

DURHAM FRINGE FESTIVAL

2025 FEEDBACK & EVALUATION



This report is a summary of data and feedback from Durham Fringe Festival (DFF) 2025 which took place over five days in July (Wednesday 23rd - Sunday 27th). This was the fifth year of the Durham Fringe, and some information in this report offers a comparison to previous years of delivery.

HOW WE PROGRAMME

DFF has an established artist/performer selection process that was again followed in 2025. Our festival is 'curated' meaning shows must apply and be selected to perform. Selection is informed by a jury of festival representatives who review each application.

Applications opened for performers in January 2025, with a six-week window to apply. A jury of 24 individuals were asked to score applications whilst considering the following question:

'How confident are you that the applicant will deliver a show of good quality, that will entertain, challenge or inform those that might seek out or try this genre.'

Applications were scored between 1 (lowest) and 5 (highest). Once applications closed, shows for consideration were sorted by genre, with the highest scoring shows sitting at the top of the pile.

Programming was based on the jury's score, with a consideration to offer audiences a balance of performing arts genres. In 2025, the genres were: theatre, stand-up comedy, magic, comedy theatre, music, spoken word, dance & physical theatre, cabaret, circus, and children & youth.

105
SHOWS

254
PERFORMANCES

491
PERFORMERS

9,000
TICKETS SOLD

SHOWS & PERFORMANCES 2021 - 2025

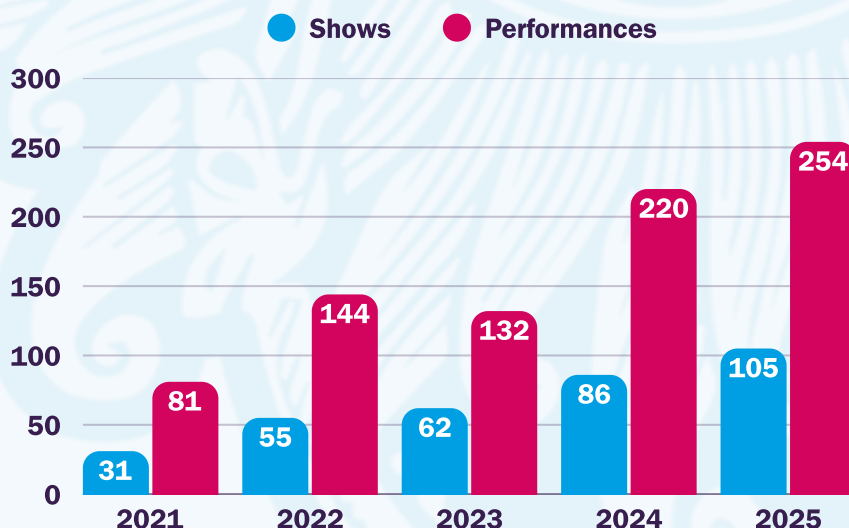


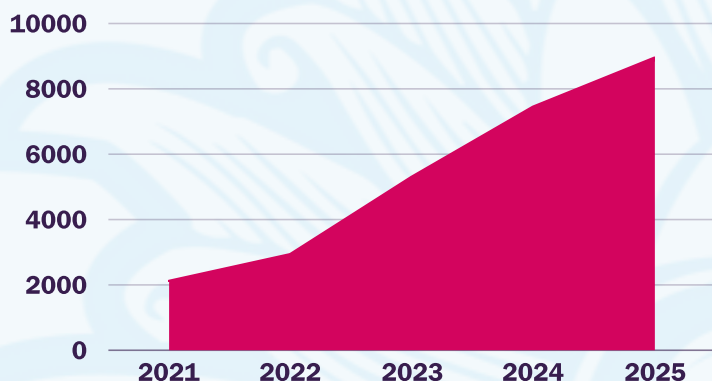
PHOTO: RICHARD EYERS

MARKETING

We invest resource into marketing the festival as a whole and urge performers to publicise their own shows. Our focus is to raise awareness of the DFF brand. This way, we feel we can shine a spotlight on the programme as a whole.

