

Job Description: Authors' Yurt Manager

Contract

Temporary: Full time 26 July and 8-30 Aug 2022

8 - 12 August will be spent on preparation and staff training during office hours, followed by a shift pattern through the duration of the Festival, working approximately 38-48 hours pw.

Salary

£11.63/hr, paid weekly in arrears by bank transfer (plus holiday pay).

Key dates

Logistics Day: Tue 26 July 2022

Opening day of the Festival: Sat 13 August 2022

Final public day of the Festival: Mon 29 August 2022

Baillie Gifford Schools Gala Day: Tue 30 August 2022

Background

The Edinburgh International Book Festival, a non-profit making organisation, is a distinctive international showcase celebrating the written word, literature, and ideas. It brings leading and emerging international, British, and Scottish authors and thinkers together to inspire each other and audiences in an extensive programme of public events.

Discussion, performance, and interactive events have become prominent features of the Festival, complementing the more traditional interview-style conversations and readings, and contributing to the Book Festival's reputation as a powerful forum for the public to exchange views with writers and experts on a wide range of issues: social, ethical and political as well as literary and cultural. At the heart of the Book Festival's activity is an integrated approach to creative learning and education, with the aim of expanding participation in democratic discussion, fostering a love of reading and developing engaged, knowledgeable audiences of all ages and backgrounds.

The Book Festival's children's programme of author events, activities and workshops is produced for young audiences of all ages, from babies to teenagers, attracting family audiences of around 20,000 each year. In addition, an extensive school's programme is created for primary and secondary pupils, with around 14,000 school children attending each year. Following an award from players of People's Postcode Lottery, the Book Festival expanded its activities to deliver a wide-ranging community programme. A series of live-literature events, artist residencies and mini-festivals is created year-round, taking the Book Festival on the road around the country to inspire and entertain people in many different communities, including Scottish prisons.

Since 1983, the Edinburgh International Book Festival has grown to stage over 900 events every August, attracting around 250,000 visits, making it the largest public celebration of the written word in the world. Up until 2020, the Book Festival took place in a specially built tented Festival Village in Charlotte Square Gardens, in the heart of Edinburgh.

With the global pandemic the world changed. As a small agile festival operation, the Edinburgh International Book Festival responded swiftly to the changing environment by staging a fully digital Book Festival in August 2020. With little experience, the Festival team boldly embarked on creating a new interactive online environment, where authors came together in 147 live and pre-recorded events. Real-time chatrooms, live author Q&As and book signings created a lively online forum where people gathered, and authors interacted with their audience. Most importantly, conversation and the exchange of ideas were able to continue. The new digital format was enthusiastically received, and many thousands of people tuned in and chatted with each other from countries across the world.

Building on the success of 2020's fully online Festival, 2021 opened up a new chapter: a long-term strategic partnership with the University of Edinburgh. This partnership has enabled the Book Festival to present a hybrid festival from a new central location at the Edinburgh College of Art and offers the opportunity to further develop the hybrid model. The range of distinctive indoor spaces and the grassy outdoor courtyard offers the Book Festival the facilities to build broadcasting studios for digital events and a range of flexible spaces for audiences to enjoy live and screened events in-person.

Prior to the pandemic, the Edinburgh International Book Festival's annual turnover was around £4.2 million, with under 20% of the income coming from Creative Scotland and the City of Edinburgh Council to support core operations. The remainder was raised through ticket sales, the sales of books through the Book Festival's highly successful independent bookshops, corporate sponsorship, grants from trusts and foundations, and donations from individuals. Due to the impact of Covid, the hybrid 2021 Edinburgh International Book Festival was designed to have smaller audiences and ticket sales. As a result of the planned reduction in scale, budgeted turnover for 2021 was just over £3 million. In 2022 the Book Festival plans to expand the scale of the site and programme, with plans place to attract more people to the site to enjoy events. Income will continue to be derived from a blend of public and private sources to maintain the Festival's long-held, robust financial position.

The Edinburgh International Book Festival is a founder member of Festivals Edinburgh, the organisation created by Edinburgh's 11 major Festivals to support joint strategic development and maintain the position of Edinburgh's festivals as global leaders.

The role

Our Authors' Yurt provides a private space for authors to meet fellow participants, relax and prepare for their events. Hospitality staff are responsible for ensuring that authors remember their time in Edinburgh for a warm welcome, relaxed atmosphere and efficient service.

The Authors' Yurt Managers work on a shift basis to ensure the Yurt is presentable and secure at all times, managing a team of Author Hospitality staff, handling author queries and complaints and liaising with the Programme Team to ensure efficient delivery of the Festival.

Key duties and responsibilities

Pre-Festival duties:

- Planning Yurt staff training and checking rotas
- Preparing and familiarising themselves and the Yurt staff team with the daily runsheets

- Carrying out training with Author Hospitality Assistants
- Liaising with Book Festival staff and on-site catering to order supplies
- Coordinating final preparation and setup of the Yurt prior to opening

During the Festival:

- Overseeing the opening and preparation of the Yurt each morning, and ensuring that it is properly cleaned, secured and closed each night (in line with the rota)
- Managing Yurt staff, including monitoring performance, appearance and timekeeping. Dealing with minor disciplinary matters promptly and reporting more serious concerns to management
- Monitoring the Yurt and outside hospitality areas to ensure that they are kept clean, tidy, safe and fully stocked with relevant supplies such as refreshments and welcome packs
- Maintaining a welcoming, calm and professional atmosphere inside the Yurt and liaising with other departments to ensure efficient delivery of the Festival and a memorable experience for authors, chair people and guests
- Liaising with on-site catering to ensure refreshments are fully stocked daily and provide feedback when necessary
- Dealing with author queries and complaints and elevating issues to Programme Team in a timely and professional manner
- Representing the department at daily staff meetings
- Checking staff timesheets and providing relevant information to payroll department on a timely basis
- Completing staff appraisal reports post-Festival

Person specification

Successful candidates will possess the following:

- Customer-facing experience
- High standards of presentation, commitment and responsibility
- Confidence when dealing with the public, guests & high-profile figures
- Outstanding customer service and communication skills
- An enthusiastic personality and a flexible, positive attitude
- The ability to work as part of a team
- Experience of managing other members of staff, team rotas and delivering the required training
- Experience of working in an environment providing catering for large numbers of guests

Additional qualities which may be useful include:

- Experience or an understanding of live literature or festival organisations

Terms and conditions

The post is currently based at 121 George Street in Edinburgh before the Festival and at the Festival site at the Edinburgh College of Art during August.

Authors Yurt Manager are required to work an average of 38-48 hours per week (6 days out of 7), on a shift basis, between Monday and Sunday. Morning shifts will start at 08:30 and evening shifts finish at 23:00. Rotas will be issued in advance of the Festival but may be subject to change.

Wages are paid weekly in arrears by bank transfer.

We are committed to making the Book Festival as accessible as possible to customers, participants, sponsors and staff. If you have any specific access requirements or concerns, please let us know and we will do our best to meet your needs.

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 Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion.

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

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** and **a covering letter** addressed to Katie Roberts. Your letter should outline your suitability for the post, why you wish to work at the Book Festival and highlight your significant skills and experience. You may include any other information to support your application.

If the job description doesn't answer your questions, please contact Katie Roberts via jobs@edbookfest.co.uk

Closing date for applications: 12 noon on 31 May

Interviews: 7 & 8 June

The Edinburgh International Book Festival Ltd has its registered office at 121 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 4YN and is a company limited by guarantee (no SC079939) with charitable status (SC010120)