



Scottish **Arts** Council

# Audience Development Strategy

2004-2007

# AUDIENCE

## Contents

Foreword	1
The Scottish Arts Council and audiences	2
Aims of the Strategy	4
Intended outcomes	5
Background to the Scottish Arts Council's audience development activity	7
The strategic context	9
Action Plan 2004-2007	10

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## Foreword

This document outlines the Scottish Arts Council's strategic approach to increasing the number and broadening the range of people who attend and participate in the arts in Scotland. Audience development was formally adopted as part of our portfolio of activity some five years ago, and we see the publication of this statement of intent as both the summation of work to date and an indication of our future priorities. It is the outcome of a considered period of consultation across all departments within the organisation and externally with arts organisations and individuals. We are very grateful for the input of everyone involved.

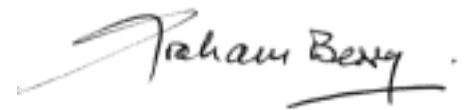
The arts and audiences are inextricably linked, and the Scottish Arts Council has worked with artists and organisations on this basis for many years. The launch of the National Lottery Fund in the mid-1990s, with its particular emphasis on public benefit, created a timely new resource to target existing and new audiences for a wide range of artistic activity with renewed vigour. This includes our work in social inclusion partnership areas, arts projects with children and young people across Scotland, extra support for volunteer promoters in rural areas, seed funding for artists and audiences from minority ethnic communities, and much more.

This Strategy focuses in particular on sustaining and increasing audiences by making sure that the artists and organisations we work with operate as effectively as they possibly can. We believe that dynamic marketing and audience development are crucial to realising arts organisations' overall aims and objectives, and we are committed to helping them achieve all this.

We will work with them on analysing attendances to ensure the best, and most creative, match between their ambitions and the most receptive audience. We will keep Scottish organisations up to date about models of good and innovative practice so they can communicate persuasively and appropriately with a wide range of people. We will support regional centres of audience development expertise, which can work directly with organisations and with the public to increase attendance and participation. Above all, we will ensure that an awareness of existing and potential audiences is part of each organisation's management thinking at the highest level.

By building on this solid business foundation in the long term, and by engaging with the broadest possible cross section of society in a range of different ways (programming, educational activity,

consultation, promotional campaigns), the Scottish Arts Council believes that arts organisations and artists will be able to maintain their relevance, their creative energy, and their exploration of excellence across all the artforms. And, above all, allow the people of Scotland to be confident and enthusiastic audiences for the arts.



Graham Berry  
Director

# The Scottish Arts Council and audiences

Developing audiences for the arts embraces a wide range of outcomes – from increasing the frequency of attendance by existing audiences, to attracting first timers and broadening the range of people who attend and participate.

The Scottish Arts Council recognises that developing audiences for the arts must be a priority across all artforms, whilst also being aware that increased attendance and participation are not the only appropriate measure of success for the artists and arts organisations we fund.

Our Audience Development Strategy is closely allied to our corporate commitment to increased accessibility to the arts for the broadest possible range of people. It also emphasises support for organisational and professional development in the short- to medium-term, in order to create a solid foundation for innovative campaigns and new ways of working in the longer term.

We see audience development as a planned and targeted management process which involves programming, education and

marketing (underpinned by research and evaluation) working together to deliver an organisation's overall objectives. Although crucial to delivering financial objectives, effective marketing and audience development also ensure that arts organisations continue to be relevant to all the different communities of interest they serve.

The Scottish Arts Council operates at arm's length from government and does not control specific programming choices directly. However, we are keen for arts organisations to take active measures which demonstrate that coherent presentation and programming policies are the cornerstones of effective audience development – delivering accessible entry points for first time attenders, and leading existing audiences to new levels of knowledge, understanding and enjoyment.

Our strategic focus will be on helping individual arts organisations to maximise attendance and participation, and thus grow the proportion of the overall population which engages with the arts.

