

Edinburgh
Jazz
& Blues
Festival

Strategic Plan 2023 - 2028



Our Vision

To be one of the world's leading jazz and blues festivals, celebrated for pushing creative boundaries and breaking down barriers to the discovery and celebration of music.

Our Purpose

To create and present a festival and year-round work that champions jazz and blues music and enriches the lives of all who engage with us.

Our Values

Creativity

We place creativity at the core of our practice

Resilience

We will always work to find innovative solutions to any problems that we may encounter

Integrity

We hold ourselves to the highest standards of ethics and personal responsibility

Sustainability

We recognise our responsibility towards reducing the world's carbon footprint



Who We Are

Founded in 1978, Edinburgh Jazz & Blues Festival is now one of the largest and most respected jazz and blues festivals in Europe. We are one of the major festivals that contributes to Edinburgh's reputation as the world's leading festival city.

We are a standalone festival in July and are shaped by the city with over 100 concerts taking place in theatres, parks and clubs in the city centre as well as in every ward in the city.

We present a programme that spans the entire history of the music from ragtime to modern jazz to Chicago blues and beyond. Our programming is bespoke for our audiences and regularly features new commissions, new projects and exciting collaborations with creative musicians from both home and abroad.

We champion Scottish musicians. They form the beating heart of the programme, we believe in the depth and breadth of talent that exists in Scotland and that our homegrown Scottish artists are voices that demand to be heard.

We also help to develop young artists, supporting them through their careers as they grow and develop towards the international stage.

We embrace and celebrate internationalism, bringing some of the finest artists working in the world today to Edinburgh.

Beyond the stage we also take responsibility towards enhancing people's lives. Our engagement programmes help break down barriers to access the arts and expose people of all ages and abilities to the transformational power of music.



Strategic Priority Creative Ambition

Edinburgh Jazz & Blues Festival is a creative driving force behind the Scottish and wider UK jazz and blues scenes and delivers high-quality impactful programmes that are relevant and speak to our times.

Our aims between now and 2028 will be:

- To build the reputation of the programme and brand so that it continues to represent a mark of quality and excitement with audiences and stakeholders, allowing them to place their trust in us
- To develop our curatorial programme, bringing increasingly diverse and fresh perspectives to the festival programming
- To work locally, nationally, and internationally to identify emerging trends in the music we promote and ensure that we are relevant and developing in line with the artform
- To continue to champion and grow the reputation of Scottish artists, at home and abroad and to lead the sector in identifying and presenting new and exciting artists to audiences
- To offer commissioning opportunities to artists to help solidify and expand our reputation as creative drivers and champions of new work
- To align the development of our programme with that of our environmental and digital ambitions, ensuring that we embark on a sustainable growth model and begin assessing new and exciting ways of presenting international artists and showcasing Scottish creativity to the world



The Edinburgh Jazz & Blues Festival has always championed me as a female band leader. They've taken the time to understand me as an artist and we've worked together to put on shows at the festival which have stretched me as a musician/creative and given me an International platform to showcase my composition and arranging skills and to shine as a soloist. This experience has been invaluable to me as it has given me the confidence to shout about my original music and about myself as a solo artist which, in turn, has opened up more opportunities for me across the UK and Europe. I'll be forever grateful to the festival for giving me such a fantastic platform and for supporting homegrown talent.

Seonaid Aitken - violinist, vocalist, composer/arranger, BBC broadcaster



Strategic Priority Organisation

Edinburgh Jazz & Blues Festival is an expertly run organisation that is well resourced, has dynamic partners and employees with passion and integrity. It is a place where people aspire to work and make lasting impacts.

As we launch this strategic plan in early 2023, the UK is entering what is predicted to be a long period of recession. The organisation objectives within this plan were developed to balance current operational concerns with future development ambitions. This will allow EJBF to protect the core assets and competences of the organisation and prepare for a changed environment when regrowth is possible

Our aims between now and 2028 will be:

- To actively source new means of funding that will allow us to better realise future ambitions and provide financial stability to the organisation, moving away from the existing annual project funding model
- To ensure the smooth transition of senior leadership and assess the organisational staffing structure to ensure that EJBF has the staff resource and support to continue to thrive

- To invest in staff training and development and create a culture where staff are inspired to take ownership over their career development
- To regularly reassess all existing company policy documents to ensure relevance and publish a comprehensive annual report to better demonstrate the impact of the support of all stakeholders
- To continue to develop a portfolio of year-round engagements through concerts and learning and participation projects, continually assessing where we are making the most impact
- To create a culture where partnership and collaborative working is actively pursued, involving an increasingly diverse number of partners in the co-creation and planning of projects from the beginning, democratising the decision making process and ultimately the future direction of EJBF
- To reach our carbon reduction targets and better instil a culture of sustainable practice within the wider organisation



