

Festival Director

Scottish International Storytelling Festival

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TRACS (Traditional Arts and Culture Scotland)

Registered Office: Scottish Storytelling Centre, 43-45 High Street, Edinburgh, EH1 1SR
 Scottish Charity No. SC043009 VAT Registration No. 269 2679 51

1. Introduction

Thank you for your interest in the role of Festival Director for the Scottish International Storytelling Festival (SISF).

Founded in 1989 under the aegis of the Scottish Storytelling Centre and the Scottish Storytelling Forum, SISF is the world's largest celebration of storytelling, anchored in Scotland, a nation of storytellers.

SISF showcases the work of Scotland's storytellers through international collaborations, new and developing work, along with spotlights on intangible cultural heritage and linguistic diversity.

Now organised by TRACS (Traditional Arts and Culture Scotland), SISF takes place in October each year, offering a vibrant programme of live performances, workshops, gatherings, talks and family events in Edinburgh and nationwide.

As part of the Festivals Edinburgh cohort, the Festival's reach is international, national and local. It is recognised as a world-leading platform for storytelling and traditional arts, and as the shop window for Scotland's year round storytelling activities.

2. Job Overview

Reporting to the TRACS CEO, the SISF Festival Director plays a crucial leadership role, steering and supporting the planning, programming, delivery, evaluation and reporting of the Scottish International Storytelling Festival.

At a pivotal moment of change with the retirement of the founding Director, the new Festival Director will be responsible not only for the successful delivery of the Festival, but also for ensuring its vigorous and viable future through the formulation of a robust strategic plan, the development of a strong core operational team, and assisting with securing additional streams of funding.

3. Job Information

Job Title	Festival Director
Employer	TRACS (Traditional Arts and Culture Scotland)
Hours	1.0 FTE (35 hours, 5 days per week), with the option for 0.8 FTE (28 hours, 4 days per week) by negotiation
Contract	Fixed term, 12 months, with option to extend for a further year subject to confirmation of funding
Salary	£42,000 (£33,600 for 0.8 FTE)
Location	TRACS office at the Scottish Storytelling Centre, Edinburgh
Holiday Entitlement	33 days inclusive of public holidays (26.4 for 0.8 FTE)
Overtime	No overtime is payable, but will be given as time off in lieu, in line with TRACS policy.
Travel	National and international travel will be necessary to the development of this role, with all travel expenses fully reimbursed.
Pension	Auto-enrolment pension scheme with NOW: Pensions; contribution set at 4.5% for both employer and employee (9% total)
Probationary period	12 weeks
References	All offers of employment are subject to satisfactory references and enrolment in the PVG scheme if required.

4. About TRACS

TRACS (Traditional Arts and Culture Scotland) is a co-operative network which champions our shared traditions of music, song, storytelling, dance, crafts, customs and Scotland's languages.

Bringing together three artform forums - Traditional Music Forum of Scotland, Scottish Storytelling Forum, Traditional Dance Forum of Scotland - TRACS exists to empower communities across Scotland to discover, develop and practise their unique traditional arts and heritage as part of our everyday life.

The Scottish Storytelling Forum (SSF) was founded in 1992 to encourage and support the telling and sharing of stories amongst all age groups and all sectors of society, particularly those who, for reasons of poverty or disability, are sometimes excluded from artistic experiences.

TRACS is an accredited Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) advisor to UNESCO on [Intangible Cultural Heritage \(ICH\)](#), and a founding member of the ICH Scotland Partnership. Together we celebrate the local distinctiveness of Scotland's places: our shared living heritage.

TRACS is also part of the City of Edinburgh's Strategic Partnership for Literature and Creative Scotland's Traditional Arts Working Group.

TRACS is supported by Creative Scotland through Multi-Year Funding, and the City of Edinburgh Council's revenue grant scheme.

4.1. TRACS, SISF, and the Scottish Storytelling Centre

SISF falls under the overall remit of the TRACS CEO, but has its own Festival Director and dedicated team (see ['Staffing'](#) below).

The core programme of SISF is delivered in Edinburgh at the Scottish Storytelling Centre on the historic Royal Mile, which houses a 99-seater basement theatre, a flexible ground-floor Storytelling Court, and more intimate first-floor Library space. TRACS' own headquarters occupies a suite of three offices on the Centre's second floor.

