

Director of Programming & Engagement

Candidate Information Pack
June 2026



A WELCOME FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in the position of Director of Programming & Engagement with the Dunard Centre.

This is an extraordinary moment in the life of the organisation. As Edinburgh's first purpose-built concert hall in more than a century – and the first Nagata Acoustics hall anywhere in the UK – the Dunard Centre is one of the most significant cultural developments the city has seen in generations, with an ambition to create something genuinely world-class that is deeply rooted in the life of the city, local region and its communities. This intimate 1,000-seater space will be home to a diverse programme encompassing classical, pop, rock, folk, jazz, comedy and spoken word, drawing international artists from across the globe, and championing local talent.

With construction now underway, the Dunard Centre is moving rapidly from vision to reality. So it is a pivotal time to be appointing a Director of Programming & Engagement, who will not only ensure that our programme is truly imaginative and diverse, but that learning and community initiatives are intertwined with our programming strategy from the very start. This will be a senior role at the centre of the organisation, and one that I expect to be built on a close, creative and highly collaborative working relationship. Together, we will shape the artistic identity of the Dunard Centre, developing a bold, world-class programme, building lasting partnerships, and ensuring that our belief that everything is engagement is embedded in the venue from the outset.

We are looking for someone with the imagination, leadership and energy to help define what this building will mean to artists, audiences, young people and communities across Edinburgh, Scotland and beyond. It is a rare opportunity to create something lasting, meaningful and inspiring from the very beginning.

Thank you again for your interest in joining us at this exciting stage. I very much look forward to receiving your application.

Warm regards,



Jo Buckley

Chief Executive
The Dunard Centre

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ABOUT THE DUNARD CENTRE

Located in the heart of Edinburgh's New Town, the Dunard Centre will be Edinburgh's first purpose-built concert hall for more than a century.

Designed by David Chipperfield Architects with Reich and Hall Architects, and leading Japanese firm Nagata Acoustics, this all-purpose performance venue will have at its heart a world-class auditorium that champions the very best in live performance across all genres, and ensures everyone can be part of it. Our ambition is to create an open and welcoming space for life-enhancing and life-changing experiences, crossing generations and communities.

This landmark building will become home to the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, and a new venue for the Edinburgh International Festival. It will be a vibrant, creative hub that teems

with life all day, matching the vibrancy and diversity of three weeks in August in a year-round offer.

Designed to slot into a bustling city centre site fringed by heritage buildings, its 1,000-seat auditorium, café, bars, workshop rooms and recording facilities will host a diverse programme that combines classical, pop, rock, folk, jazz, spoken word and electronica. Its innovative and wide-reaching community engagement programme will connect artists, audiences and communities in year-round opportunities for lifelong learning.

The Dunard Centre benefits from the generous support of the Dunard Fund – a long-term funder of the arts and music in Scotland – and is the cultural centrepiece of the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal, a transformative partnership between the UK and Scottish governments and Edinburgh City Council. Through the support of Royal Bank of Scotland, the Dunard Centre will be built in the heart of Edinburgh, behind and directly

connected to the Bank's historic registered office at 36 St Andrew Square.

Having broken ground in December 2025, the Dunard Centre is now at the start of a four-year construction period. The new Director of Programming & Engagement would therefore be joining the project at a pivotal moment as this long-awaited prospect becomes a reality.



OUR MISSION

- To deliver a **world-leading** concert hall that champions the very best in live performance across all genres, and invites everyone to be part of it;
- To reflect the hall's world-class acoustics and exceptional design in a programme that is **bold, ambitious and courageous**, as international as it is anchored in the hall's Scottish roots;
- To be **people-centred** from back office to front of house, creating an open and welcoming space for life-enhancing and life-changing experiences, crossing generations and communities;
- To develop a vibrant, creative hub that is anchored in **partnerships**, connections and lifelong learning;
- To embed **sustainability** in everything that we do, ensuring the hall's place in a thriving and climate-conscious cultural economy for generations to come;
- To become an **outward-looking** centre whose reach far transcends its physical space.



Our team

A list of our team can be found [here](#).

A list of our Trustees and Committee members can be found [here](#).

OUR VISION & VALUES

To create a 'Hall for All', a world-class concert hall in the heart of Edinburgh: a creative, collaborative space that hums with activity all day every day, bringing exceptional live music to everyone.