In 2025, we offered performers marketing tips and advice via weekly email bulletins and through a performer section on our website. This contained information about local press and tips about what worked at previous events.

TICKET SALES 2021 - 2025



PERFORMER FEEDBACK:
“Publicity a bit better this year but still lots of local people not aware of the event.”

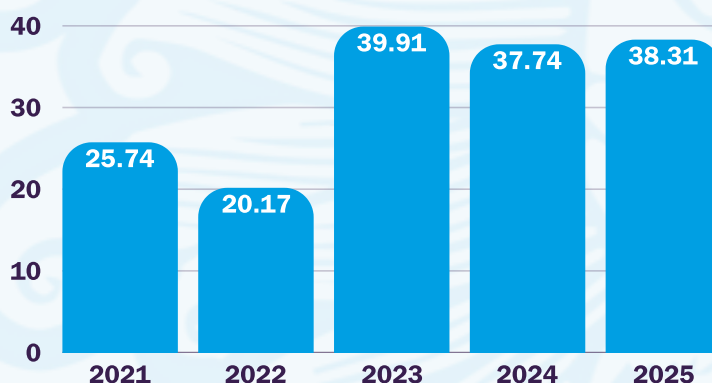
We received organic coverage in local news including BBC online, Northern Echo, NARC Magazine, NE Volume and Crack Magazine but chose not to invest in paid print media placements.

We instead invested in social media ads, a paid influencer feature, and printed banners, posters and leaflets. We also produced 10,000 printed programmes that featured a bio about each show, along with other essential information.

During the festival week, we were featured on ITV News twice (Wednesday and Saturday). This included interviews with our Festival Director and one of our performers.

We invited writers from Fringe Review and Broadway Baby, two online outlets which published a number of reviews during the festival.

% OF AVAILABLE TICKETS SOLD



SALES BY WEEK (7 DAY PERIOD)

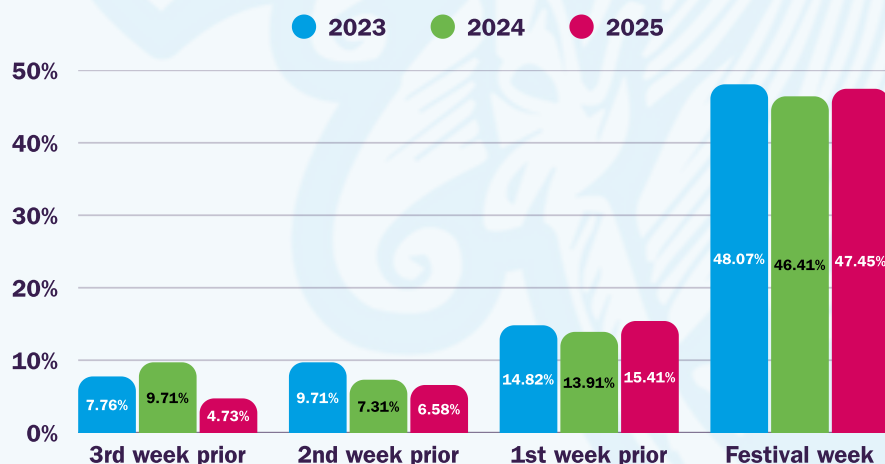


PHOTO: JOHN LYONS

2025 VENUES

We hosted a total of 10 performances spaces across Durham City Centre, including a large outdoor stage on Palace Green which was complimented by a small number of local food and drinks traders.

DFF is able to operate across a significant number of venues thanks to an incredible team of volunteers, with each site managed by a lead volunteer (Site Lead).



