

Policy and Sustainability Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 30 November 2021

Edinburgh's Winter Festivals - Consultation Results

Item number	
Executive/routine	Routine
Wards	All
Council Commitments	43, 46, and 47

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 Policy and Sustainability Committee is asked to note:
 - 1.1.1 The outcomes of the Winter Festivals Consultation; and
 - 1.1.2 That the key findings from the consultation will inform the specification and event brief for the procurement exercise to deliver new events from 2022/23.

Paul Lawrence

Executive Director of Place

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Edinburgh's Winter Festivals – Consultation Results

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 On [18 June 2019](#), Culture and Communities Committee approved an emergency motion requesting a public consultation on the future of the Winter Festivals from 2022 be undertaken. This report provides an update on the results of that consultation.

3. Background

- 3.1 In February 2021, the Council undertook a wide-reaching and independent consultation with residents and other stakeholders from across the city on the future of Winter Festival activity in Edinburgh.
- 3.2 The city's Winter Festivals currently comprise two events: Edinburgh's Christmas; and Edinburgh's Hogmanay.
- 3.3 In 2019, the Edinburgh's Christmas event took place over a six-week period from the third weekend in November to 6 January, at locations in and around the city centre of Edinburgh. Edinburgh's Christmas includes a market offer, fairground, family attractions and, until 2018, an ice rink.
- 3.4 In 2020, Edinburgh's Christmas was primarily an online event due to restrictions on gatherings during the coronavirus pandemic.
- 3.5 Edinburgh's Hogmanay is an internationally renowned New Year festival in its 29th year. Currently, it is annually a three-day festival centred around celebrations on 31 December. The festival provides international promotion for the city and images of the midnight fireworks display are broadcast around the world, attracting significant international audiences as well as providing managed city centre celebrations. Activities include a street party, concerts in Princes Street Gardens, a torchlight procession and an open-air ceilidh.
- 3.6 In 2020, the event producers, Underbelly, commissioned a drone display called '[Fare Well](#)' to celebrate Hogmanay replacing the street party and all other mass gatherings.

- 3.7 The footprint of both events has changed over recent years: while the levels of entertainment on offer at Edinburgh's Christmas and Hogmanay have increased, so has the level of infrastructure required to deliver them.
- 3.8 As a result, the Council initiated an open public conversation about the future of these events, to listen to residents' views and to ensure that the future of the Winter Festivals achieves the right balance for those living and working in Edinburgh.
- 3.9 Those consulted included:
- 3.9.1 City Centre residents, especially those who have been affected in the past by Winter Festival activity;
 - 3.9.2 Edinburgh residents in general, ensuring a level of engagement and opportunity to respond that was as wide as possible;
 - 3.9.3 Edinburgh residents with sensory and mobility impairment, disability groups and organisations representing the interests of those with visibility and mobility impairment including the Edinburgh Access Panel;
 - 3.9.4 Edinburgh residents on low incomes and organisations representing their interests;
 - 3.9.5 Community Groups, especially those for children and young people, and single-parent families;
 - 3.9.6 Heritage and community organisations with a particular interest in the City Centre;
 - 3.9.7 Faith-based organisations;
 - 3.9.8 Edinburgh Community Councils;
 - 3.9.9 Businesses operating in Edinburgh and particularly the City Centre, including, but not limited to, Federation of Small Business/Chamber of Commerce businesses, tourism industry, and hotels. There are also a large number of businesses who are not members of an official representative body and these businesses were also included; and
 - 3.9.10 Stakeholder organisations involved in or impacted by the delivery of current Winter Festival activity including, but not limited to, Police Scotland, transport providers, NHS Lothian, Festivals Edinburgh, EventScotland and VisitScotland, Essential Edinburgh.
- 3.10 The All-Party Oversight Group on Festivals and Events was kept updated during the process, approving the final survey.

4. Main report

- 4.1 Following a competitive tender process, Progressive Partnership Ltd were appointed to undertake the public consultation into the future of Edinburgh's Winter Festivals.

- 4.2 The consultation comprised an engagement phase and a wider public consultation. Full details of the methodology are contained within Appendix 1.
- 4.3 The engagement phase gathered interviews and conducted focus groups with key stakeholders within the city. This included six community workshops for community groups, special interest groups, the city's business and commercial sector, and children and young people (Appendix 1 – slide 115). The outcomes of this phase shaped the themes and questions in the wider consultation phase.
- 4.4 From 24 February 2021 until 19 May 2021, a public consultation was opened on the Council's consultation hub, seeking views from businesses and members of the public on the future of the Winter Festivals. In tandem, a number of focus groups with parents and seldom heard groups (Appendix 1 – slide 114) were held.

Key Findings

- 4.5 In total, 8,614 individuals and 35 organisations responded to the survey. 68% of respondents were from Edinburgh; 23% from the rest of Scotland; and 7% from the rest of the United Kingdom (UK).
- 4.6 The survey sought to establish support for having the two events, with 87% showing support for a Christmas celebration and 86% for Hogmanay. There is a clear desire for the city to celebrate these events.
- 4.7 89% of respondents had attended an Edinburgh's Christmas event in the past but only 46% for Edinburgh's Hogmanay.
- 4.8 Full details of the findings are contained within Appendix 1. The key trends and messages which emerged from the consultation included:
 - 4.8.1 The majority saw the celebrations as being welcoming for tourists, but they were less likely to be welcoming to residents. Most agreed that they are good for businesses, but few perceived them as affordable or environmentally sustainable. The main reasons for not attending Christmas and Hogmanay celebrations in the past were overcrowding, 'designed for tourists' and too expensive;
 - 4.8.2 Edinburgh respondents were less positive than respondents from the rest of Scotland and the UK about the winter celebrations being welcoming, enjoyable, unique, affordable, beneficial to business and environmentally sustainable; and
 - 4.8.3 When asked about previous celebrations, views were mixed. While many of the comments were positive, a larger number were negative. The main concerns focused on the central location and impact on residents.

The Future of the Winter Festivals

- 4.9 Food, drink, musical performances and activities for children were the top preferred activities for Christmas. Alcoholic drinks and funfair rides were the least wanted activities for Christmas celebrations.