We aim to achieve this by:

- funding and advocating models of effective practice
- commissioning and disseminating market intelligence
- encouraging individual organisations to apply an enhanced knowledge of existing and potential audiences to their strategic planning and decision-making
- increasing our investment in a network of regional support workers and agencies.

National Lottery funding has increased resources in some organisations, and has impacted across artforms. These projects have also increased our understanding of long-term audience development strategies and a customer-focused approach, as well as providing a starting point for sharing information with those responsible for arts marketing in Scotland.

This Strategy explains the mix of tactical and strategic activity required to deliver our audience development aims and objectives,

resourced cross-Council by a combination of central funds and lottery funds. Priority will be given to supporting our infrastructure of Core Funded Organisations, and the venues they operate in, by:

- monitoring attendance data
- advocating improved practice and increased resources, as well as the benefits of collaborative working
- ensuring easy access to strategic and tactical support, tailored to the distinctive needs of different regions and population centres
- funding for training and skills development
- co-ordinating market research
- nurturing an evidence-based and audience-focused management approach in arts organisations
- initiating and supporting audience development projects.

The Scottish Arts Council will support its Core Funded Organisations in setting appropriate annual targets for attendance and participation through our formal funding agreements. Some organisations are better placed than others to

deliver our audience development priorities, and we will work cross-Council to identify them and prioritise support accordingly.

Particular related issues and priorities emerge from the other Scottish Arts Council artform strategies and action plans for other areas, and are addressed within the audience development action plan. They are:

1. Our artform strategies and Corporate Plan make explicit our commitment to growing and increasing attendance and participation – through increased and targeted arts provision, through ensuring high artistic standards and production values, through education work, through specific audience development initiatives, and through funding strategies which encourage effective and innovative marketing approaches.
2. We are committed to working with distinct geographical communities and particular communities of interest across Scotland. We also prioritise taking active measures to support and increase

attendance and participation by children and young people, by minority ethnic groups, and by disabled people.

3. Our monitoring reports on new activities and in particular on new capital developments highlight the importance of audience-focused planning and management in ensuring long-term success and sustainability.
4. We are committed to working with our Core Funded Organisations and others to bridge the gap between the proportion of the population actually attending and the proportion of the population with a stated interest – for example, recent Scottish Arts Council commissioned research into visual arts attendance identifies this as 25% and 50% respectively of the adult Scottish population.<sup>1</sup>

It is crucial that the implementation of the audience development action plan is acknowledged as a shared corporate responsibility across all departments of the Scottish Arts Council, and resourced and supported accordingly.

<sup>1</sup> *Visual Arts Audiences in Scotland*, Interim Report, December 2002

## Aims of the Strategy

Two guiding principles inform our approach – empowering individual arts organisations to maximise audiences, and encouraging attendance and participation by as broad a range of people as possible.

Our specific aims are:

1. to nurture an audience-focused management culture in the Scottish Arts Council and in Scottish arts organisations.
2. to co-ordinate the provision of market intelligence for the Scottish Arts Council, and for Scottish arts organisations.
3. to support a Scotland-wide network of regional audience development workers and initiatives, in partnership with local authorities and others.
4. to increase the skills base and marketing resources available to Scottish arts organisations and arts marketers.
5. to maximise arts attendance and participation in Scotland.
6. to maintain a national overview of audience development activity in Scottish arts organisations.

Each of these aims is explored in detail in the action plan.

## Intended outcomes

The Strategy provides a framework for the delivery of a range of demonstrable outcomes over a three year development period. This framework is intended to ensure increased attendance and participation at Scottish Arts Council funded organisations by 2006/07.

### Outcome 1

Increased resources and skills base in funded organisations, supporting robust marketing and audience development planning that is closely allied to their organisational business plan:

- access to a pool of skilled professional marketers (staff and freelance)
- project funding for targeted campaigns
- access to opportunities for collaboration and joint campaigns when appropriate
- involvement in national campaigns targeting new audiences
- support in using new technology for sales and communications
- access to training for junior, middle and senior level staff.

