

New festival puts deaf arts and culture centre stage

Events designed to welcome deaf and hearing audiences.

Edinburgh Deaf Festival will bring a whole new artistic and cultural experience to deaf and hearing audiences in August.

It offers everything from drama, comedy and cabaret to magic, tours and exhibitions.

One highlight will be a five hour Deaf Rave in an underground car park in St James Quarter. The clubbing event will feature a host of DJs including DJ Chinaman, MC Geezer, DJ Ceri Karma, Jia McKenzie and Billy Reid along with dance acts, signing singers and rappers.

Unique in Scotland, the festival will run from 12-19 August, and celebrates deaf culture, language and heritage – things that Edinburgh has in abundance.

The event is organised by Deaf Action, the first deaf organisation in the world. They were founded in the city in 1835 and has been based in Albany Street (where many of the festival events will take place) since 1889.



Little boy on blue background in coat with drop shapes and cloud

Highlights will include:

- *Perspectives with Gavin:* International standup Gavin Lilley shares his experiences as a deaf person navigating a hearing world.
- *SPILL YOUR DRINK:* Deaf cabaret from Glasgow's Solar Bear theatre company which works with deaf and hearing performers.
- *The Funny Punny Magic Show:* with Tricky Ricky.
- *Once Upon A Raindrop:* Cheerful, funny, magic show for toddlers with sensory games and magic tricks.

There will also be a deaf history exhibition, screenings, workshops and more – for more information head over to Edinburgh Deaf Festival's [website](#)

Hopes are high that it will become an annual event

Philip Gerard, Deaf Action CEO, said: "As a deaf BSL user my overriding memory of the Fringe is one of feeling overwhelmed, but wanting to be part of it all. We wanted to change this.

"So we've created a week of deaf culturally-specific events alongside an accessible festival season. Deaf culture has a proud place in Scotland in terms of language, history and heritage. It's right that Edinburgh should celebrate, promote and raise the visibility of deaf culture and awareness of deaf issues.

"We want deaf visitors to the festival to be able to go to a performance with an interpreter or captions in the morning, watch a deaf artist in the afternoon, and socialise in the deaf bar in the evening. The best of both worlds.

We want integration alongside a cultural celebration, drawing the deaf community into the other festivals.

"This is reciprocated for festival goers who aren't deaf, who can book to see deaf performers and be transported to a deaf world for an immersive experience."



Jamie Rea, Shona McCarthy Fringe Society CEO and Philip Gerard all using BSL

The Edinburgh Deaf Festival has been set up and run in close collaboration with the Fringe Society.

Shona McCarthy, Fringe Society CEO, said: “We’re proud to be associated with the first deaf festival in Scotland. It’s amazing to see Deaf Action, and the all the community, come together to create such a comprehensive programme.

“I think this is something that’s going to continue and I hope it becomes an annual addition to the festivals landscape.”

Performances will include a mix of deaf and hearing artists, and where appropriate will be interpreted and captioned.

The festival will also feature activities as part of Scotland’s Year of Stories 2022, which spotlights, celebrate and promotes the wealth of deaf-led stories inspired by, written, or created in Scotland.

- See <https://edinburghdeaffestival.co.uk>

▪ Tickets <https://www.edfringe.com>