- 4.10 Fireworks, lighting installations and live music performances were the top three preferred activities for Hogmanay. Street party and mass gathering was the least wanted activity.
- 4.11 Respondents also called for future winter celebrations to have local involvement of artists and performers and Scottish/local culture.
- 4.12 Themes, in response to making Christmas and Hogmanay more accessible to people with disabilities, were dominated by physical access issues such as wheelchair accessibility and restrictions on the number of people attending.

Principles

- 4.13 Principles that benefit Edinburgh's environment, its reputation and business were those thought most important. This was followed by the need to be family-friendly and suit all ages.
- 4.14 The most wanted concession was to have free activities, this was closely followed by having discounted rates for Edinburgh residents.
- 4.15 It should be noted that any future events will be designed in line with the findings of the current consultation on the Use of Public Spaces for Filming and Events.

Locations of Winter Festivals

- 4.16 The largest group wanted Christmas celebrations to be staged at a number of locations spread throughout the city centre. This was followed by a similar proportion who wanted a few city centre locations and a few local town centres.
- 4.17 As with Christmas celebrations, the largest group wanted Hogmanay to be staged at a number of locations spread throughout the city centre, followed by a similar proportion who wanted a few city centre locations and a few local town centres.

Welcoming to Different Cultures and Religions

- 4.18 Many felt that the Winter Festivals are welcoming from a religious/cultural standpoint. Many felt that Christmas is inherently Christian, and Hogmanay is a Scottish tradition, and neither should change their qualities. Others gave examples of how to increase diversity.

Impact on Business

- 4.19 While the base is very small, the majority of business owner/managers in Edinburgh claimed the festivals have increased their turnover.
- 4.20 The largest group of business owner/managers wanted Christmas and Hogmanay celebrations to be staged at a number of locations spread throughout the city centre.

Family Friendly

- 4.21 Parents were in favour of the celebrations. Cost is undoubtedly an issue but, despite this, parents find the celebrations enjoyable.
- 4.22 The importance of making the celebrations family friendly was made clear throughout the consultation. This includes creating alcohol free zones, less crowded

zones, a focus on children at Hogmanay, and features to make children and people with disabilities more able to participate in the celebrations.

Conclusions

- 4.23 There was overwhelming support for winter celebrations in Edinburgh to continue in some form.
- 4.24 Findings from the consultation point to the need to review the current delivery model by taking the following elements into consideration:
 - 4.24.1 Continue to provide high quality Christmas and Hogmanay celebrations which will be valued by residents and visitors, and continue to enhance Edinburgh's reputation;
 - 4.24.2 Avoid overcrowding and improve access by distributing Christmas celebrations more widely throughout the city centre;
 - 4.24.3 Look for opportunities to extend Christmas celebrations to other parts of the city outside of the city centre;
 - 4.24.4 Improve and evidence the environmental sustainability of the winter festivals, including through the local sourcing of products;
 - 4.24.5 Improve access for those previously less able to participate, including through physical accessibility, the design of activities for those with a range of needs, and for people on lower incomes and from deprived areas;
 - 4.24.6 Focus on making the celebrations family friendly;
 - 4.24.7 Introduce alcohol-free times and / or areas within Christmas celebrations;
 - 4.24.8 Continue dialogue with representative organisations and seek further opportunities to agree how best to address negative impacts of winter festivals on Edinburgh residents;
 - 4.24.9 Seek opportunities to maximise community benefit, including giving priority to existing local businesses and creatives; and
 - 4.24.10 Seek opportunities to emphasise the character and culture of Edinburgh through the design and use of existing buildings and spaces, temporary constructions, events, branding and advertising.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 The consultation has provided a framework and general principles for delivery of future editions of Edinburgh's Christmas and Edinburgh's Hogmanay, showing strong support for the two events to continue, albeit with a revised format.
- 5.2 It is clear from the consultation that the two events require slightly different approaches to delivery. As a result, it is proposed that a pilot year be held to test the new models of delivery.

- 5.3 There is a clear desire for a city centre activity for Christmas, which not only supports businesses by attracting people to the city centre, but also delivers the celebratory elements of Christmas, including a food and beverage offer and activities for families with an emphasis on affordability and environmental sustainability. A procurement exercise will be undertaken to appoint a producer to deliver this event, using the clear feedback from the consultation to ensure that it meets the needs of residents and businesses and is of appropriate scale.
- 5.4 For wider winter activity, it is proposed to appoint an individual or organisation to a Winter Festivals Director role, reporting directly to the Council. They will have responsibility for developing an overall Winter Festival programme based on a theme of Light and incorporating the desired elements from the consultation: fireworks, lighting installations and live music. The inclusion of local artists, communities, performers and creatives is essential in the development of this programme.
- 5.5 It is anticipated that these appointments will be completed by late spring 2022.
- 5.6 Members will be kept updated on the process through the All-Party Oversight Group for Festivals and Events.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 A budget of £40,000 was identified to deliver this consultation. Due to the volume of responses and extra work required to evaluate the qualitative submissions, an additional £13,700 was required to complete the consultation.
- 6.2 The budget was contained within the Culture Service budget.
- 6.3 Delivering this consultation was an essential exercise in determining the future of the Winter Festivals in Edinburgh and ensuring that they meet the needs of Edinburgh residents and businesses.
- 6.4 Currently, there is a maximum of £813,456 available annually for delivery of the two events. The total sum required will be reviewed during the upcoming event brief and procurement exercise.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 The consultation had a positive impact on stakeholders and the community. The central principle of this consultation was that everyone within the city – residents, communities, businesses and stakeholders – should be invited to participate and to ensure that views from across the entire city were heard.
- 7.2 The service provider was tasked with creating a methodology to ensure that this central principle was delivered.
- 7.3 The volume and breadth of responses received demonstrates that this was achieved.