SISF's national programme encompasses *Story Ripple*, developed with SSF and the Storytelling Development Officer, and *Go Local*, delivered with partners, regional festivals, and venues nationwide, continuing into November

5. Festival Director: Job Purpose

To programme and manage the delivery of the Scottish International Storytelling Festival, ensuring a vibrant, high-quality programme of world-class storytelling, grounded in our rich oral traditions.

The new Festival Director will be joining the TRACS team at a pivotal moment in SISF's history and in a climate of ongoing change and adaptation within the Scottish festival sector. As well as providing **creative vision**, they will need to hit the ground running, engaging proactively with a range of stakeholders to address three key operational areas: **strategy, funding** and **staffing**.

5.1. Creative Vision

The Scottish International Storytelling Festival (SISF) stands at a unique moment in its journey — deeply rooted in Scotland's renowned oral traditions, yet carrying a growing responsibility to demonstrate the universal power of storytelling in a fast-changing world. With the retirement of the Festival's founding Director after the 2025 event, the change in leadership offers the opportunity for a refreshed creative vision.

The new Festival Director will provide leadership and artistic inspiration to build on SISF's established reputation as a meeting place for tradition bearers, emerging voices, and international artists, ensuring it continues to celebrate Scotland's storytelling traditions while creating opportunities for renewal, innovation, artistic exploration, and reaching new audiences.

As the Festival enters its next chapter, the new Director's vision will build on decades of excellence while addressing the challenges of the future. The Scottish International Storytelling Festival will continue to embrace tradition and evolution, highlighting Scotland as a creative nation rooted in its living heritage yet open to the world.

5.2. Strategic Development

The TRACS Business Plan 2025-28, of which SISF is a significant strand, formed the basis of TRACS' Multi-Year Funding award from Creative Scotland, totalling £1.75m over three years. TRACS works to support, celebrate and advocate for the traditional arts in Scotland as a part of everyday life. We see SISF as a key method of safeguarding the tradition of oral storytelling - the key aim of the Scottish Storytelling Forum - in line with the UNESCO Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage, for which TRACS is an accredited NGO advisor.

To support the TRACS Business Plan implementation, the new Festival Director will develop a bespoke business plan for SISF, mapping out its creative and operational future as a key part of TRACS' activities.

In addition, we expect the new Festival Director to work with the SSF to continue integrating and showcasing the work of the Forum, its Directory Members and its Apprentices.

5.3. Funding

Diversifying the Festival's funding model is key to its long term sustainability. The successful candidate will be expected to work closely with the TRACS CEO to research and pursue opportunities for additional funding from new sources, including sponsorship and philanthropy.

SISF is part of the [Festivals Edinburgh](#) strategic grouping and has been a regular recipient of funding from the Scottish Government EXPO Fund as well as the PlaCE (Platforms for Creative Excellence) programme.

These schemes have now evolved into the [Expanded Festivals Fund](#) initiated by the Scottish Government and delivered by Creative Scotland for programmes of activity between 1 May 2026 and 31 December 2027.

Since application deadlines will have passed by the time the new Director is in post, applications for the 2026 and 2027 festivals will be prepared and submitted by the outgoing Director, the TRACS' CEO and the Festival team, with sufficient flexibility built in to support the new Director's creative vision.

5.4. Staffing

Presently, SISF is run by a small team comprising staff drawn from across TRACS, the Scottish Storytelling Forum (SSF) through the Storytelling Development Officer, the Scottish Storytelling Centre (SSC), and freelancers, each with their own specialised areas of knowledge and expertise. The wider SSC team also plays a significant role in the delivery of the Festival, including box office and front of house responsibilities. The new Festival Director will work with the TRACS CEO to reassess the Festival's staffing requirements to ensure the staffing model is operationally sound, financially viable and fit for purpose.

6. Who we're looking for

The Festival Director will

- be a strong advocate for oral storytelling in Scotland as a key component of Scotland's thriving traditional arts sector.
- have significant experience within Scotland's arts and culture sector, with a clear commitment to fostering creative excellence, encouraging participation, and promoting cultural collaboration.
- be a proven leader with a strong track record in successfully curating and delivering diverse arts or cultural programmes.
- have a keen understanding and appreciation of Scotland's traditional arts and cultural heritage, and be open to working collaboratively across artforms.
- have demonstrable experience in project management, business planning, and partnership development.
- be able to inspire and motivate a team to deliver a refreshed creative vision for SISF and contribute to the wider success of Scotland's traditional arts sector.
- ensure SISF continues to support the aims and objectives of the Scottish Storytelling Forum.
- be a strong addition to the TRACS team, contributing to our overall charitable purposes in serving the networks of traditional artists and communities across Scotland

7. Key Duties and Responsibilities

While it is understood that not all of the following will apply to the first 12 months of the post, these areas describe the overall responsibilities of the role.