### Outcome 2

An evidence-based management approach in arts organisations:

- ‘audience-focused’ management decisions based on up-to-date market intelligence
- competent data collection and analysis
- on-going evaluation against targets (numbers of attenders and participants, as well as customer profiles)
- setting appropriate targets, which also allow the Scottish Arts Council to measure the impact of its funding decisions and development work
- access to up-to-date information on customer profiles for different artforms
- access to robust information on proven barriers to attendance to ensure a realistic understanding of the opportunities for attracting new attenders.

### Outcome 3

#### Provision of a Scotland-wide arts marketing and audience development infrastructure:

- regional resources offering advice, market intelligence, campaigns and services at subsidised rates
- access to information on good practice and proven models from around the UK and beyond
- Scottish Arts Council commissioned guidance notes and publications
- funding partnerships with local authorities, the voluntary sector, and other umbrella bodies as appropriate.

### Outcome 4

#### Market development:

- increased attendance and participation (individuals)
- increased sales (volume)
- increased frequency of attendance and participation
- increase in the percentage of the overall population engaging with Scottish Arts Council funded organisations and projects
- increased attendance and participation by priority audiences (disabled people, minority ethnic communities, children and young people).

### Outcome 5

#### Embedding audiences and audience development within Scottish Arts Council planning and policy development:

- regularly updated audience development strategy to be cross-referenced with artform, other cross-Council strategies, and the corporate plan
- effective internal and external advocacy
- cross-Council access to regularly updated information on national patterns of (and barriers to) attendance and participation
- active engagement with audiences for national cultural initiatives and campaigns.

# Background to the Scottish Arts Council's audience development activity

Since the early 1980s, arts organisations and arts marketers in England and Wales have benefited from centrally-funded research and market intelligence, training, and networking initiatives, and from the services and support of regional marketing agencies.

Greater flexibility in the strategic application of lottery funds was introduced by central government in 1998, and the Scottish Arts Council took this as an opportunity to address the lack of similar investment in Scotland. We commissioned a report *Supporting Marketing and Audience Development* to identify the relevant issues and opportunities.

One of the report's key findings was that a history of under-investment had contributed to limited marketing effectiveness in many organisations, and thus a failure to maximise attendance and participation. The principal recommendations for the Scottish Arts Council were:

- to ensure a practical understanding of existing and potential audiences for the arts in Scotland within funded organisations

- to develop a Scotland-wide network of regional support workers or agencies providing low cost quality services.

This approach aimed to maximise individual organisation's marketing effectiveness and thus increase arts attendance and participation across Scotland.

The report served as a catalyst for the launch of the Scottish Arts Council Audience and Sales Development Lottery Scheme in April 1999, and the subsequent appointment of an Audience Development Manager. Internal and external consultation since then, as well as the Scottish Arts Council's *Audit of Marketing and Audience Development Activity* in 2001, have increased our understanding of the day-to-day realities of marketing and audience development activity in funded organisations.

Several key issues have emerged, which this Strategy aims to address over time.

- Organisations need to factor a thorough understanding of their audience into their overall planning, and commit to a

longer term marketing approach as a business fundamental. A persistent belief in the innate desirability of their work is a still a barrier to effective marketing and audience development in some organisations. This is compounded by a reliance on short-term publicity and promotion, and an under-investment in marketing (the bulk of expenditure is directed at creating the work). All of these factors combine to make audience development the sleeping giant of arts management – the increased resources and support outlined in this Strategy are intended to release this latent potential.

- More information on existing and potential audiences, as well as the findings of robust evaluation of different promotional tactics, needs to be available to arts organisations. This will allow them to select the most persuasive and appropriate marketing approach for each target group, and to refine mass market 'one poster serves all' promotions where appropriate.
- The Scottish Arts Council has an important role to play in addressing the lack of

information exchange between organisations, and the scarcity of opportunities to network with peer groups. We will actively encourage collaboration, collective problem solving, and sharing of good practice.

- Long-term marketing planning is the exception rather than the norm in organisational business plans. Marketing is not usually embraced as an aid to achieving organisational objectives. Instead, the term

is frequently used when 'publicity' would be a more accurate label, and is managed as a 'bolt-on' activity once the artistic plan has been confirmed.