7.4 Execution of this consultation had no negative environmental impacts.

8. Background reading/external references

8.1 Report to Culture and Communities Committee on [28 January 2020](#).

8.2 Report to Policy and Sustainability Committee on [25 February 2020](#).

8.3 Report to Policy and Sustainability Committee on [28 May 2020](#).

9. Appendices

9.1 Appendix 1 – Edinburgh’s Winter Festivals Public Consultation – Final Report

progressive

City of Edinburgh Council
Winter Festivals Public Consultation
Final Report
November 2021



Contents



Background and method



Summary of findings



Profile of the response



Conclusions



Main findings

- Experience of the Winter Festivals
- Previous celebrations
- Future of the Winter Festivals
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 - accessibility
 - principles
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- Location of Winter Festivals
- Final comments



Appendices

- Technical appendix
- Profile of survey respondents
- Profile of focus group participants – consultation phase
- Profile of engagement phase participants



Background and method

Project background



Edinburgh's Winter Festivals are popular and currently take place over a six-week period from around the third weekend in November to around the 6th of January, at locations in and around the city centre of Edinburgh.

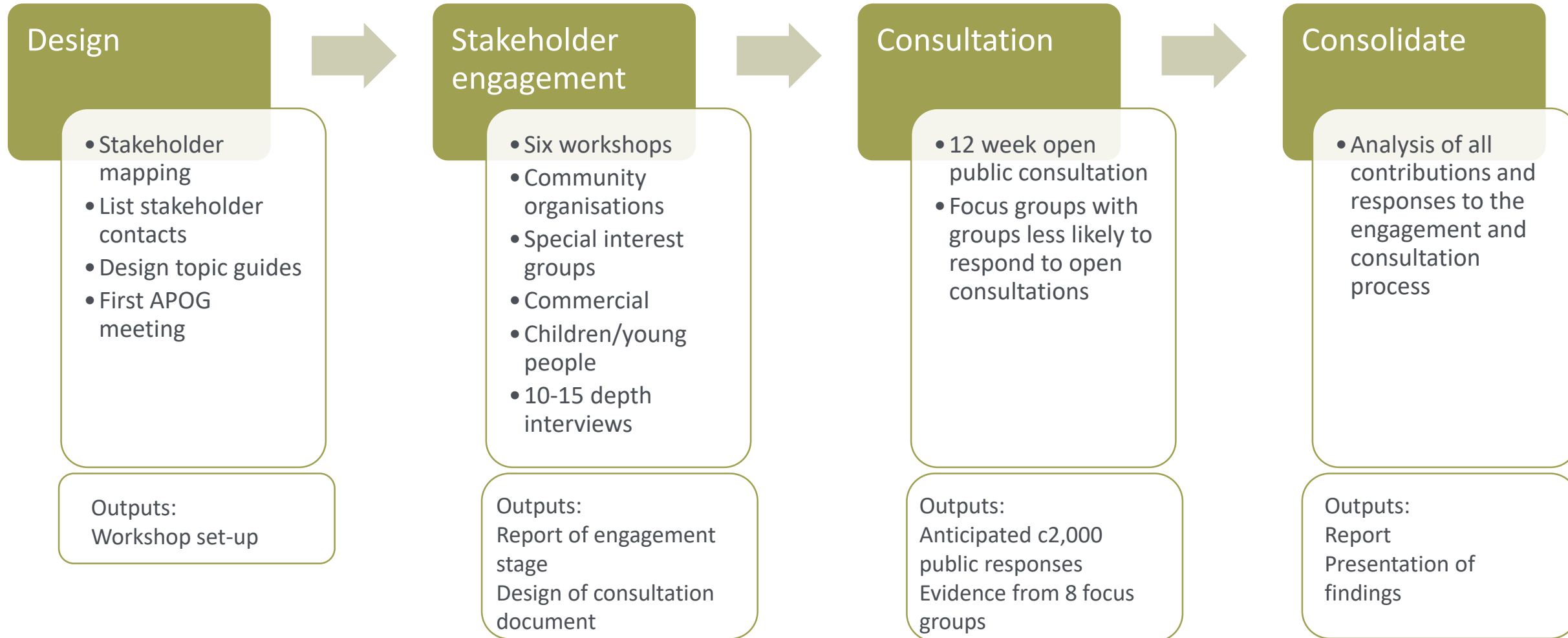
The vast majority of Edinburgh residents attend at least one of the Winter Festival activities each year, and most think the Festival makes Edinburgh a better place to live. Nevertheless, in recent years a proportion of residents (in most recent surveys, 7%) have expressed unhappiness with aspects of the festivals.



The Winter Festival is organised on the city's behalf under contract. The current contract is due to expire in 2023. A review of the Festival will inform decisions on the specification of the contract going forward.

The public consultation has been undertaken to provide insight into what local people, businesses and stakeholders value about the festivals and how they see them developing in the future.

Method: study approach



The final consultation report draws on the consultation survey, the focus groups and the stakeholder engagement outputs

Consultation approach

Consultation survey, supplemented by a series of focus groups with seldom heard groups.


Consultation Survey

Consultation survey: link made freely available to members of the public, businesses, stakeholders

No restrictions to entry, but any duplicate responses deleted

A total of 8,612 individuals and 35 organisations responded

Fieldwork dates: The consultation was open 24th February – 19th May

Where base sizes are low a caution sign is shown. These results must be read with caution. 

As this is a consultation and the sample is self selecting it is not representative of the population of Edinburgh as a whole.

Focus groups

Eight focus groups were conducted with parents and seldom heard groups*

Groups were carried out on Zoom, because of continuing Covid~19 restrictions

A total of 41 people took part in the group discussions

A £40 incentive was paid to encourage attendance

Groups were run from 27th April to 11th May.

Findings from group discussions are reported with this symbol:



*See appendix for a profile of the groups



Overview of the responses

The profile of those who responded does not match the profile of the population of Edinburgh. Results are therefore not representative of Edinburgh’s whole population.

Individuals



8,614 surveys

Organisations



35 surveys

3 letters were also received. These can be found in full in the appendices.