Strategic Priority Digital

Edinburgh Jazz & Blues Festival is recognised as a digital leader, in approach and output, with a world class programme attracting content partners and audiences from all over the world

Our aims between now and 2028 will be:

- To expand the scale and reputation of our online programme, enhancing the wider reputation of the festival and organisation both in Scotland and internationally
- To find new and exciting international digital programme partners allowing us to present an increasingly diverse online programme, live streaming from venues around the world
- To continue to grow and develop lasting relationships with new digital only audiences both within Scotland and internationally
- To invest in the upskilling of the EJBF team and in digital resources to continually deliver programmes of increasing impact which can be delivered more economically and within existing resources
- To create a legacy plan for our ever-growing library of digital content
- To embrace digital working and technologies beyond the presentation of work and assess where new learnings can better impact on other areas of the organisation
- To investigate the environmental impact of our online ambitions to ensure that we embark on a sustainable growth pattern

Strategic Priority

Audiences

Edinburgh Jazz & Blues Festival is a major event which enlightens and entertains diverse audiences from all over the world.

Our aims between now and 2028 will be:

- To grow our audiences, increase the depth of their engagement, and to increase the percentage of younger attenders
- To ensure that our audiences are always at the heart of our decision making and that we are continually improving in our ability to capture their feedback
- To increase customer retention by better serving them through developing improved customer journeys and marketing strategies
- To ensure that we are as welcoming as possible by continuing to engage with accessible venues, offering fair ticket prices and ensuring that we maintain a commitment to programming major centrepiece events alongside free events such as the Mardi Gras



As always, a very well-run event. Sound engineers, backstage, volunteers, every person involved brought a willingness and joy that transcended to everyone I spoke to. Brilliant. Long may it continue!

It was an excellent and very welcome 10 days of music. It has opened our eyes and ears to a scene that we didn't really know existed in Scotland.

EJBF Audience Members



Strategic Priority Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

Edinburgh Jazz & Blues Festival is accessible and relevant to all. We are a catalyst for positive change in the sector and communities we work in.

Our aims between now and 2028 will be:

- To instigate annual EDI action plans and continually assess if they are having the desired impact
- To partner with a charter organisation to help give direction and collective weight to our EDI aims
- To ensure that all staff are trained in topics surrounding EDI and accessibility to better engage with the many individuals, audiences and communities that we serve and to bring a heightened awareness to their wider work and ours
- To diversify the communities we work in across all areas of our output, ensuring that we are engaged with every ward in the city of Edinburgh
- To widen the networks through which we promote our jobs, learning and participation programmes and other opportunities, and the introduction of rigorous EDI monitoring to ensure that all opportunities are reaching a wide audience



Tutors are just fab - patient, knowledgeable, responsive and inspiring

They were really good at taking time with such a young pianist who got a lot out of participating

Participating has really increased my passion to play music more often

I would like to thank the music director and the team for the warm welcome, all the work they did to prepare, their enthusiasm, the way they consider each participant. It was really enriching humanly and musically!

Just the best bunch of people who clearly love music and are so supportive

Participants - Learning and Participation Programme



Strategic Priority Edinburgh Festival Carnival

Edinburgh Jazz & Blues Festival are responsible for the management, programming and delivery of Edinburgh Festival Carnival (EFC). EFC is Scotland's largest multi-cultural event underpinned with a year-round series of community engagement projects. The centrepiece of EFC is the much-loved festival parade, where artists and performers from across the world perform alongside young people from across the city under the iconic landmark, Edinburgh Castle.

Edinburgh Festival Carnival Vision

Edinburgh Festival Carnival is a landmark event on the global carnival arts calendar and has an impact at every level on the communities it serves from grass roots to international.

Our aims between now and 2028 will be:

- To protect and enhance EFC's reputation as Scotland's largest multi-cultural event presenting work of quality and scale in the heart of the city
- To actively expand our networks so the EFC confidently represents a true reflection of the diversity that exists in Scotland today and provides a world class platform for people to celebrate their culture and heritage

- To better align the brand and ethos and values of Edinburgh Festival Carnival with Edinburgh Jazz & Blues Festival
- To actively source new means of funding to provide financial stability to EFC
- To grow our family of participants by fostering meaningful relationships with community partners and delivering learning and participation projects which are tailored and impactful to those communities



It can be very lonely being a young black person in Edinburgh and even more so as a young black person of Caribbean heritage. The Masked Words project gave my son the opportunity to learn about his roots in a fun way and to meet and socialize with peers. He had a great time dressing up in costume and eating Caribbean food. The project was well co-ordinated, and the material and calibre of presenters was excellent. We really need more opportunities like this for our young people

Participant - Carnival Community Project





Edinburgh Jazz and Blues Festival Ltd is a company limited by guarantee and incorporated in Scotland (SC112437) with its registered office at 89 Giles Street, Edinburgh, EH6 6BZ. Registered Charity No. SCSC012211