



**Communities Programme Assistant  
(Part-time, fixed term)  
Job Description**

# Communities Programme Assistant: Job Description

## Contract

Fixed-term: October 2025 – Friday 4 September 2026

Part-time: 3 days per week (rising to full-time for month of August)

We welcome proposals for flexible working arrangements.

## Salary

£25,500 pro rata

## Key dates

**Schools Programme launch:** April 2026

**Public Programme launch:** June 2026

**2026 Festival:** 15 – 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.

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 which platforms the most interesting and inspiring publishing from around the world, and balances today's most challenging topics with exploration of how we can work together towards a brighter future.

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 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 at the heart of civil society where nuanced discussion can happen and a spectrum of perspectives can be explored. We believe this role, supporting and influencing public conversation, is vital to society and to the Festival's future.

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.

In 2024, our evolution saw the beginning of a new chapter under the leadership of Festival Director, Jenny Niven. It was also our first year presenting the Festival in our new home of the Edinburgh Futures Institute – a cutting-edge 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 offers us to collaborate with new partners and share innovations and a wide range of voices with our audiences, both now and far into the future.

## Communities Programme

Edinburgh International Book Festival Communities Programme brings together the very best from groups and organisations across the country with the energy and excitement of the August Book Festival. Produced in collaboration with a variety of partners, this programme of residencies, festivals and one-off events brings authors, artists and audiences together to inspire each other and to be inspired, to share stories and experiences, and bring books to life for people of all ages in their own communities. To learn more about our Communities Programme visit our blog:

<https://ontheroad.edbookfest.co.uk>

## The Team

The Book Festival has a permanent staff of 24 throughout the year, expanding over the spring and summer to a peak of around 150 staff during the Festival. All staff members play a role in the ongoing development of the organisation through several full team planning and debrief meetings during the year. The Heads of each department form the Senior Management Team.

The Communities Programme Assistant is a key part of the Communities Team, and reports to the Director of Communities and Equalities. Other key relationships include the Creative Learning Manager and the Programme Administrator, and Programme Producers.

## The Role

The Communities Programme Assistant will support the effective delivery of the Communities programme, achieving maximum impact for participants from a wide range of backgrounds. Produced in collaboration with a variety of partners, this wide-ranging programme of events and projects brings authors, artists and audiences together to inspire each other and to be inspired, to share stories and experiences, and bring books to life for people of all ages in their own communities.

The Communities Programme Assistant will lead on the administration and logistical support of all Book Festival Communities Programme projects and events. Collaborative working across the Book Festival team is integral to this role. The Communities Programme Assistant must have a particularly close working relationship with the Creative Learning Manager developing innovative ways to engage with participants.

## Key Duties and Responsibilities

- Work with the Director of Communities and Equalities, taking on board their vision and ideas, to coordinate a coherent programme of events and projects ensuring the programme is well organised and achieves high production values
- Liaise with partners from diverse organisations on operational matters
- Coordinate the administrative and logistical requirements of the Communities Programme (contracts, fees, travel, accommodation, venue hire, etc)
- Attend workshops and events to support author logistics/welfare and act as the ‘face’ of the Book Festival (e.g. prison visits)
- Provide a point of contact for Community Programme enquiries from participants, partners, parents/guardians, staff and other enquiries
- Liaise with colleagues across departments to ensure smooth channels of communication
- Provide on the ground, hands-on event delivery (e.g. setting up workshop spaces, welcoming participants, etc)
- Internally, attending team meetings and any other relevant meetings as required
- Write monthly blog updates for the On the Road blog and support Brand and Audience with transfer of Communities content onto new website

- Support Director of Communities and Equalities with project evaluation and monitoring (e.g. recording participant numbers, collating feedback)
- Update and administer free communities tickets initiative
- Work with Creative Learning Manager and liaise with community partners to programme and deliver Discovery Zone and free family programme in August Festival
- Support with copywriting for communities, children and schools events for brochure and content for new website
- Support the Creative Learning Manager with planning and delivery of the schools launch event
- Comply with the Book Festival's equal opportunities policy and practice, child protection policy, health and safety practices and principles and standards relating to quality management and customer care

## Personal Specification

### **Knowledge and experience**

- At least 2 years' experience of arts administration including assisting in the delivery of high-quality projects in communities with a diverse range of participants
- Experience of working with authors, artists and other workers in the education and cultural sector
- Experience of coordinating and delivering projects and events
- Experience of working within a set budget
- Understanding of the cultural landscape of Scotland (desirable)
- Knowledge of contemporary literature and festivals, with experience of working in a live literature or arts organisation (desirable)
- Knowledge of the Curriculum for Excellence and the UN Conventions on the Right of the Child (desirable)

### **Skills**

- Excellent organisation, planning and coordination skills
- Excellent interpersonal skills and an ability to communicate persuasively and with integrity
- Ability to engage with people of all ages and from a diverse range of backgrounds
- A high level of literacy and articulation, with excellent communication skills
- The ability to work sensitively with individuals or groups and build productive relationships

- The capacity to solve problems quickly and creatively
- Good IT skills and the ability to self-support administratively

#### **Personal attributes**

- Positivity and resilience
- Pays the utmost attention to detail but understands the bigger picture
- Plans ahead but will happily adapt and develop plans as new opportunities arise
- Motivated, pro-active and enthusiastic, even in the face of challenges
- A strong commitment to equality, inclusivity and diversity
- A willingness to travel within Scotland
- A willingness to work out with standard office hours, as the job dictates

### **Staff Wellbeing**

The Book Festival has 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 and at the Festival site in Edinburgh Futures Institute during August. Normal hours of work are 09:30–17:30, Monday to Friday outwith Festival time – this role is 3 days per week, increasing to full-time during August 2026. Days/hours of work will be agreed in discussion with the successful candidate and the Communities Programme Director. Additional hours required at during the Festival itself when staff should expect to work six days a week. Flexible/hybrid working is possible outwith August. Time off in lieu will be given for weekend days worked outside normal working hours.

Employees receive 34 days of paid holiday per annum pro rata including public holidays. Six of these days are used for the shutdown of the office over Christmas, as well as four of the Public Holidays - Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Years Day, 2 January.

The salary for this position will be £25,500 per annum pro rata for 24hrs (a full-time post is 40hrs per week). It will be paid on the 28th of each month in arrears by bank transfer. The Book Festival will pay a



contribution of 5% of salary into our approved, auto-enrolment pension scheme. Employees may make voluntary additional contributions through payroll.

## Equal Opportunities

Edinburgh International Book Festival is an equal opportunities employer, an Investor in People and a Real Living Wage employer. Our work is framed by a commitment to Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Access and Care. The Book Festival is a working environment where everyone is treated fairly, and our differences are celebrated as strengths.

We encourage applicants with diverse backgrounds and experiences to apply. If you have any specific access requirements, please let us know and we will do our best to meet your needs.

## How To Apply

Applicants must apply via our online portal: <https://edbookfest.teamdetails.com>

Ensure you upload your current CV and an application letter, along with answering our recruitment portal questions. Your letter should outline your suitability for the post and why you wish to work at the Book Festival. You may include any other information to support your application.

**Closing date for applications:** Wednesday 15 October

**Interviews will be held on:** Wednesday 23/Thursday 24 October

If you have any questions about the role not answered by the above, please contact Noëlle Cobden on [jobs@edbookfest.co.uk](mailto:jobs@edbookfest.co.uk).

*The Edinburgh International Book Festival Ltd has its registered office at 121 George St Edinburgh and is a company limited by guarantee (SC079939) with charitable status (SC010120).*