## The strategic context

The dynamic between artists and audiences is the lifeblood of the arts. Some might say that one cannot survive without the other – as ticket buyers and collectors, as occasional attenders and loyal subscribers, as hesitant participants and passionate devotees.

In today's crowded marketplace, arts organisations in receipt of public subsidy are under pressure to increase as well as to broaden their audiences, to keep in touch and even ahead of market trends, and to exploit new marketing approaches. The onus is now on each organisation to take informed and creative decisions about its ability to serve the broadest cross-section of the population, and to programme and promote its work accordingly.

The current political emphasis on social justice increasingly acknowledges a key role for the arts, and endorses a desire for children and young people to engage with creativity and the arts as a matter of right. This gives arts

marketing and audience development unprecedented significance as the bridge between the Scottish public and the subsidised arts.

The arts and arts organisations cannot truly be said to be equally accessible to all without demonstrating their active and long-term commitment to overcoming barriers to attendance. The Scottish Arts Council is well placed to ensure this happens, working directly with the arts organisations we support. We believe that a proactive audience development 'culture' is required to engage and persuade new attenders, and to increase the frequency of attendance and participation by existing audiences.

Audience development begins with a clear understanding of the attitudes and perceptions, positive and negative, of attenders and non-attenders. Arts organisations can use this information to plan awareness-raising campaigns and

to persuade more people to engage with the arts. Breaking down the physical, psychological and social barriers which inhibit attendance and participation (in different ways for different people) plays a key part in this.

Effective audience development needs the full involvement of the whole organisation, built around a basic marketing competence and a management approach which takes account of the audience's needs and wants. The Scottish Arts Council is committed to creating a climate where this can happen – to providing funded organisations with the knowledge, skills and resources to operate as effectively as they possibly can.

We will work closely with funded organisations, articulating how marketing and audience development will help them achieve clear positive outcomes in relation to financial, artistic and social objectives, and thus establishing realistic audience development priorities.

# Audience Development Strategy Action Plan 2004-2007

This Action Plan provides a detailed framework showing how we will implement the Audience Development Strategy. For each aim we have identified objectives and specific actions.

Please note that the implementation of certain proposals will be dependent on additional investment, and therefore timescales may vary.

AUDIENCE

Outcomes	Objectives	Actions	Timeline
All Core Funded Organisations (CFOs) to be working to an appropriate marketing strategy and annual targets for attendance and participation	All CFOs to provide the Scottish Arts Council with an annual statement articulating their marketing approach  All CFOs to provide the Scottish Arts Council with annual targets for attendance and participation	Produce guidance notes/templates and offer advice to CFOs	2004/05
	A range of proactive audience development campaigns to be managed by CFOs (prioritising new and lapsed attenders)	Project funding	2004/05-2006/07
	To increase recognition at CFO senior management level of marketing and audience development as business fundamentals	Fund demonstration projects at key venues  Fund and facilitate CEO study visits to best practice organisations  Audience development forum for CEOs, with relevant cultural sector partners	2005/06  2005/06  2006/07
An established Scottish network for information exchange and informal mentoring	To nurture a vibrant professional community of arts marketers, working to support funded organisations	Host annual arts marketers forum each autumn  Source Scottish speakers for events outside Scotland (eg Arts Marketing Association conference, Audiences Europe Network events)  Distribute a twice-yearly e-newsletter (information updates and contacts)  Host PR event for audience development strategy, plus project showcase  Initiate a Scottish Arts Council audience development reference group, with responsibility for co-ordinating national campaigns  Regular liaison and networking with Scottish marketing agencies and arts marketers across the UK	2004/05-2006/07  2004/05-2006/07  2005/06-2006/07  2005/06  2005/06-2006/07
Scottish Arts Council policy and planning decisions to be informed by robust information on current and potential audiences for the arts	To advocate consideration of audiences' needs/behaviours as part of policy-making and planning by officers, committees and Council members	Provide briefings and disseminate research findings internally  Co-ordinate internal training for officers, committees and Council members  Liaison with other UK arts councils, umbrella bodies, international contacts	2004/05-2006/07  2005/06  2004/05-2006/07