PALACE GREEN



**SIR THOMAS ALLEN
ASSEMBLY ROOMS THEATRE**



CITY THEATRE



FABIO'S



CAFEDRAL



**FONTEYN BALLROOM
(DURHAM SU)**



**VANE TEMPEST
(DURHAM SU)**

SITE LEAD FEEDBACK

Site Lead feedback is essential, as they offer us a crucial 'boots-on-the-ground' perspective of the event. Here are their key points about DFF 2025:

- Volunteers were excellent
- Performers consistently offered good feedback
- Site leads recognised returning customers from previous years
- Difficulties with internet access at several venues put pressure on box office
- Accessibility is a challenge in a number of venues
- Pre-event communication could have been delivered sooner

NEW VENUES FOR 2025

This was the first year we took residency in Durham University's Department of Music building and Gala Theatre's Studio.

DURHAM CASTLE

We also collaborated with Durham Castle and Beamish Museum who hosted a one-day event in the Castle's grounds.



GALA THEATRE'S STUDIO

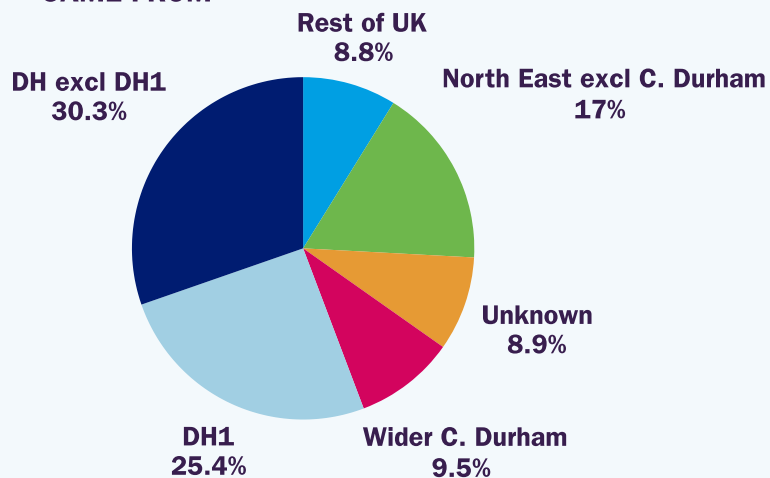


DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

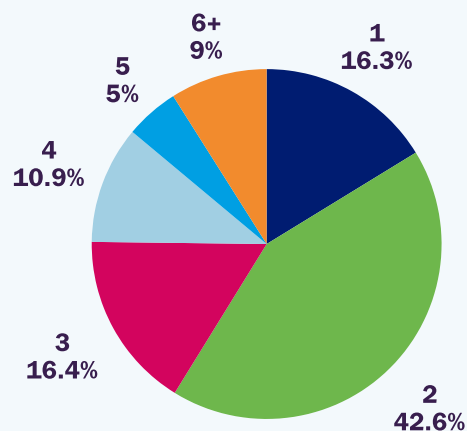


2025 AUDIENCES

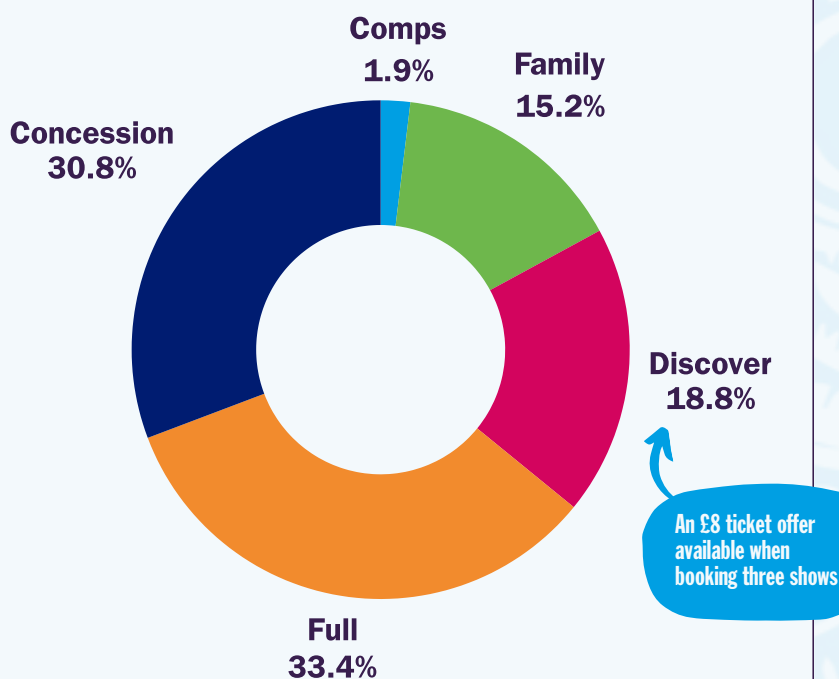
WHERE THEY CAME FROM



GROUP SIZE

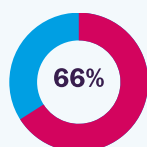


SALES BY TICKET TYPE

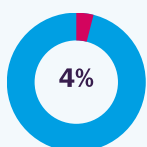


AUDIENCE SURVEY QUESTION:

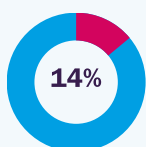
WHAT DO YOU THINK OF OUR TICKET PRICE?



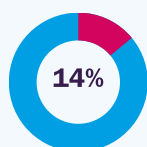
Fair/just right



Too expensive



Too cheap



I'd pay more for headliners

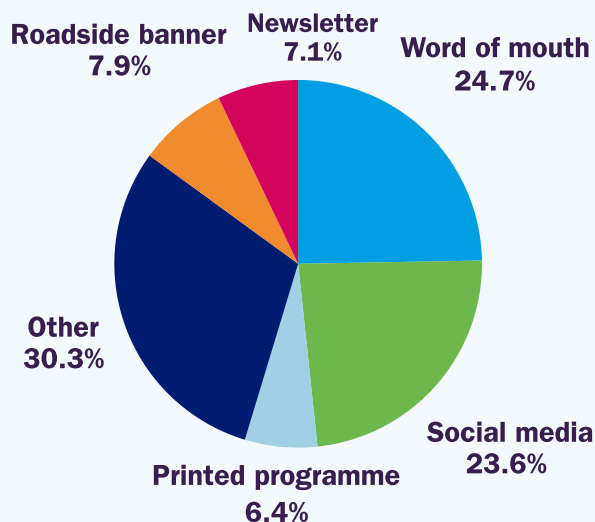


AUDIENCE FEEDBACK:
"It felt like Edinburgh
Fringe for first time in
my hometown"

