

National Centre for Music



Recruitment Pack

Community Engagement Officer

Key Information

JOB TITLE	Community Engagement Officer
CONTRACT	Fixed term for four years, with the possibility of extension
SALARY	£30,000 per annum
HOURS	Full time
LOCATION	Hybrid (at least 2 days/week in offices in central Edinburgh initially, increasing when the Centre opens)
REPORTS TO	Director of Partnerships
START DATE	April 2026, or earlier if possible
BENEFITS	Auto-enrolment pension 31 days annual leave inclusive of public holidays



ABOUT THE NATIONAL CENTRE FOR MUSIC



The National Centre for Music (NCM) is a new charitable organisation which will take up home within and operate the iconic old Royal High School on Calton Hill, Edinburgh. Offering new mid-scale performance and rehearsal spaces, practice rooms, a recording studio, co-working and creative office space, events and conferencing facilities, a cafe and bar, and two acres of flower-filled landscaped gardens - the first public city centre gardens to be opened in Edinburgh in 200 years – the centre will become an iconic destination and a place where Scotland’s musical history is made.

NCM aims to gather, nurture and celebrate all of Scotland’s musical ecosystem – providing opportunities and pathways for people to participate in, perform or soak up and enjoy music making of all genres. We will both showcase Scotland’s musical heritage and support the creation of music that will inspire people for centuries to come.

We have been founded to answer an incredible opportunity – the redevelopment of an iconic heritage location. This setting, its story and its connection with Scotland’s cultural history has influenced our founding ideas. This is a building where focused listening, learning and collaboration have always been at the centre of things, and soon it will be full of these once more – for everyone to explore.

ABOUT THIS ROLE

We are seeking to appoint a Community Engagement Officer to play a fundamental role in the delivery of an Activity Plan supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

This ambitious programme will ensure local communities feel welcome, engaged, and empowered to explore and shape what this new national cultural organisation could mean for them. The Community Engagement Officer will collaborate with diverse communities to explore the heritage associated with the project – architectural, natural and cultural – and, together with those communities, will develop projects that offer attractive, inclusive and accessible ways for local people and visitors to engage with this heritage.

The Community Engagement Officer will play a critical role in documenting the delivery and impact of these projects, and will feed into wider organisational development, particularly in bringing perspectives from different stakeholder groups right into the heart of our programming and activities.

You will be a key person in ensuring that everyone feels welcome at the National Centre for Music, whether they are coming for a cup of tea in the café, to explore the gardens, participate in one of the programmes or as an audience member. The role is a chance to contribute deeply to the creation of a welcoming iconic destination at the heart of Scotland's capital city that will fuel Scotland's cultural heritage and creativity for decades to come.

The role is initially a four-year fixed term post, directly linked to the funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. There is potential it will be extended or adapted, as the NCM Business Model and strategy develop past initial opening years. We're currently based in an office on George Street but, in the future, our home and offices will of course be in the iconic Royal High School building. Engagement activities will therefore initially take place in the community or alternative locations, before shifting to focus more on welcoming people into the National Centre for Music.

If you would like to speak to a member of our team prior to application, please get in touch to arrange a chat by emailing hello@ncmscotland.org.uk.

VISION

Reawakening a spectacular Scottish heritage site, the National Centre for Music will become an energising force in Scotland's music sector, and an iconic cultural destination. Through our programmes and partnerships, Scotland's musical communities will come together, music will change peoples' lives, and Scotland will stay firmly at the forefront of global musical boldness.

MISSION

To create a nurturing and inspiring environment where Scottish musical history is made.

VALUES

Every sound counts

The explosion of different types of musical approaches, genres and passions that exist here every day is what makes us special.

Curiosity fuels our creativity

Our quest to celebrate the richness of music making in Scotland will never be exhausted – we know there is always more to discover, and we take that challenge seriously.

Join the dots

We are an active connector - bringing different musical perspectives and knowledge together in respectful exchange for everyone's benefit.

Warm and welcoming

We may look grand on the outside, but as soon as you enter, you feel at home. Our spaces all have an uplifting atmosphere, and our friendly team ensure everyone can access, enjoy and participate fully in what we have to offer.

Building for the future

We are creating an organisation that will play a significant role in Scotland's cultural trajectory. People will start to rely on us, so we prioritise long-term resilience and put sustainability (in all its meanings) at the heart of our thinking, to ensure we become an organisation fit for the future.



RESPONSIBILITIES

The Community Engagement Officer will be responsible for delivering specific projects and opportunities within our Heritage Lottery-funded project, which has an emphasis on engaging new and diverse audiences with our site.

The role will nurture relationships with communities who we hope will go on to become long-term audiences, participants and partners for NCM. So, while the initial focus for the role will be on responding to community interests and needs around the heritage of the building and the landscaped gardens, consideration for how these will interface long-term with musical programming will be vital. The Activity Plan includes plans for a wide range of cross-cultural, community-led events and festivals, and we anticipate these will be a good opportunity to integrate with long-term programming structures.

Overall, the Community Engagement Officer will be developing activities which ensure communities are supported to feel a long-term sense of connection with the site, the project and each other.