Excellence & Ambition

This Nagata-designed hall brings their unmatched acoustic pedigree to the UK for the first time, creating a resource not just for Scotland but for the whole nation. It will foreground and celebrate the best in live performance across all art forms and develop a space which offers life-changing experiences that cannot be found elsewhere. In curating a programme that is vibrant, diverse, ambitious and unparalleled, it will invest in the future, inspiring, nurturing and developing new generations, through a hall that has been gifted to them for life.



Inclusivity

The Dunard Centre offers a rare opportunity to create a welcoming, inclusive and creative artistic hub at the heart of Edinburgh, an intimate and accessible space that is open to all and which actively seeks out new listeners, a building which teems with life every day. It will democratise and demystify the arts, without ever swerving from its mission to champion and foster excellence.

Lifelong Learning

The Dunard Centre will be a site for formative artistic experiences and will support its local communities — as well as those further afield — on their lifelong artistic journeys. The inclusive nature of the Dunard Centre will create a pathway to a lifetime of creativity and collaboration across all parts of society. Everyone will be welcomed wholeheartedly into this unique, collaborative space, and encouraged to experiment and explore.



Partnerships

Partnerships will be the cornerstone of our mission, actively seeking more joined up provision across the cultural sector and, in turn, transforming the cultural landscape into one that is more active, more equal, and ultimately more powerful. These partnerships will underpin the development of a bold, courageous and creative hub, one which brings together existing initiatives and sparks innovative new ideas through close collaboration. Together, we will advocate for and strengthen the message around the vital part that culture plays in society.

Sustainability

The Dunard Centre will be a beacon for sustainable working. Its ambition to become a zero-carbon building within a decade of its opening will underpin all areas of its activity and become a proactive mindset. From reusable coffee cups to renewable energy, no aspect of the Dunard Centre will be too large or too small to be considered in meeting our targets. The location could not be better placed to speak to this, with an adjacent tram stop, nearby local and national bus services and Waverley Station within 5-minutes walking distance. Our aim is to become a leading example of what a green hall can be.

ABOUT THE ROLE

Title

Director of Programming and Engagement

Reporting to

Chief Executive

Line management for

Programme Manager (to be appointed)

Engagement Manager (to be appointed)

The Dunard Centre is a once-in-a-century building, and this is a unique opportunity to shape its programming, both on and off the stage. Our vision is to create a 'Hall for All', and to do this by building our learning, community and education initiatives into our programming from the outset. Everything is engagement, and everyone is our audience.

The Director of Programming & Engagement will work with the Chief Executive to develop the Dunard Centre's long-term artistic strategy, ensuring that the charity meets its ambitions to be a truly inclusive, accessible and welcoming creative hub that is home to a wide spectrum of genres and a broad cross-section of the local, national and international communities. We are looking for a creative and strategic leader, who is passionate about the impact that our work can have on the lives of young people, emerging artists, audiences, and the wider community.

Joining the Dunard Centre during its capital phase, you will help to build the partnerships and networks that will allow the venue to thrive, and to implement an ambitious and imaginative programming strategy that matches the world-class nature of the facilities.



RESPONSIBILITIES

Strategy

- Working closely with the Chief Executive, lead the Dunard Centre's artistic planning both within and outwith the venue itself, developing a programme that is exceptional in its quality, breadth and ambition
- Develop and deliver the Dunard Centre's programming and engagement strategies, working with the Chief Executive and Artistic Advisory committee to meet the organisation's ambitions and values
- Embed the belief that 'everything is engagement' across the artistic programme, ensuring that learning, community and education initiatives are integrated into the performance programme, and that neither is subservient to the other
- Work closely with a range of contacts including agents, artists, orchestras, bands, conductors, composers, speakers, publishers and guest curators to create a world-leading artistic programme that spans all genres, including classical, folk, pop, rock, jazz, comedy and spoken word
- Identify and implement new ways of working with local and touring artists, promoters and partner organisations, to maximise the impact of their work and ensure that the benefits are far-reaching
- Work with our Founding Partners (the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and Edinburgh International Festival) to develop the detail of their annual residencies, ensuring these partnerships are embedded within the fabric of the year-round programme
- Identify and develop collaborations with other artists, curators, promoters and organisations to ensure the Dunard Centre's vision to be a 'Hall for All' is met
- Take the lead in developing new ideas and concepts for discrete series, festivals and strands, developing relationships with guest curators
- Oversee community and local stakeholder relationships to enable appropriate stakeholder involvement and co-creation in the development of community engagement programmes
- Take a highly strategic approach to growing the programme through audience analysis, minimising dark days and ensuring a breadth of genres across the year
- Develop initiatives to ensure that new and emerging talent is supported and championed across the artistic programme
- Work with strategic partners to develop innovative skills pathway initiatives for young people and under-represented groups in the cultural sector
- Use and grow an understanding of both the local and national context in which the Dunard Centre is situated, and ensure that policy developments are built into the programming and engagement strategies

