



Box Office Manager Recruitment Pack

Box Office Manager: Job Description

Contract

Fixed-term contract from Monday 27 April — Tuesday 1 September 2026.

Full time, 35 hours per week Monday – Friday. Office hours are generally 09:30-17:30 with 1-hour unpaid lunch. Additional hours will be required during on sales and the Festival itself, when staff should expect to work a six or seven day week, as well as evenings and at weekends. Hours will not exceed working time regulations.

Rate of pay

£16.51 per hour, paid weekly in arrears by bank transfer (plus holiday pay).

Key dates

The Front List events on sale: Wednesday 29 April – Wednesday 6 May 2026

Main programme on sale: Wednesday 17 June – Thursday 25 June 2026

Edinburgh International Book Festival: Saturday 15 August – Sunday 30 August 2026

Background

The Edinburgh International Book Festival is a world-leading cultural festival, with democracy, creativity and ideas exchange at its heart. We celebrate the power of words and writing in all of their dynamic and imaginative forms, bringing diverse perspectives together, and empowering our audiences to deepen their understanding of our ever-changing world.

Since 1983, we have welcomed hundreds of thousands of visitors to engage with the world's greatest and emerging writers, thinkers, artists, and performers. Each year, we programme innovative events that broaden the horizons and enrich the minds of our audiences, both in Edinburgh and online. These take the form of on-stage conversations, workshops, creative masterclasses, think tanks, and more, all informed by a culture of open dialogue, curiosity about the perspectives of others, and active embracing of new ideas and experiences.

A registered charity, we are run by a passionate team who believe in the power of words and ideas to ignite imaginations, foster human connection, and challenge the status quo – as well as to offer solace, nurture wellbeing, and spread joy. Our Festival aims not just to open up conversations, but to broaden them too: existing as a space where nuanced discussion happens.

At the heart of our Festival is a commitment to accessibility, inclusivity, and the creation of a truly democratic environment for the exchange of ideas and collaborative thinking. We give a platform to voices who are often overlooked and aim to break down barriers to access for those who might not typically see themselves as a book festival audience. More than just a summer festival, we work year-round with partners in the local community – with schools, libraries, prisons, hospitals, and other community hubs – with the aim of developing engaged, knowledgeable audiences of all backgrounds and ages. The Festival also makes hundreds of events available to watch online via a Pay What You Can model, offering audiences who cannot attend in person the opportunity to take part, and making the Festival truly global in nature.

Over the last four decades, we have continually transformed our Festival model to reflect our rapidly evolving world, and ensure our ongoing relevance, with a programme balancing today's most challenging topics with exploration of how we can work together towards a brighter future. In 2024 this evolution saw the beginning of a new chapter of our story under the leadership of our new director, Jenny Niven, including our successful first year of presenting the Festival in our new home of the Edinburgh Futures Institute – a new university building created from the stunning renovation of the city's old Royal Infirmary, and positioned at the heart of the city's Festival environment. We are excited about the opportunities this will offer us to collaborate with new partners and share new innovations and voices with our audiences, now and far into the future.

The team

The Book Festival has a permanent staff of 23 throughout the year, expanding over the spring and summer to a peak of around 150 staff during the Festival.

The Box Office comprises Assistant Box Office Manager, Schools Booking Coordinator, two Supervisors and increasing numbers of sales staff in the run-up to the Festival. The Box Office can be very busy - during June and the Festival, staff can work long days in six- or seven-day weeks. The Box Office Manager reports to the Audience Services Manager, who also oversees the FOH, Access and Chat Moderation teams.

Alongside the launch of our new website in March 2026, the Book Festival will be using the Spektrix ticketing system for the first time for the 2026 Festival. Previous experience of using Spektrix would be advantageous.

The role

May – July

The Box Office opens to the public in early May when our Front List events go on sale (circa 15 events). The rest of May is when the main programme of events are built in preparation for the launch in early June. Box Office Assistants and Supervisors will join the team in June to assist with the advance booking period for sponsors and Friends of the Book Festival, followed by the

public on sale a week later. The opening day of public booking (June 24) usually sees an extremely high demand. Tickets will be sold through phones and the website until August, when a box office counter opens on our festival site.

Festival

The Box Office counter sales operation moves to the Edinburgh Futures Institute for the duration of the Festival in August. Alongside a phone room there is also a box office counter based at the main entrance of the site. The Box Office team may also help staff an information point, as well as assisting the FOH and Access teams to help customers navigate our Festival and programme of events.

The post will be line-managed by the Audience Services Manager.