7.1. Strategy and Leadership

- Lead on a refreshed strategy, business plan and vision for SISF, in collaboration with the TRACS CEO and senior team.
- Be an ambassador locally, nationally and internationally for SISF, and the wider work of TRACS.
- Establish proactive collaborative relationships with sector colleagues and fellow festivals within Scotland.
- Develop and strengthen the profile of emerging and established traditional artists in Scotland, including regular engagement with those on the Scottish Storytelling Forum's Storytelling Directory and development programmes.
- Develop collaborative connections with international partners, and in the wider UK, to promote artistic and cultural exchange.

7.2. Finance and Funding

- Work with the TRACS CEO to agree, manage and monitor relevant Festival-related budgets.
- Support the Festival team to ensure work is delivered within agreed budgets.
- Ensure fees, terms and conditions and contracting of artists and practitioners are in line with sector standards, adhering to TRACS employment policies and the Fair Work Convention.
- Help to secure appropriate sources of funding and/or sponsorship nationally and internationally to support and develop the Festival.

7.3. Operational

- Review the festival team in collaboration with the TRACS CEO to ensure the operational needs of the festival are met and staff roles and responsibilities are clearly defined across the team.
- Manage and chair SISF team meetings.
- Support individual team members as necessary while ensuring good cross-team communications.
- Provide and present written reports as required, including attending TRACS board meetings periodically to update trustees.
- Be a spokesperson for the Festival (e.g. media interviews, Festival launch).

- Liaise regularly with the Scottish Storytelling Forum on its ongoing projects and initiatives.
- Represent SISF with public agencies and partners and attend relevant Festivals Edinburgh meetings.
- Contribute to funding applications as required.
- Contribute to and oversee Festival evaluation and reporting to funders.
- Be responsible for organising travel and accommodation, in consultation with the TRACS Finance and Admin team.

7.4. Planning and Programming

- Programme the annual Scottish International Storytelling Festival, engaging a range of artists and practitioners from Scotland and across the world to enhance the profile of traditional oral storytelling both in Scotland and globally.
- Work with the Festival team to deliver the Festival to the highest standards of production, delivery and performance.
- Ensure SISF programming represents the world around us, underpinned by a strongly inclusive approach reflecting lived experiences, including Scotland's indigenous languages.
- Ensure programming choices support the aims of TRACS and sector policies on Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion.
- Highlight and celebrate the significant contribution of Scotland's Nacken / Traveller communities to maintaining the storytelling tradition.
- Develop the Festival's growing BSL strand and foster greater inclusion of people with physical, sensory or learning disabilities.
- Work with the CEO to ensure TRACS' broader aims are encapsulated and celebrated throughout the Festival, with the principles of the UNESCO Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage at its heart.
- Identify international elements of the programme suitable for onward touring within Scotland and the wider UK, to maximise their reach and reduce the environmental impact of international engagement.
- Attend other national and international festivals and events to stay abreast of the global storytelling scene and identify new and emerging artists and trends.

8. Person Specification

Essential	Desirable
Qualifications	
Undergraduate degree or equivalent level of professional experience commensurate with the requirements of the job	
Knowledge and Experience	
- Experience of successfully curating an international arts programme at a recognised festival or venue - Proven project management experience, including business planning, budget setting, financial management, evaluation and reporting - Effective management and development of stakeholder relationships to deliver agreed outcomes	- Highly desirable: in-depth knowledge and experience of traditional and contemporary oral storytelling - Knowledge of the wider traditional arts scene in Scotland - Knowledge of the UNESCO Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage
Skills and Competencies	
- Ability to balance artistic vision with logistical and financial realities - Excellent verbal and written communication skills - Inspiring and confident public speaker, with experience of speaking to the media - Excellent organisational and administrative abilities - Strong IT skills with standard office packages, cloud workspaces (e.g. Google) and digital filing systems - Ability to manage own time and resources to achieve deadlines	Abilities in Scots and/or Gaelic