Management & Oversight

- Discuss and negotiate repertoire and programmes with artists, agents, orchestras, bands, conductors, and soloists, including casting of soloists and guest artists where appropriate
- Once recruited, provide strong leadership to the Programme Manager and Engagement Manager (direct reports) as they implement the programming model, ensuring that the Dunard Centre's programming offer reflects the highest international standards and maximises audience attendance and earned income
- Work closely with the Programme Manager and Engagement Manager to ensure sufficient administrative processes are in place to manage projects, ensuring all projects are feasible and appropriately resourced
- Oversee the recruitment of freelance artists, workshop leaders and creatives to support the delivery of specific programmes and initiatives
- Manage the development and performance of the Programme team through coaching, mentoring, and peer support, promoting a trusting and fair working environment, inspiring individuals to give their best and ensuring effective performance against measurable goals

Planning & Reporting

- Work with the Finance Director to develop Programming and Engagement budgets, meeting regularly to review and monitor outturn positions and forecasts
- Work with other members of the senior management team to develop initiatives that grow and sustain a diverse audience, ensuring that the Dunard Centre's targets for impact and revenue generation are met
- Work with the Development team to provide programming information to support funding applications and reports to funders according to application timescales
- Work with the Head of Facilities & Operations to ensure that all events comply with relevant health and safety requirements in line with organisational policies
- Work closely with the Marketing department to ensure an integrated approach to growing audiences in line with strategy, including the promotion of the programme through all marketing channels
- Work with the Finance Director to oversee and deliver contracts and commercial agreements in a timely manner
- Work with the Head of Facilities & Operations to maximise occupancy, while balancing commercial imperatives with artistic ambition

Other

- Attend conferences, events and performances both nationally and internationally, as appropriate, to support the understanding and development of the Dunard Centre's creative vision and be an outward-facing advocate for the venue
- Support the Chief Executive and Chair to coordinate the meetings of the Artistic Advisory Committee, regularly reporting to them and working collaboratively with them to develop strategic programming initiatives for the venue
- Act as the organisation's Designated Safeguarding lead, ensuring safeguarding practices are embedded throughout the programme to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults
- Attend Board of Trustees meetings as a member of the senior management team and produce reports and presentations for trustees as required
- Undertake any other duties as directed by the Chief Executive



PERSON SPECIFICATION

Essential skills and experience

- Significant senior managerial experience in a public performance venue, festival or concert hall
- Significant strategic programming experience with a strong knowledge of music
- Experience of creating and/or delivering community and participation projects, including those aimed at supporting young people and talent development
- Strong understanding of concert and event production and the management of delivery teams
- Strong network of contacts across the music and educational sectors nationally and internationally
- Experience of leading a team of direct reports
- Experience of developing and managing positive external organisational relationships
- Experience of developing large-scale strategies for cultural organisations
- Financial acumen, with experience of managing complex budgets
- Experience of working with charity boards and/or governing groups within organisations
- Energetic and personable approach to team working, able to cultivate great working relationships with musicians, colleagues, and a wide range of external partners
- Awareness of all responsibilities that must be addressed when coordinating activities involving children and vulnerable adults

Desirable experience

- Understanding and experience of developing Safeguarding policies and procedures
- Experience of interacting with the press and public relations teams
- Experience of developing new systems and processes for a developing organisation

