

# Youth hostelling for Gen Z

**The organisation behind one of Scotland's booming travel trends wants to recruit Gen Z board members – to help “put the youth back into hostelling”.**

Hostelling Scotland has said it wants to capitalise on a recent surge in interest amongst Gen Z travellers and make hostelling “even more appealing to future generations”.

Each year, more than 350,000 people visit the 29 youth hostels and 24 affiliate hostels located around Scotland, generating more than £9 million in turnover for the not-for-profit charity and contributing £25 million to the economy.

Hostelling Scotland said interest has soared among 18-24 year olds since the Covid-19 pandemic, signalling a “revitalised hunger for affordable, social travel options”.

They say the 18-24 year old age group – part of the Gen Z cohort born between 1997 and 2012 also known as “Zoomers” – is narrowly behind only the 25-34 age group.

Hostelling Scotland now wants to appoint three volunteer “adventure curators” to its board of 12 trustees, to help improve its offering for younger people even further.

Crucially, the appointments would also improve the charity's efforts “to communicate and connect with Gen Z travellers”.



Margo Paterson, CEO of Hostelling Scotland

Margo Paterson, CEO of Hostelling Scotland, said: “We want our board to reflect the communities we serve.

“Young people bring fresh perspectives, creativity, and energy, and a more representative board will help us evolve.

“This is a great opportunity to develop leadership skills, gain governance experience, and shape the future of sustainable travel in Scotland.”

The role involves attending four to five board meetings per year, with some in person, and participating in a sub-committee.

Applications are invited from individuals “passionate about sustainable travel and community”.

No previous board experience is required, and successful applicants are offered training in charity governance, finance, and strategic leadership.

Hostelling Scotland was founded in 1931, as the Scottish Youth Hostel Association. The charity was rebranded as Hostelling Scotland in 2018 and is now one of Scotland's leading accommodation providers.

The hostelling experience is very different from that of almost a century ago. An image change in recent years has been driven by a programme of modernisation in the face of a more competitive market amid the rise of budget hotels and short-term lets.

As the tourism industry bounces back following the pandemic, young travellers have responded to new-look hostels with high-quality facilities including private en-suite rooms and stylish communal spaces.

Sophie Bell, 28, who joined Hostelling Scotland's board in 2018, said: "Hostelling is hugely popular among young people across Europe, but in Scotland, it's often seen as outdated or only for the countryside.

"The reality is very different – modern hostels have great facilities, private rooms, and are in cities as well as rural areas.

"The biggest challenge is awareness. More young voices on the board will help shape the way we reach Gen Z, whether through social media, influencers, or other modern approaches."







Sophie Bell board member