Online surveys	Paper surveys	Total
8,647	2	8,649

Gender	Response to consultation		*EH
	#	%	%
Women (incl trans women)	5,474	64	51
Men (incl trans men)	2,764	32	49
Other gender identity	39	<1	-
Prefer not to say	337	4	-
Ethnic group			
BAME	231	3	20
Non- BAME	7,883	92	80
Prefer not to say	500	6	-
Base (individuals)	8,614	101	459,366

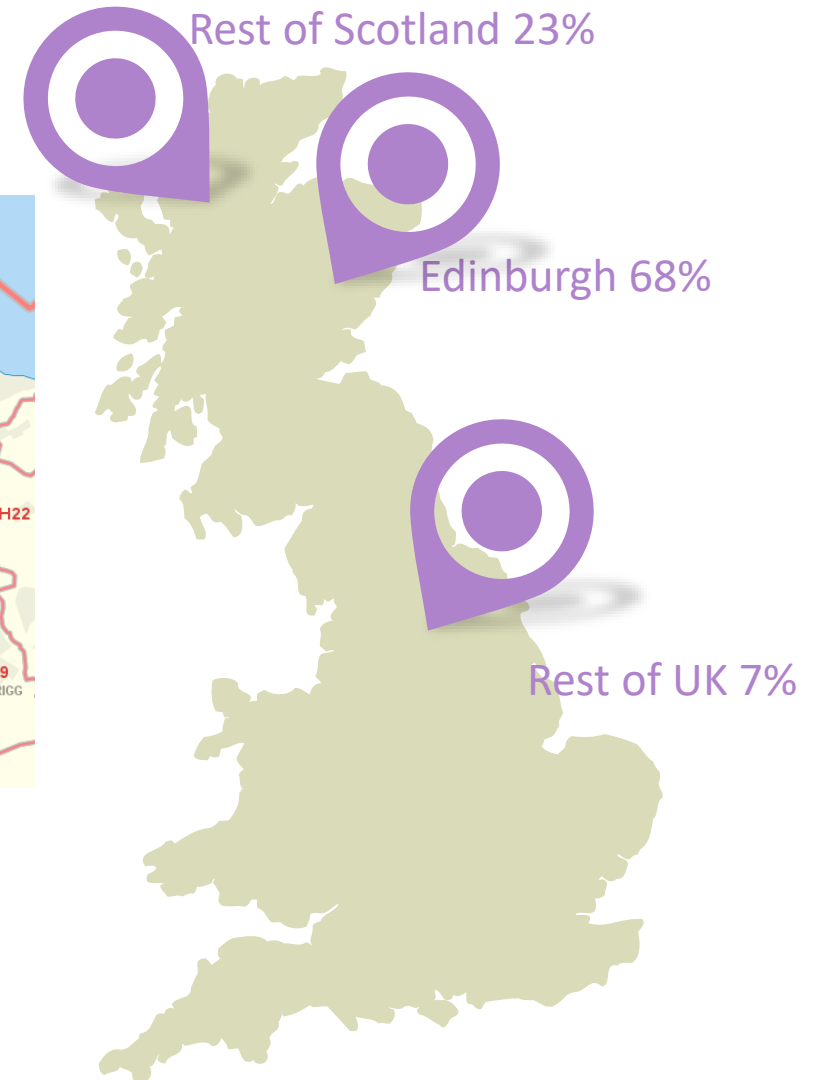
Socio economic groups (SEG)	Response to consultation		*EH
	#	%	%
AB	4,353	51	33
C1	1766	21	30
C2	548	6	14
DE	633	7	23
Prefer not to say	1,314	15	-
Age			
16-24 years	295	4	15
25-34 years	1,503	17	14
35-44 years	1,891	22	26
45-54 years	2029	24	9
55-64 years	1592	18	19
65+ years	921	11	18
Prefer not to say	382	4	-

*Based on census data 2011 and findings from Edinburgh Peoples Survey

Responses came from across Edinburgh, Scotland and the rest of the UK. We have reported on results by combining postcodes EH 1/2/3/7 and 8 and comparing them to all other EH postcodes (R/EH) all other Scottish posts codes (R/Scot) and the remaining UK postcodes(R/UK)



Location	Individuals		Organisations *
	Number	%	Number
City Centre (EH1/2)	168	2%	16
Central (EH3/7/8)	1,180	14%	5
Other Edinburgh	4,496	52%	10
Rest of Scotland	1,939	23%	4
Rest of UK	600	7%	-
Other/unknown	231	3%	-
Total	8,614	100%	35





Experience of the Winter Festivals

In favour of Winter Festivals

Christmas

- Older people tended to be less in favour: 18-24 (96%) 25-34 (92%) 35-44 (90%) 45-54 (87%) 55-64 (86%) 65+ (81%)
- Parents with younger children tended to be more in favour of Christmas celebrations than those with older children: aged under 5 (94%) 5-12 (92%) 13-16 (91%)
- Those in postcodes EH1/2/3/7/8 (78%) were less in favour than the rest of the EH postcodes (85%)

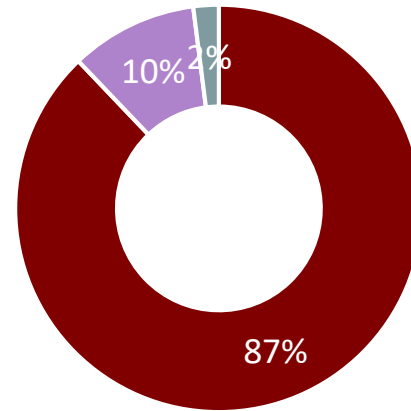
Hogmanay

- Older people tended to be less in favour: 18-24 (94%) 25-34 (91%) 35-44 (89%) 45-54 (86%) 55-64 (84%) 65+ (81%)
- Those with younger children tended to be more in favour than those with older children: under 5 (92%) 5-12 (90%) 13-16 (88%)

The vast majority were in favour of Edinburgh having celebrations for Christmas and Hogmanay

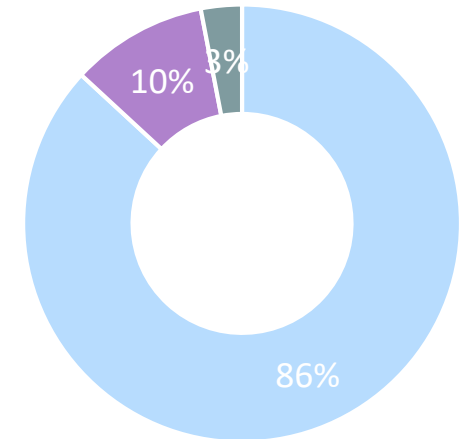


Want an annual Christmas celebration?



