

Edinburgh communities are ready for Fringe Days Out

The Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society and Lothian have launched the 2019 Fringe Days Out scheme, providing Fringe vouchers and Lothian bus tickets to community groups and charities across Edinburgh.

31 community groups and charities will participate in the initiative this year including Sikh Sanjog, Pilmeny Youth, Lothian Autistic Society, WHALE Arts, Contact the Elderly, SCOREscotland, Dads Rock and Capability Scotland. The Fringe Days Out scheme works with participating organisations to reach those who might not have experienced the Fringe before and to ensure the path is made easy for groups and individuals to attend.

The 2019 initiative was launched at community arts centre Out of the Blue, one of the scheme's participating charities which works to provide affordable spaces, resources, projects and opportunities for the residents of Edinburgh to be creative. The Society was delighted to announce that an extra £10,000 of ticket and bus vouchers will be added to the Fringe Days Out scheme this year, enabling up to 700 more people to access the Fringe.

Staff and volunteers from each of the 31 charities and community groups were at the launch event, leading workshops on how to make the most out of the Fringe. Guests were also treated to a performance from Ritti Soncco, an aerial silks performer who trains at Out of the Blue.



Since the scheme began in 2017, an estimated 5,594 people have been given the opportunity to use Fringe Days Out vouchers, a significant proportion of whom have never experienced the Fringe before. The Fringe Society is committed to working with the same group of partners for at least the next four years and aims to double the value of the scheme from £50,000 in 2018 to £100,000 in 2022.

Shona McCarthy, Chief Executive of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society, said: "I am thrilled to announce the continuation of our Fringe Days Out initiative today and see new community groups and charities joining the scheme.

"At the heart of the Fringe is the idea that everyone is welcome and that the arts are for the many not the few.

"Alongside our 31 partners, we are very proud that Fringe Days Out has offered thousands of people from across the city the chance to experience the Fringe for the very first time, on their terms. We are committed to growing the scheme over the next few years and to working hand in hand with communities

across

Edinburgh to bring the Fringe and the arts closer to home.”

Trishna Singh OBE, Director at Sikh Sanjog, said: “We were delighted to be approached by the Fringe Society in 2017 to be part of the ‘Fringe Days Out’ scheme. It is important for people to understand that when you do not think something reflects your life it will always be for ‘other’ people.

Even although we are into the fourth and fifth generations of Black Asian Minority people being born in the UK and have straddled two cultures, we still want to see things that represent our cross cultural lives. Fringe Days Out gives us an opportunity to experience the delights of the Fringe on our own terms. We will continue to support Fringe Days Out and Community Engagement programmes to ensure that all the citizens of Edinburgh have equal access to the Fringe.”

Gaynor Marshall, Communications Director for Lothian, said: “Lothian is proud to be a part of the community and we are delighted to be partnering with Edinburgh Festival Fringe to support Fringe Days Out again this year. This joint project will allow families the opportunity to enjoy all the Fringe has to offer with free travel to and from festival venues across our city.”

This year’s Fringe Days Out initiative continues the strong partnership between the Fringe Society and Lothian, which began in 2014 and helps make the Fringe as accessible as possible to Edinburgh residents and Fringe visitors alike.

The Fringe Society are also grateful to CityFibre who have come on board as a new sponsor for 2019, contributing towards Fringe vouchers and transport with the aim of increasing connectivity between residents of Edinburgh through

the Festival and the social experiences around it.

Through the Scottish Government and City of Edinburgh Council Platforms for Creative Excellence (PLACE) funding, The Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society has employed a full-time Community Engagement Officer to support the development of the scheme and foster relationships and partnerships between community groups. The Society has also established a Community Engagement, Access and Learning team which is working to ensure the Fringe is welcoming to everyone, while also providing year-round opportunities for local communities.