Key responsibilities

- Assisting the Audience Services Manager with recruitment of the temporary Box Office team during May/June
- Supervision of all daily box office operations, ensuring staff are well-supported and correct procedures are being followed at all times
- Investigating and resolving any customer complaints or issues that arise
- Leading on training of Box Office staff and implementing high standards of customer care
- Monitoring the staffing budget for the box office team
- Administration of the Spektrix ticketing system including changes to event data, set-up of new events or ticket offers, scheduling regular reports, and ensuring staff maintain high standards of accuracy in customer data entry
- Working closely with the Audience Services Manager on the project management of the opening day of public ticket sales, including logistical planning, contingency planning, recruitment, training and scheduling of temporary staff, technical support, and web support
- Processing non-public bookings for groups such as sponsors, Festival participants, guests and industry professionals and corresponding with these bookers as required
- Preparing the Festival staffing rota
- During the Festival, management of the phone room and Box Office counters, queue management, administration of returns queues for sold out events, maintaining information screen displays and resolving customer issues occurring on-site
- Engage in sustainable practices while in the workplace and adhere to the Book Festival's environmental sustainability policies.
- Any other duties as required by the Audience Services Manager

Person specification

This is an ideal development opportunity for candidates wishing to build on existing Box Office experience, preferably at supervisor level, in a world class festival environment.

The successful candidate will possess the following:

Essential

- Box Office management experience (preferably 2 years or 2 festival contracts)
- Experience of using the Spektrix ticketing system
- Ability to provide excellent service and manage customer expectations in a demanding festival environment
- Experience of handling customer complaints and diplomatically finding resolutions
- Proven success in building excellent teams of customer-facing staff, and maintaining high standards and morale in high-pressure situations
- Excellent communication skills, both written and oral
- Ability to work on own initiative and as part of a team, and to lead and motivate others
- A positive, flexible attitude and calm manner under pressure in

Desirable

- An understanding of the Edinburgh Festivals and/or the Scottish literary landscape
- Experience in a similar arts or festival environment

Staff wellbeing

The Book Festival is developing an open and active staff wellbeing culture and is committed to making everyone in our team feel safe, welcome and included. An Employee Assistance Package is available which offers a variety of levels of counselling, one-to-one personal support and resilience tools, along with personal legal and financial advice and family support. Several of our team have chosen to be trained in First Aid for Mental Health and our Safer Spaces Policy actively promotes a culture where everyone's experience (staff, artists, partners and audiences) is valued and no-one is made to feel unsafe or excluded. We continue to reflect and consult with our team.

Terms and conditions

The post is based at our offices, 121 George Street, Edinburgh; satellite locations as required; and at the Festival site at the Edinburgh Futures Institute during August. Normal hours of work are 09:30 – 17:30, Monday to Friday with 1-hour unpaid lunch. Additional hours will be required during on sales and the Festival itself, when staff should expect to work a six or seven day week, as well as evenings and at weekends.

The rate of pay for this position will £16.51 per hour. Wages are paid weekly in arrears by bank transfer.

Edinburgh International Book Festival will auto enrol you in their NEST pension scheme 3 months from the start date of your employment. You can choose to join the scheme from the start date of your employment. You can get further details of the scheme from the Head of Operations & Finance.

Equal opportunities

The Edinburgh International Book Festival is an equal opportunities employer and a Real Living Wage employer. Our work is framed by a commitment to Equity, Diversity, Care and Inclusion.

The Book Festival is a working environment where everyone is treated fairly, and our differences are celebrated as strengths. We actively encourage applicants with diverse backgrounds and experiences to apply.

If you have any specific access requirements, please contact jobs@edbookfest.co.uk to let us know and we will do our best to meet your needs.

How to apply

Please read the job description carefully and complete the online application using the links on our website: <https://www.edbookfest.co.uk/about-us/jobs>

Please ensure you upload a copy of your current CV (no more than two pages) and an application letter outlining your suitability for the role and why you wish to work at the Book Festival. You may include any other information that supports your application, and we ask that you provide two recent professional references.

If the job description doesn't answer your questions, please contact Catherine Smith, jobs@edbookfest.co.uk

Please note that due to the high volume of applications we receive we will not be able to offer feedback to unsuccessful applicants. If you have not heard from us within 2 weeks of the closing date, please assume that your application has not been shortlisted.

Closing date for applications: Friday 6 March 17:00

Interviews

Interviews will be held at the Book Festival offices at 121 George Street, Edinburgh, EH2 4YN (for local candidates) or virtually if preferred.

Interviews will be held on Tuesday 17 and Wednesday 18 March 2026