Personal attributes

- Exceptional inter-personal and leadership skills
- Proactive, solutions-driven approach to challenges
- Entrepreneurial, with the ability to balance artistic priorities with commercial returns
- Strong commitment to improving Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the cultural sector
- Excellent negotiation skills
- Excellent organisation and time management skills, including the ability to prioritise effectively, multi-task and adapt to changing circumstances
- Ability to work with a team to meet shared objectives
- Ability to motivate and lead a team to ensure effective performance against goals, promoting the organisation's values and passing on skills and knowledge where possible
- Flexibility to work evenings and weekends when required, according to event schedules



TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT

- Permanent, full-time contract (40 hours per week inclusive of paid lunch breaks)
- Salary: c. £60,000 FTE per annum
- Statutory pension contributions (4% of salary)
- 33 days paid holidays per year, inclusive of five observed statutory holidays
- Hybrid working
- Employee Assistance Programme

It is expected that the successful candidate will be based in Scotland and will work primarily from the Dunard Centre office at 35 St Andrew Square, Edinburgh EH2 2AD. However, the Dunard Centre operates a flexible working policy, and flexible working arrangements will be considered for the right candidate. A time off in lieu (TOIL) policy is also in place at the Dunard Centre for all employees.

Once the Dunard Centre opens, your role will require you to work flexibly to complete your duties, and you may, from time to time, be required to work alternative or additional days (including evenings, weekends and bank holidays) to meet the requirements of your role. These hours will be agreed in advance between yourself and your line manager in accordance with the requirements of the Dunard Centre.



HOW TO APPLY



The Dunard Centre has engaged Perrett Laver to support the recruitment to this post. The closing date for applications is:

9am BST on Monday 22nd June 2026.

For more information and to apply, please visit the Perrett Laver website, quoting reference **8459**:

plusportal.perrettlaver.com/



For an informal discussion about the role, please contact Samuel Head on:

Samuel.Head@perrettlaver.com

If you require any reasonable adjustments to assist you in the selection process, please advise us of these so that we can make appropriate arrangements.

If you would like us to make adjustments during the application process, please contact Esther Elbro at the following email address:

Esther.Elbro@perrettlaver.com

If you have comments that would support us to improve access to documentation, or our application process more generally, please do not hesitate to contact us via the following email address:

accessibility@perrettlaver.com

Privacy Policy

Protecting your personal data is of the utmost importance to Perrett Laver and we take this responsibility very seriously. Any information obtained by our trading divisions is held and processed in accordance with the relevant data protection legislation. The data you provide us with is securely stored on our computerised database and transferred to our clients for the purposes of presenting you as a candidate and/or considering your suitability for a role you have registered interest in.

As defined under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) Perrett Laver is a Data Controller and a Data Processor, and our legal basis for processing your personal data is 'Legitimate Interests'. You have the right to object to us processing your data in this way. For more information about this, your rights, and our approach to Data Protection and Privacy, please visit our website at: perrettlaver.com/privacy-policy/.

Equal opportunities

The Dunard Centre is committed to equality and encourages you to apply no matter your age, caring responsibilities, disability, gender, gender identity, marriage and civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity status, race, religion or beliefs, or sexual orientation. The Dunard Centre welcomes candidates from all backgrounds and from all sectors, and is particularly committed to supporting applications from individuals from backgrounds or social groups that are currently underrepresented in the creative industries.

Closing date for applications:

Monday 22 June 2026 at 9am BST



FOR MUSIC. FOR EVERYONE.

Image credits

P1: Anna Calvi - Eoin Carey for Edinburgh International Festival

P3, 16: David Chipperfield Architects

P4: Andy Smith

P6: Pekka Kuusisto - Christopher Bowen for Scottish Chamber Orchestra

P5, P11, P14: Scottish Chamber Orchestra

P7: Sally Jubb for NYCOS, Andrew Perry For Edinburgh International Festival, Sandy Butler for Scottish Chamber Orchestra

P8: Ayanna Witter-Johnson - Jess Shurte for Edinburgh International Festival

P13: Youssou N'Dour - Mihaela Bodlovic for Edinburgh International Festival

**DUNARD
FUND**



 Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

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DEAL
Edinburgh
& South East
Scotland

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of Scotland

 EDINBURGH
THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

This ambitious venue has been made possible by substantial philanthropic donations, including the visionary support of Dunard Fund, a long term funder of the arts and music in Scotland. This project is supported by the Edinburgh & South East Scotland City Region Deal.

IMPACT Scotland is a charity registered in Scotland no: SC046904.