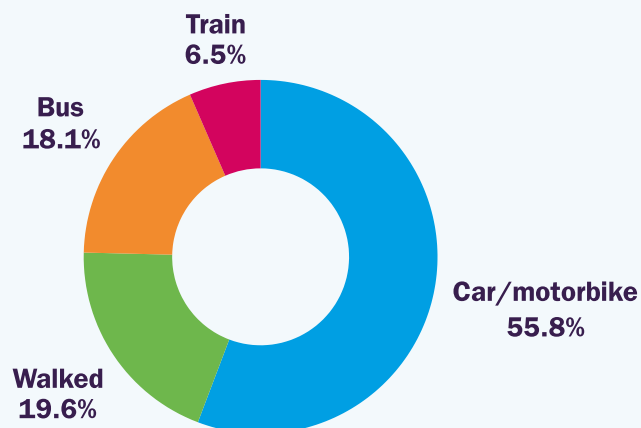
PHOTO: RICHARD EYERS

AUDIENCE SURVEY RESULTS

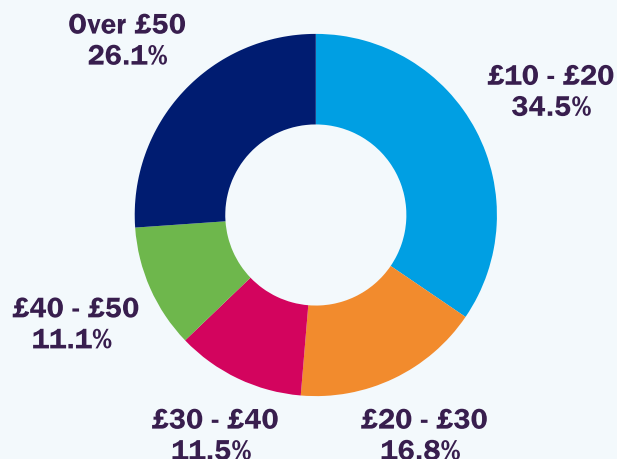
HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT DFF?



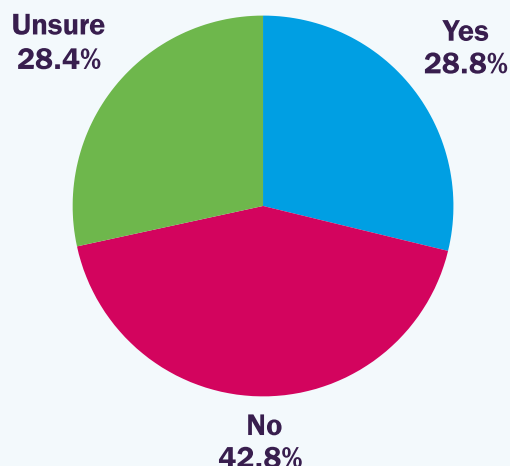
HOW DID YOU TRAVEL?



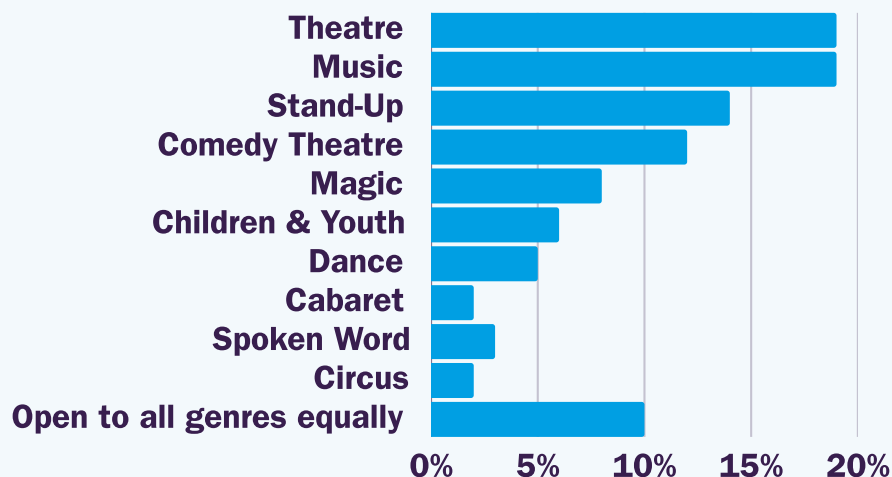
HOW MUCH DID YOU SPEND AT LOCAL BUSINESSES?



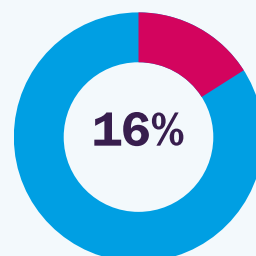
DOES COUNTY DURHAM/NORTH EAST ENGLAND HAVE ENOUGH PERFORMING ARTS ON OFFER?



WHAT GENRES ARE YOU INTERESTED IN?



DID YOU STAY IN DURHAM OVERNIGHT?