Essential	Desirable
Personal Qualities	
• Vision and ambition for SISF and the future of storytelling in Scotland • A commitment to the traditional arts in Scotland • Personal and professional integrity and trustworthiness • Personal alignment with our values and charitable objectives • People person with the ability to build working relationships quickly and constructively • Team player, with the desire to work and thrive in a mutually supportive and collaborative environment	

9. How to Apply

9.1. Covering Letter

Your covering letter should be a maximum of two pages of A4 and consider the following questions:

- Why are you applying for this role and what makes it right for you, and you right for it?
- How would you ensure the festival is grounded in traditional oral storytelling while fostering innovation and evolution, inspiring the next generation of storytellers?
- How would you ensure your programme reflects the diversity of storytelling voices and perspectives from Scotland and beyond? How would you make the programming process inclusive, and how has this been reflected in your previous work?

We are looking for answers in the form of evidence from your professional experience, referring to the criteria in the Person Specification.

9.2. CV

Please also submit a CV to further illustrate how you meet all or most of the essential experience, skills and personal attributes. CVs should be a maximum of three pages and contain relevant references who we can contact in the event of you being offered the role.

If you have any questions about any aspect of the role or application, or if you are unsure about your experience in particular areas, you can contact TRACS' CEO Steve Byrne steve@tracscotland.org to discuss this in confidence.

9.3. Essential dates and how to submit

- **Recruitment Start Date:** Tuesday 21st October
- **Application Deadline: 9am on Monday 1st December 2025**
- Interviews: w/c 8th December with potential second interview w/c 15th December
- Please send your application - covering letter and CV - by email to: recruitment@tracscotland.org

9.4. Shortlisting and interview process

If you are shortlisted, you will be notified by no later than **Thursday 4th December** and invited to take part in the interview process. Information on the interview panel will be provided at that point along with any guidance on the format of the interview itself.

Unsuccessful interview candidates will be offered feedback if requested.

9.5. Offer of employment

All offers of employment at TRACS are made subject to receipt of satisfactory references. Under the Asylum and Immigration Act we are required to check that anyone taking up employment with us has the legal right to work in the UK. If you currently do not have the legal right to work in the UK, employment would be dependent on a successful application to the Skilled Worker Visa, with TRACS as your sponsor.

9.6. Equalities, diversity and inclusion

TRACS is committed to representing the diverse range of voices who make up Scotland today.

As part of our commitment to increase the diversity of our workforce, we provide a guaranteed interview to applicants who meet all or most of the essential requirements for this job who are Deaf, living with hearing loss and/or disabled, or those who are black or global majority.

9.7. Equal Opportunities Monitoring

After submitting your application, please fill out our anonymous [Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion form](#). This allows us to understand if our vacancies are accessible to, and being applied for by, people from diverse backgrounds.

This includes not discriminating under the Equality Act 2010 and building an accurate picture of the make-up of the workforce in encouraging equality and diversity.

9.8. Fair Work Statement

TRACS is an accredited Living Wage Employer. We are committed to embedding the five dimensions of the Fair Work Framework throughout our organisational processes, programming, and advocacy work.

9.9. Flexible working

We will consider flexible approaches to working for all shortlisted candidates. If you are invited to interview, you will have the opportunity to ask us to consider a flexible arrangement. While this post is offered at 1.0 FTE, we anticipate that applications may come from active practitioners who may not wish to take on a full-time role. Therefore we are open to discussion around the potential for a 0.8 FTE post.

9.10. Data protection

- Information provided by you as part of your application will be used in accordance with TRACS Data Privacy Policy and in the recruitment process only.
- Any data about you will be held securely with access restricted to those involved in dealing with your application and in the recruitment process.
- Once this process is completed the data relating to unsuccessful applicants will be stored for a maximum of 12 months, so we could contact you if an appropriate position became available, and then securely destroyed.
- If you are the successful candidate, your application form will be retained and form the basis of your personnel record.

- Information provided by you on the equal opportunities monitoring form will be used to monitor TRACS' equal opportunities practices.
- By submitting your completed application form you are giving your consent to your data being stored and processed for the purposes of the recruitment process, equal opportunities monitoring and your personnel record if you are the successful candidate.
- Personal data will be managed in compliance with article 5 of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

We wish you all the best with your application.