■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know

Want an annual Hogmanay celebration?



■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know

Q1. Do you think Edinburgh should have an annual Christmas celebration?

Q2. Do you think Edinburgh should have an annual Hogmanay celebration?

Base (All): individuals 8,614 organisations 35



Women, those outside of Scotland, parents and organisations were more in favour than their counterparts. Those in lower income groups (DE) and those with long standing illness were less in favour than their counterparts

In favour of Christmas celebration

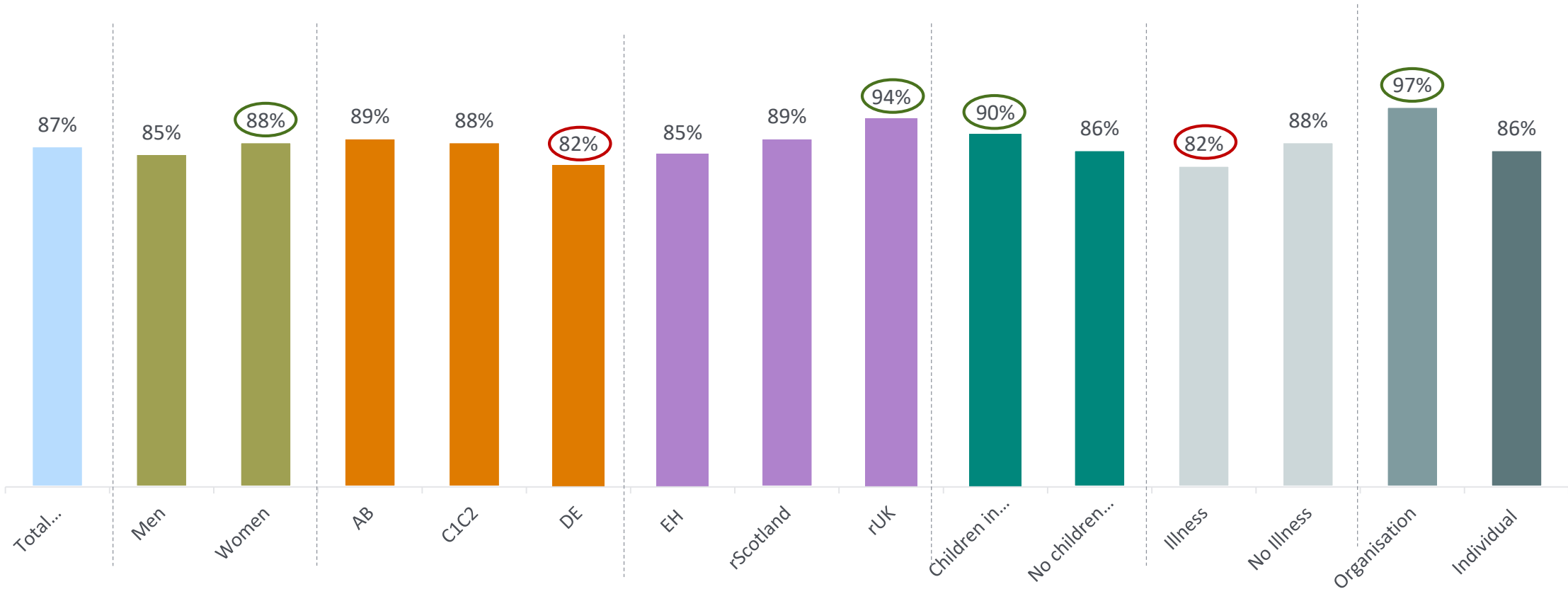


Q1. Do you think Edinburgh should have an annual Christmas celebration?

Base (all): 8649, Men 2764, Women 5474, AB 4353, C1C2 2314 DE 633, EH 5875 rScot 1943 rUK 600, children 2434, No children 5655, Illness 1071 No illness 6880, Organisation 35 Individual 8614

Trends for Hogmanay match those for Christmas: Women, those outside of Scotland, parents and organisations were more in favour. Those in lower income groups (DE) and those with long standing illness were less in favour than their counterparts

In favour of Hogmanay celebration



Q2. Do you think Edinburgh should have an annual Hogmanay celebration?

Base (all): 8649, Men 2764, Women 5474, AB 4353, C1C2 2314 DE 633, EH5875 rScot1943 rUK 600, Children 2434, No Children 5655, Illness 1071 No illness 6880, Organisation 35 Individual 8614

Attendance at Winter Festival

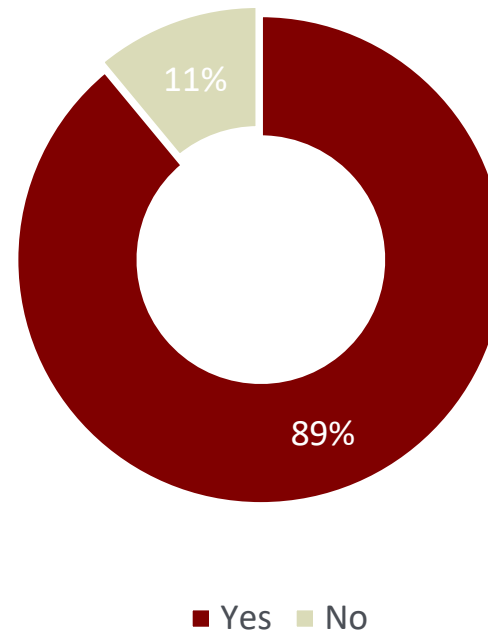
Of those who responded to the consultation:

- BAME (53%) were more likely than Non-BAME (46%) to have attended Hogmanay
- Those with long standing illness were less likely than those with no illness to have attended Christmas or Hogmanay:

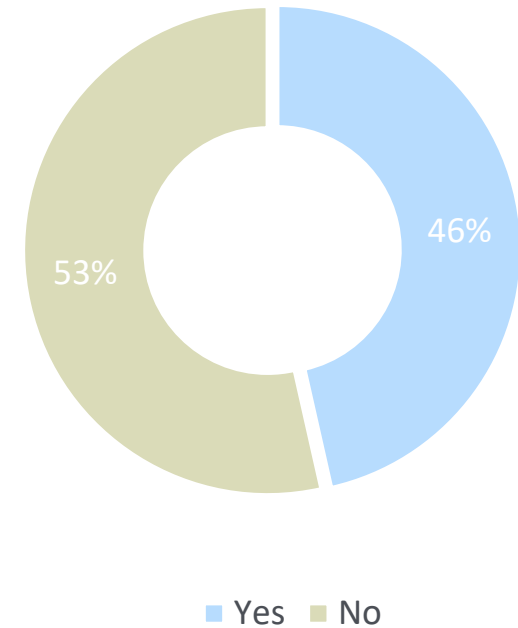
	Christmas	Hogmanay
Illness	84%	42%
No illness	90%	47%

The vast majority had attended Christmas celebrations. Fewer had attended Hogmanay.

Attended Christmas



Attended Hogmanay



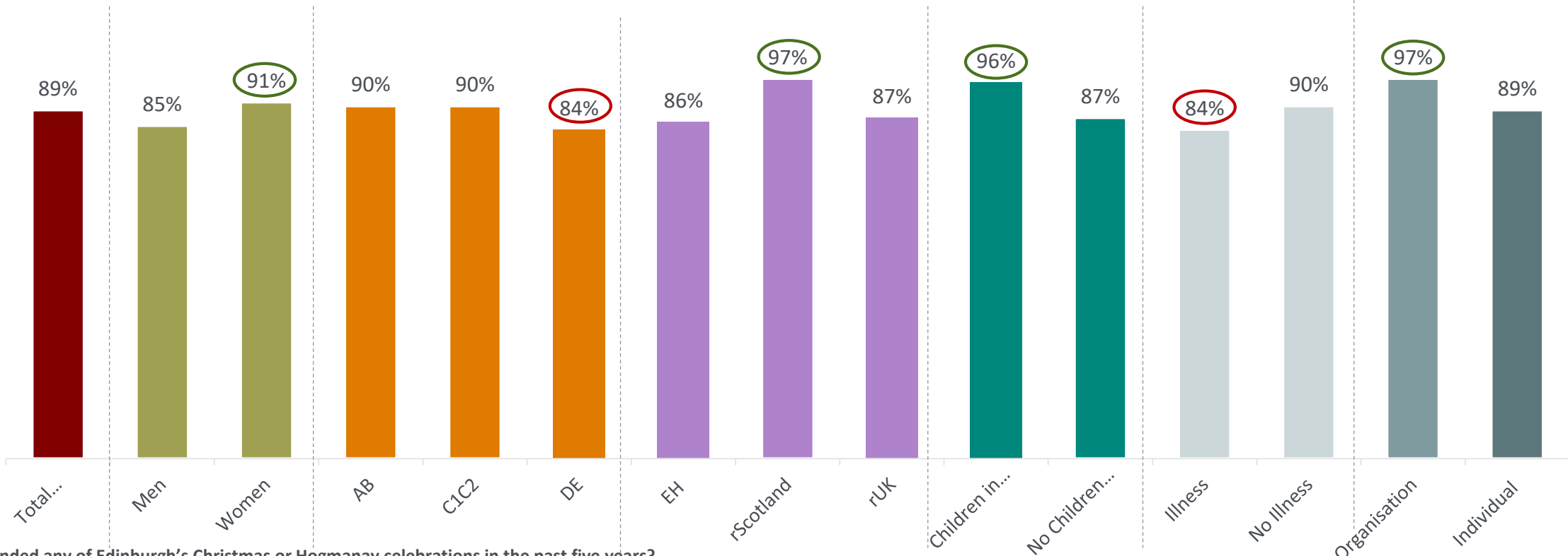
Q3. Have you attended any of Edinburgh's Christmas or Hogmanay celebrations in the past five years?

Base (All): individuals 8,614 organisations 35

Women, parents, younger people and those with no illness were all more likely than their counterparts to have attended a Christmas celebration.

Age					
18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
95%	94%	93%	89%	85%	79%

Attended Christmas celebration



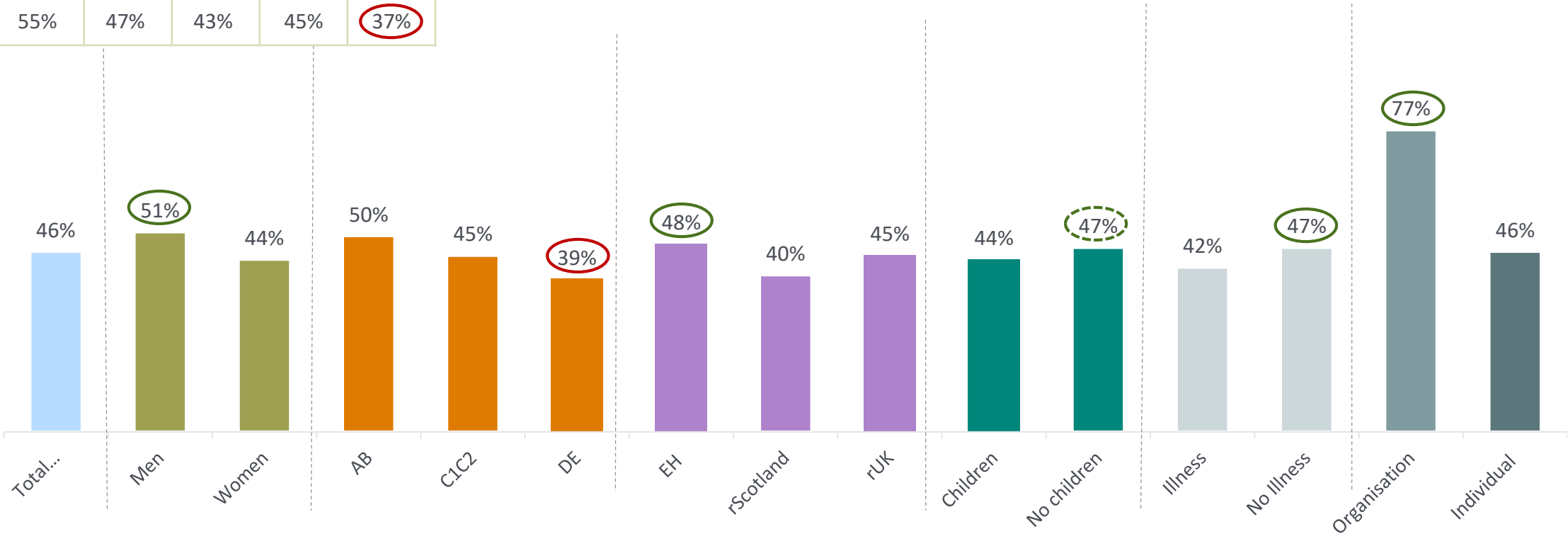
Q3. Have you attended any of Edinburgh's Christmas or Hogmanay celebrations in the past five years?

