund is the outcome of collaborative work through the Strategic Festivals Partnership and will be administered by Creative Scotland.
- Applications for awards of up to £200,000 in total will be available from September with guidelines published early next week.
- This funding increase recognises the success of EXPO since the fund's creation in 2007 and the work of festivals to shape and support hundreds of commissions, enhance the ambitions of thousands of Scottish artists and attract audiences in the millions for EXPO-supported work. It also forms part of a £34 million increase in support to the culture sector this year.
- This fund continues the aims of EXPO to support festival innovation and maximise national and international opportunities for artists, whilst also expanding to include other areas where Scotland's festivals excel, such as community and education programmes and industry skills and talent development.
- We will draw from the recommendations of the independent review of Creative Scotland, due to report in November, and the findings from this funding expansion towards an aim of developing this as a multi-year fund, providing long-term certainty for festivals to plan ambitiously for the future.
- This announcement enhances the existing and increased support provided to the sector, especially through Creative Scotland's Multi Year Funding programme, which is funding a record number of organisations this year (251), of which almost a third of funded organisations run a festival. 141 new organisations receiving funding for the first time.

BRITISH COUNCIL**Overview:**

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. It operates in over 100 countries, promoting UK values, education, and culture. It is an executive non-departmental public body sponsored by the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO).

Relationship with the Scottish Government:

The British Council maintains a collaborative and strategic relationship with the Scottish Government. Officials are in regular contact and seek to align work with Scotland's international priorities. It supports Scottish cultural diplomacy, education, and soft power initiatives.

The Council engages regularly with all of the devolved governments, including through the Scotland Advisory Committee, which ensures a clear Scottish focus in its programming and strategy. It also helps to deliver the Scottish Government's external affairs agenda, particularly in areas such as climate change, human rights, and cultural exchange; this is particularly valuable in countries where there is no Scottish Government presence.

Notable examples of the British Council's work in Scotland include:

- Hosting Going Global, the British Council's conference for leaders in international higher education in Edinburgh in late 2023. The event attracted 400 delegates from 44 countries and 17 Scottish institutions were represented.
- In November 2024, the British Council's Going Global conference was held in Abuja, Nigeria. Eleven Scottish universities and colleges participated, building connections and deepening connections across Africa – at an event convened by the British Council.
- Delivering a residency programme for five Ukrainian arts professionals, in partnership with the British Council Ukraine, Creative Scotland and the Ukrainian Institute.
- Hosting delegates from Vietnam, Morocco and Ukraine at the Celtic Connections festival showcase, and brokering support to enable six Scotland projects to be a part of the 2024 UK-France Spotlight.

Momentum:

Momentum is a British Council, Creative Scotland & Festivals Edinburgh partnership programme for key cultural figures from across the world to build relationships with the Edinburgh festivals and the wider Scottish cultural sector. This year's invited

countries/regions are Poland, Viet Nam, South Korea, MENA, Mexico, Nordics and Turkey, alongside specialist delegations for Visual Arts and Literature delegations.

[redacted section 30 (b)(i)]

SUPPORT FOR CULTURAL EXPORTS

Current Situation

- A key action from the International Culture Strategy was to carry out a scoping study into the establishment of a support service for cultural export and exchange.
- [redacted section 30 (b)(i)]
- [redacted section 30 (b)(i)]
- [redacted section 30 (b)(i)]

Top Lines

- The Scottish Government recognises that working and exporting internationally is vital to Scotland's culture and creative sectors. While the export of goods plays a considerable role, much of the export activity in the sector is focussed on the export of services.
- International working requires skills, knowledge, expertise, networks and the capacity and resources to plan and deliver activities.
- Our International Culture Strategy identified a need to provide greater support in this area – representatives of our culture and creative sectors have highlighted the need for greater support for international activity, including cultural exports and exchange in recent years.
- The sector has made clear that more support is needed to overcome these barriers, including through advice and information, funding, showcasing and supporting international networks. A bespoke service to support cultural export and exchange would be well placed to deliver this.
- In order to establish what services to support cultural exports would be appropriate and could be established, further data is required on a number of questions. These include:
 - What are the current barriers to cultural exports in Scotland?
 - What additional support is required to export both services and goods, and which art forms require support?
 - What rationale is there for support to be directed at one or more sub-sectors, such as music?
 - What functions would a service most usefully carry out?
 - What best practice models are there from other countries?
 - What resources are required to establish a service?

**Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Europe and
External Affairs
British Council Reception 18 August 2025
(448 words, 3.2 minutes)**

Good evening –

It is a pleasure to be here with you all. My thanks to the British Council for hosting us this evening and to the Scottish National Gallery – an incredible piece of architecture in the heart of Edinburgh.

As Cabinet Secretary for Culture and the constituency MSP, I am incredibly proud to stand before you and represent a city renowned globally as a cultural and intellectual capital.

At every stage of planning and delivery, Scotland's Festivals are renowned for ambition, creativity and excellence at home and overseas.

Last week I was delighted to be part of Global Ink, the Edinburgh International Book Festival's flagship industry event, bringing together industry professionals from Scotland, the UK, and around the world – including British Council colleagues and delegates from the outstanding Momentum programme.

Funding from the Festivals EXPO Fund is enabling this acclaimed programme to expand for its 2026 edition to include a new landmark international conference, showcasing Scottish writing to the world.

Examples like this are why I am enthused to announce over the weekend a £1.8m expansion of the fund to festivals across Scotland.

Scotland's festivals are at the heart of our culture sector and national life. They are an invaluable

platform for our artists and performers to develop and support their ambition and creativity by providing focal points for activity and opportunities to showcase their work.

By increasing investment into festivals across the country we are supporting their commissions of and collaborations on new and exciting works, increasing opportunities for participation in creative pursuits and ensuring Scotland's cultural highlights can be enjoyed at home and abroad.

International engagement is vital to the culture and creative sector.

That's why in 2024 we published our International Culture Strategy – which focusses resolutely on sectoral development and the importance of international engagement to the ways in which the sector works, both in its business interests and in

the cultural engagement and exchange of ideas that are fundamental to cultural innovation.

As part of this, we cannot underestimate the value of cultural exports to the sector. That is why, as part of our International Culture Strategy, we are carrying out a feasibility study into the establishment of a support service for cultural export and exchange.

Over the coming months we will work closely with creative organisations, businesses and individuals to establish what forms of support could best help the sector to export services and goods internationally.

I have no doubt that this initiative has the potential to be groundbreaking in how we help our creative sectors to realise their international potential.

Thank you for having me this evening and I hope you continue to enjoy all Edinburgh has to offer this festival season.