Aim 2 To co-ordinate the provision of market intelligence for Scottish Arts Council and for Scottish arts organisations		Timeline
Outcomes	Objectives	Actions
Increased knowledge and understanding of patterns of attendance and participation across Scotland	Ensure provision of market intelligence on existing and potential arts attenders	Commission Audiences Scotland research programme 2004/05
Informed allocation of marketing resources in CFOs	Ensure effective capture, analysis and application of audience data in arts organisations	Contribute to the internal review of the CFO audit process 2004/05
Greater use of targeted rather than mass market promotion	Support good practice in CFOs and other key venues	Award National Lottery funding to organisation-specific research projects which address Scottish Arts Council priority areas/Corporate Plan targets 2004/05-2006/07
	Ensure Scottish Arts Council has access to accurate and regularly updated information on attendance patterns (existing and potential) by art form, geography and socio-demographics	Disseminate key UK research findings via Scottish Arts Council website and networks/events 2005/06-2006/07
		Commission good practice guidance in partnership with other UK arts councils as part of the Audience Data UK project 2004/05
		Develop an approach to tracking attendance and participation by Scottish Arts Council's priority target groups 2005/06
		Fund attendance at conferences and training events 2004/05-2006/07
		Provide formal guidance on monitoring and evaluation, project documentation 2005/06
		Disseminate existing Scottish Arts Council artform research on attender profiles (dance, crafts, visual arts) 2004/05
		Map and analyse existing patterns of cultural sector attendance and participation across Scotland in partnership with other cultural providers 2005/06
		Commission and disseminate profiles of attenders at literary events 2005/06
		Commission and disseminate profiles of theatre attenders (i) touring (ii) building based 2006/07
		Commission and disseminate profiles of music attenders (jazz, world music, classical, contemporary, opera) with non-CFO partners as appropriate 2005/06-2006/07
		Work with UK arts councils to provide interpretation and training on updated area profiles for Scotland 2005/06

Outcomes	Objectives	Actions	Timeline
Direct access to tactical and strategic marketing support for CFOs and other key venues, at subsidised rates	Work with regional funding partners to establish a Scotland-wide support network	Fund two location-specific arts marketing guides each year (tactics for touring companies)	2004/05-2006/07
		Seed fund two regional/peripatetic workers within 'hub' CFOs	2005/06-2006/07
		Fund Highlands and Islands Audience Development Co-ordinator post, based at HI-Arts	2004/05
		Seed fund two audience development workers based in local authorities	2005/06-2006/07
		Commission a study of regional audience development needs and potential outside the Central Belt	2005/06
	Facilitate initiatives delivering Scottish Arts Council marketing/audience development service contracts in Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Inverness – working with local authorities and other partners	Project/lottery funding for the Audience Business (Edinburgh)	2004/05-2005/06
		Seed fund agency development for Glasgow	2004/05-2005/06
		Tender for service contracts in Edinburgh, Inverness and Glasgow	2005/06-2006/07