Base (all): 8649, Men 2764, Women 5474, AB 4353, C1C2 2314 DE 633, EH 5875 rScot 1943 rUK 600, Children 2434 , No children 5655, Illness 1071 No illness 6880, Organisation 35 Individual 8614

Older respondents and those in lower income groups were less likely to have attended Hogmanay celebrations. Respondents from Edinburgh were more likely to have attended Hogmanay than those in other regions.

Age					
18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
54%	55%	47%	43%	45%	37%

Attended Hogmanay celebration



Q3 Have you attended any of Edinburgh’s Christmas or Hogmanay celebrations in the past five years?

Base (all): 8649, Men 2764, Women 5474, AB 4353, C1C2 2314 DE 633, EH 5875 rScot 1943 rUK 600, Children 2434 , No Children 5655, Illness 1071 No illness 6880, Organisation 35 Individual 8614

Why not attend

Christmas

- Those in EH postcodes were more likely to perceive it as too crowded
- SEG C1C2 (41%) and parents (72%) were more likely to perceive it as too expensive

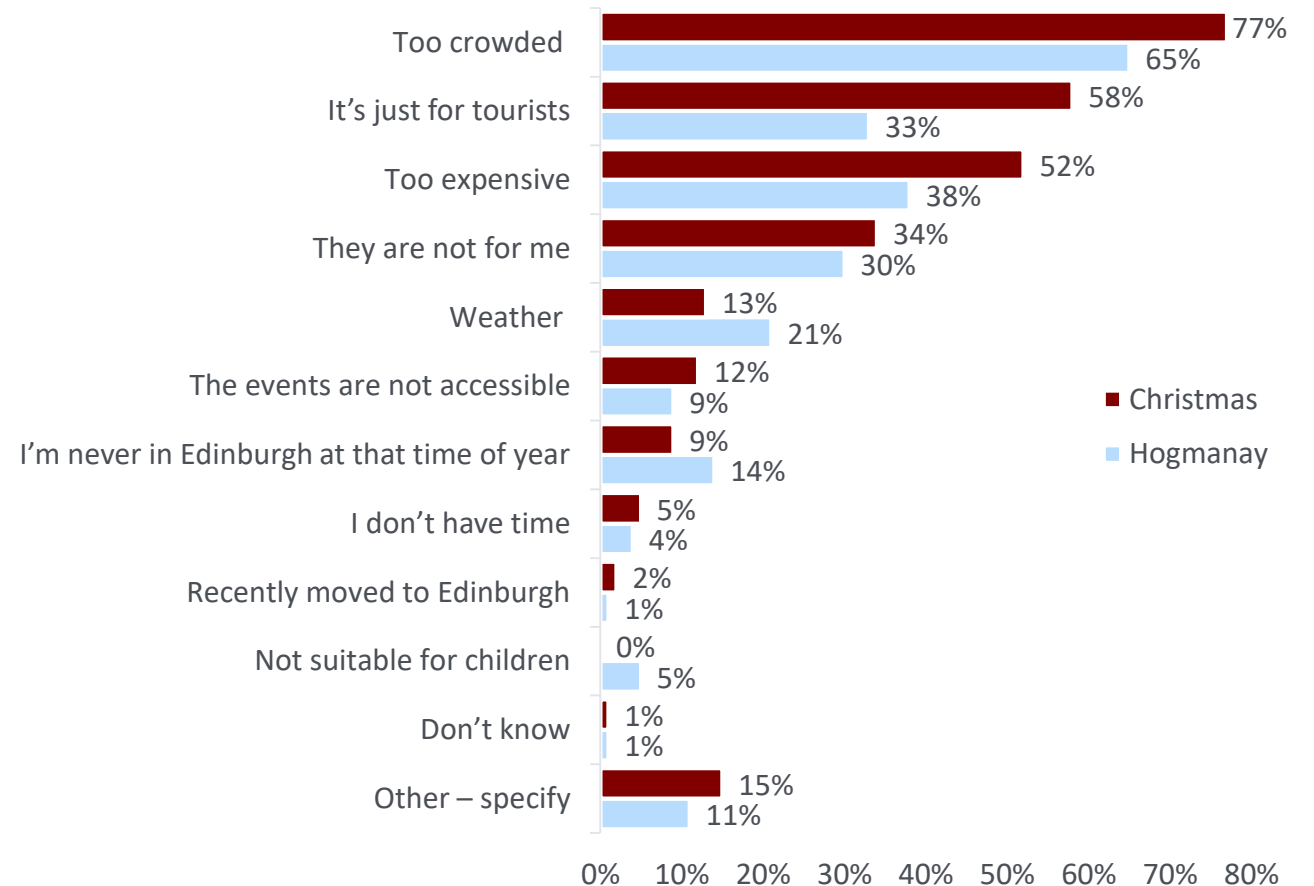
Hogmanay

- Those aged 65+ (73%) SEG AB (68%) those with no children (69%) those with long standing illness (72%) and those with EH postcodes (76%) were more likely to perceive it as too crowded
- Men (42%) those aged 25–34 (47%) those with long standing illness (48%) BAME (55%) and those with EH postcodes (44%) were more likely to perceive it as too expensive