97%
WOULD RECOMMEND
DURHAM FRINGE TO
OTHERS

AUDIENCE FEEDBACK:

"Lovely theatre I'd never been to before despite growing up in Durham"



PHOTO: RICHARD EYERS

OUR VOLUNTEERS

94

General

21

Technicians

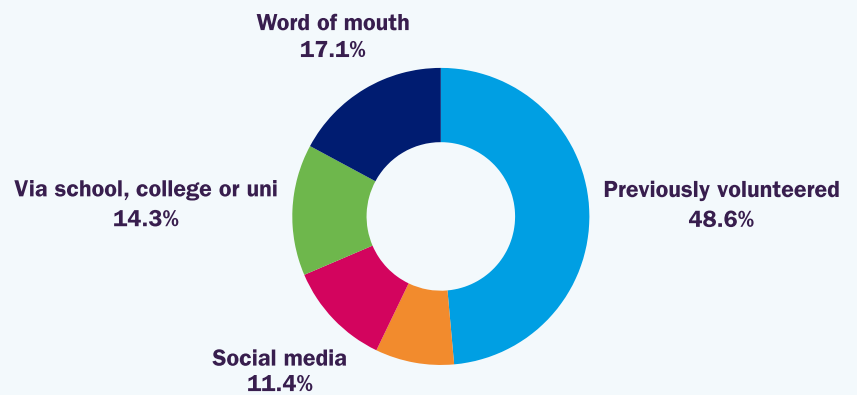
Aged 14* - 72

*under 16s accompanied by guardian

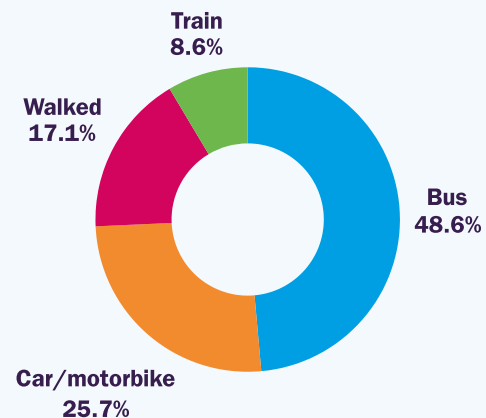


PHOTO: RICHARD EYERS

HOW DID THEY FIND OUT ABOUT VOLUNTEERING WITH DURHAM FRINGE?



HOW DID THEY TRAVEL TO THE FESTIVAL?



TOP FOUR BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING (ACCORDING TO OUR VOLUNTEERS)

1 Opportunity to socialise & meet new people

2 Supporting a project I value

3 Being an active member of the community

4 Watching shows for free

56% STATED A CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS VOLUNTEERING EXPENSES SUCH AS TRAVEL WAS ESSENTIAL OR VERY HELPFUL

VOLUNTEER FEEDBACK:

"It was great to get to meet other volunteers and performers, as well as getting to know more about the behind the scenes work that goes into organizing the event."

"I enjoy feeling useful and doing something that is both enjoyable but feels like it makes a difference."

100%
WOULD RECOMMEND
VOLUNTEERING WITH
DURHAM FRINGE



VOLUNTEER TECHNICIAN FEEDBACK:

"The variety of things I got the chance to do was amazing. I spent the week rigging lights, figuring out how to get a wardrobe up a flight of stairs, helping to keep the Pageant Wagon rolling; loads of other things. I met some of the loveliest and most interesting people, and I can't wait to work with them again next year."

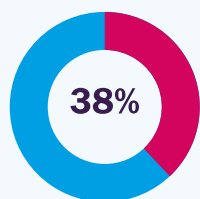
PHOTOS: RICHARD EYERS



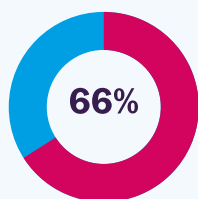
OUR PERFORMERS

Edinburgh Fringe also charge £1.25 booking fee per ticket ?