Aim 4 To increase the skills base and marketing resources available to Scottish arts organisations		Timeline
Outcomes	Objectives	Actions
Skilled professional community of arts marketers working across Scotland	Increase skills base in arts marketers working at all levels, and ensure marketing and audience development training is accessible to Scottish arts marketers	Fund TMA training for junior arts marketers in Scotland 2005/06
Increased knowledge base and marketing competency within CFOs and other key venues		Fund training and attendance at other relevant events through Scottish Arts Council's Professional Development Fund 2004/05-2006/07
Maximised attendance in CFOs		Negotiate reduced prices for relevant UK publications and reports, and circulate to CFOs 2004/05-2006/07
Maximised box office income in CFOs and other key venues		Disseminate information on UK-wide training and development opportunities via e-newsletter 2005/06-2006/07
		Fund two audience development traineeships in CFOs 2006/07
		Fund attendance at Audiences Europe Network events 2004/05-2006/07
		Fund and evaluate the visual arts CFOs skills development programme 2004/05
		Co-ordinate artform/scale specific skills development programmes based on the outcomes of CFO review meetings 2005/06-2006/07
	Retention of experienced marketers within Scotland	Audit of marketers' skills, salary levels, and professional development needs in partnership with Scottish Museums Council 2005/06
		Launch audience development campaign awards for Scotland (eg in partnership with Arts & Business, FST, engage) 2006/07
		Host professional development forum for senior arts marketers and CEOs 2005/06
	Increase marketing resources available to CFOs	Evaluate impact of 20 audience development posts funded to date 2005/06
		Seed fund five CFO development posts (may be shared/city based) 2006/07
		Project funding for campaigns and research 2004/05-2006/07
	Encourage CFOs to market core programme to education participants, where appropriate	Review the five 2003/04 demonstration projects and disseminate report 2004/05
		Fund three education/marketing demonstration projects, with a particular emphasis on lifelong learning 2005/06
	Advocate use of (new) technologies in arts marketing	Guidance on managing and exploiting websites 2004/05
		Audit of box office technology in use in Scotland 2005/06
	Increase strategic use of dynamic pricing policies	Audit of pricing policies in use in CFOs 2005/06
		Fund four pricing demonstration projects 2005/06-2006/07

Aim 5 To develop the market for arts attendance and participation in Scotland

Outcomes	Objectives	Actions	Timeline
Increased attendance and participation	Maximise attendance at CFOs by existing audiences	Venue development funding to support targeting new audiences via programming, education, or marketing initiatives	2006/07
	Increase CFOs' ability to attract new audiences	Work with Scottish Arts Council Music Department to support Tune Up Fund campaigns and pilot projects aiming to increase frequency of attendance by existing and new audiences	2004/05-2005/06 2004/05-2006/07
	Support appropriate CFOs in taking proactive measures to attract Scottish Arts Council priority target groups	Support Scottish Arts Council's Cultural Diversity Action Plan's commitment to increased attendance and participation Support Scottish Arts Council's Arts and Disability Action Plan's commitment to increased attendance and participation	2004/05-2005/06 2004/05-2005/06
Effective and accessible sales mechanisms available to the public Scotland-wide	Support national pilots with a sales focus	Project fund Highlands and Islands pilot ticketing agency	2004/05-2005/06
		Support for visual arts and crafts selling events	2004/05-2006/07
		Investigate promotional opportunities provided by tourist and other commercial operators	2006/07
Increased understanding and awareness of the arts via Scottish Arts Council and partner-led national campaigns	Co-ordinate promotional activity, working with colleagues Improved public access to information on arts programmes across Scotland	Initiate national campaigns and sales promotions on the findings of artform attender profiles	2006/07
		Work proactively with artform and External Relations departments to prioritise national audience development campaigns	2005/06
		Support Family Friendly arts promotions across Scotland	2004/05

Aim 6 To maintain a national overview of audience development activity in Scottish arts organisations			
Outcomes	Objectives	Actions	Timeline
Evidence of increased attendance by Scottish Arts Council priority audiences	Encourage CFOs to target Scottish Arts Council priority audiences	Project funding targeting priority audiences each year (eg elders, tourists, families)	2005/06-2006/07
		Produce research digests, including case studies of effective campaigns	2005/06
Evidence of sustained arts attendance by a broad cross-section of society		Develop a methodology for monitoring target groups' attendance in partnership with other UK arts councils (part of the Audience Data UK project)	2005/06
		Housekeeping guidance on customer data capture and analysis (part of the Audience Data UK project)	2004/05-2005/6
Information on untapped potential from within currently under-developed markets (eg tourists, elders, ethnic minority)		Work cross-Council to support a rolling programme of research to monitor the percentage of the population attending the arts (Audiences Scotland)	2004/05-2006/07
		Agree appropriate marketing plans and attendance/participation targets with CFOs as part of the CFO funding agreement	2004/05-2006/07
		Commission related primary and secondary research, literature reviews	2006/07
		Fund demonstration projects	2006/07

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