Specific responsibilities include:

- To plan and deliver the community engagement opportunities as set out in the RHS/NCM National Lottery Heritage Fund funded Activity Plan , including but not limited to: community-led research; co-created events, festivals and creative outputs; and talks and tours.
- To develop and maintain positive productive relationships with individuals, communities and community organisations across Edinburgh, and specifically in Abbeyhill and Dumbiedykes., and to be a visible and approachable point of contact for those communities.
- To ensure all Activity Plan events and opportunities align with NCM's values - making everyone feel welcome and included - including through the coordination of access tools such as audio description, British Sign Language (BSL) or captioning, and the coordination of access support initiatives including transport support, alternative format materials and alternative format events. This work will integrate closely into NCM's wider approach to access and inclusion.
- To develop engagement opportunities (e.g. free events, touring events, digital opportunities) which extend beyond immediate partner community groups, to increase awareness of NCM within communities who often face barriers to live music, cultural participation and/or heritage engagement.
- As the centre prepares to open, to work closely with the Events Officer to develop, test and deliver events that are accessible for all, including working with people with dementia, carers and under 5s, people with additional support needs etc
- To work with colleagues and content creators to capture and record the delivery of the redevelopment, documenting and curating engaging stories, and supporting the sharing of these using digital media.
- To work with RHSPT-appointed Heritage Interpretation consultants to ensure community knowledge, needs, feedback, stories and creative outputs that are better understood or generated through the Activity Plan feed into Heritage Interpretation content and strategy.
- To work closely with colleagues on special projects with education partners (including pupils of the current Royal High School and universities / HE institutions) to co-create outputs which tell the heritage stories of the site in diverse and engaging ways

PERSON SPECIFICATION

We appreciate that everyone's career journey is different. We are not setting a specific number of years' experience, and we do not require specific formal qualifications. This is a key role delivering a significant programme from a major funder, so we want to see evidence that you have a strong eye for detail, experience in and passion for heritage engagement and community building, some budget management experience, and a personable nature that will make diverse stakeholders feel comfortable working with you.

Skills and Experience required for this role

- In-depth understanding of community engagement practice, whether gained through past roles or a qualification
- Working understanding of co-creation principles and practice
- Working understanding of audience engagement
- Working understanding of engagement with a music or live arts focus, and evidence of playing a key role in successful engagement projects with a focus on heritage, culture, music, horticulture or a related subject matter
- Experience in nurturing and developing positive relationships with diverse stakeholders, across a wide range of ages and demographic groups
- Experience in planning and delivering accessible and inclusive engagement projects, events, workshops or activities
- Demonstrable experience of working to a brief and delivering to a deadline
- Experience of working within a delegated budget, and of budget tracking
- Good working knowledge of IT/project management systems to manage information, data and project planning effectively

The following would also be an advantage:

- Experience Working on a National Lottery Heritage Fund Activity Plan or National Lottery Heritage Fund project
- Knowledge of Edinburgh and its communities
- Working understanding of volunteering practice
- Experience of contributing to communications and marketing outputs and/or working effectively with communications and marketing colleagues

The characteristics and knowledge of someone we think would flourish in this role

- A person-centred, friendly individual who gains trust quickly, and empowers those they work with
- A passion for engaging diverse audiences and communities with music, nature, heritage and/or culture
- An eye for identifying opportunities within a heritage asset and translating them into engaging and appropriate projects/activities, bringing things to life for different people in different ways
- An individual with a creative and flexible approach, who can cope with lots of stakeholders with lots of different perspectives, needs, time pressures and delivery styles
- Someone with a passion for access and inclusion
- Someone who takes collaborative approach to engagement practice and is confident in co-creation practices and sharing ownership
- Someone with exemplary communication skills who listens carefully, is sensitive to cultural differences, and can communicate verbally and in writing with a diverse range of people in a range of settings
- Someone who is comfortable multi-tasking, and who can prioritise using their own initiative, with excellent organisational skills
- Someone who works well in a team but can also work independently when required, and knows when each approach is appropriate

SOME BEHIND-THE-SCENES INFORMATION

In June 2025, the Royal High School Preservation Trust (RHSPT) was awarded funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) towards the redevelopment of the old Royal High School, on Calton Hill, Edinburgh, into a National Centre for Music (NCM).

Part of the £5m NLHF award was dedicated to the creation and delivery of an Activity Plan, to engage local communities, stakeholders, partners and audiences in this significant heritage story and destination, and its future. NCM – a separate charity to RHSPT – is now responsible for managing and implementing the Activity Plan, as it will be through NCM that the public engage with and discover the site and its heritage.

We recognise there are risks that come with a young organisation and we want to reassure candidates that we have secure finances, an experienced Board of Trustees, and appropriate HR, financial and governance structures and policies in place.

HOW TO APPLY

Please email hello@ncmscotland.org.uk with 'Community Engagement Officer' as your subject header, attaching:

- a copy of your CV
- a covering letter of not more than two A4 pages (or a short video or audio recording of not more than 7 minutes in length) outlining your motivations for applying, and why you think you would be a strong candidate for this position

CVs and Covering Letters will be anonymised before initial review by the shortlisting panel. As indicated above, if you do not feel comfortable sharing a written submission, we are also happy to accept video or audio recordings of a covering statement. If you choose to submit a recording, the shortlisting panel will hear your voice (and, if you submit a video, know what you look like) but will not have access to your name or personal details.

First interviews are expected to take place on Tuesday 3 March and can be done online or in person.

CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS 12 noon on Wednesday 18 February

For an informal conversation in advance of applying, or to ask any questions, please contact ben@ncmscotland.org.uk

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

We are committed to ensuring everyone has access to the same resources and opportunities in applying for this role. If you have any access requirements, or we can do anything to help you feel more supported in your application, please do not hesitate to contact us and we will make any reasonable adjustments we can.

To give everyone the best chance of demonstrating their suitability for the role, we will share the core interview questions a few days in advance of first interviews.



Using money raised by National Lottery players, The National Lottery Heritage Fund supports projects that connect people and communities with the UK's heritage. The 'Awakening Edinburgh's Architectural Masterpiece – A new Cultural and Environmental Destination' is made possible with The National Lottery Heritage Fund. Thanks to National Lottery players, we have been able to commence work transforming Edinburgh's iconic old Royal High School into a new National Centre for Music.