PREVIOUS FRINGE EXPERIENCE

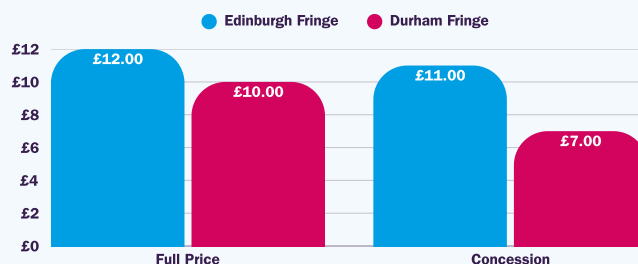


had previously performed at other fringe festivals



had previously performed at Durham Fringe

FRINGE FESTIVAL PRICE COMPARISON SAME SHOW AT EDINBURGH VS DURHAM



TOP SIX BENEFITS OF DURHAM FRINGE (ACCORDING TO OUR PERFORMERS)

- 1** Gaining experience performing at festivals
- 2** Space to try out new & developing work
- 3** Performing in Durham
- 4** Meeting other performers & developing a network
- 5** Career development
- 6** Generating income

WHAT WOULD PERFORMERS LIKE SUPPORT WITH IF THEY PERFORM AGAIN?

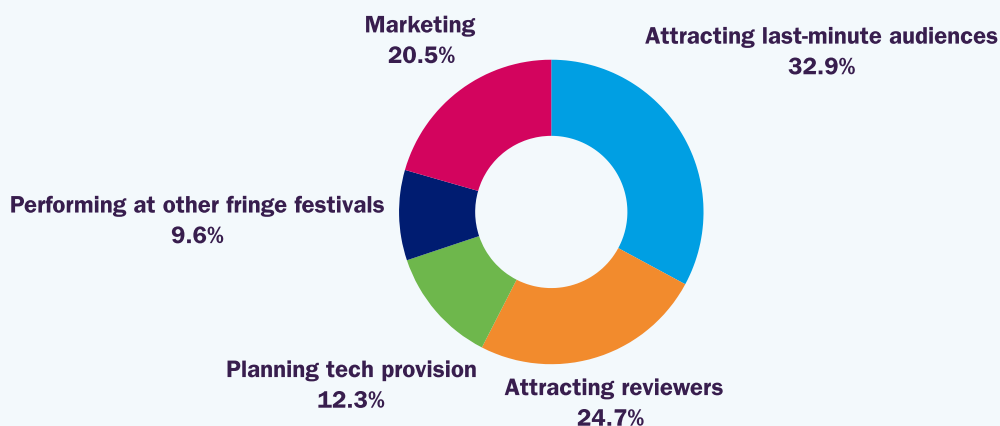


PHOTO: JOHN LYONS

PERFORMER FEEDBACK:

"I would like to say that's possibly the best Fringe experience we've ever had - and we've been doing them for nearly 10 years."

durhamfringe.co.uk

PERFORMER FEEDBACK:

"I was very impressed by the volunteers,. They were all very helpful and engaged and made us feel really welcome. The [technicians] were very professional and involved in our plays which gave us a great sense of security while performing. Felt like a team."



PHOTO: JOHN LYONS

PERFORMERS RATE THEIR EXPERIENCE IN 2025

	5/5	4/5	3/5	2/5	1/5
Pre-festival communication	50%	44%	6%		
During and post-festival communications	50%	41%	9%		
Venue facilities	41%	38%	19%		3%
Allocation of Get in / Get out time	44%	34%	19%		3%
Tech Rehearsal	47%	25%	19%	9%	
Fringe staff / volunteers	78%	13%	9%		
Eventotron (online application system)	50%	34%	6%	3%	6%
Ticket prices	50%	41%	6%	3%	
Share of ticket sales	56%	44%			
Marketing	47%	41%	6%	3%	3%
Overall experience at Durham Fringe	53%	47%			

PARTNERS, FUNDERS & SPONSORS

DURHAM FRINGE 2025 WAS MADE POSSIBLE THANKS TO THE SUPPORT OF