Overcrowding, expense and celebrations being only suited for tourists were the main reasons for non-attendance



Reasons for not attending winter celebrations

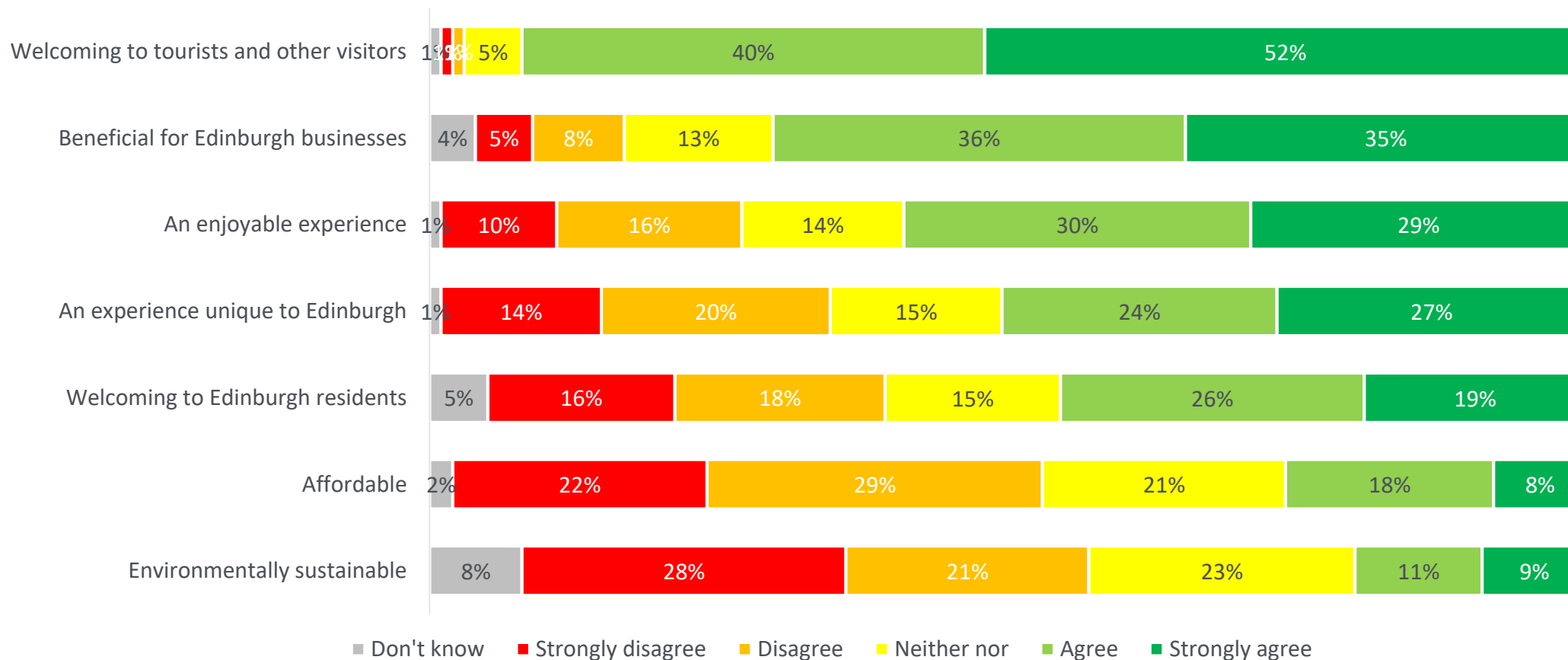


Q4. Why have you not attended the [...] celebrations in the last few years? Please tick all that apply

The majority saw celebrations as being welcoming for tourists but fewer saw them as being welcoming for residents. Most agreed that they are good for businesses but few perceived them as affordable or environmentally sustainable. Views on them being enjoyable and unique to Edinburgh were mixed.



Views on the Winter Celebrations




Q5. To what extent do you agree or disagree that previous Christmas and Hogmanay celebrations have been...

Base (All): individuals 8,614 organisations 35

On all issues those aged 18-24 were more positive than other age groups. Those with children were more positive than those without children that the celebrations are an enjoyable experience.



Views on the Christmas and Hogmanay festivals (% net agree)

	Respondent type		Children		Age						SEG		
	Individual (8,614)	Org  (35)	Yes (2,434)	No (5,655)	18-24 (295)	25-34 (1,503)	35-44 (1,891)	45-54 (2,029)	55-64 (1,592)	65+ (921)	AB (4,353)	C1C2 (2,314)	DE (633)
Welcoming to Edinburgh residents	45%	66%	52%	44%	72%	55%	50%	42%	42%	35%	45%	50%	47%
Welcoming to tourists and other visitors	92%	91%	94%	92%	98%	95%	93%	92%	90%	87%	92%	94%	91%
An enjoyable experience	59%	74%	68%	58%	85%	70%	64%	58%	56%	46%	59%	67%	63%
An experience unique to Edinburgh	51%	66%	55%	50%	72%	57%	51%	49%	50%	49%	50%	56%	58%
Affordable	26%	46%	26%	27%	35%	28%	25%	24%	30%	27%	26%	28%	33%
Beneficial for Edinburgh businesses	71%	69%	75%	70%	85%	71%	72%	69%	73%	69%	71%	75%	76%
Environmentally sustainable	20%	23%	24%	19%	40%	27%	22%	17%	19%	16%	18%	25%	27%

Edinburgh respondents were less positive than respondents from the rest of Scotland and the UK on the issues of celebrations being an enjoyable experience, unique, affordable and environmentally sustainable. Those who have not attended either festivals were far less likely to agree that they are affordable than those who have attended .



Views on the Christmas and Hogmanay festivals (% net agree)

	Region				Attendance of Festivals			
	Central EH (1,369)	R/EH (4,506)	R/ Scot (1,943)	R/UK (600)	Attended (7,842)	Not attended either (795)	Not attended Hogmanay (4,621)	Not attended Christmas (966)
Welcoming to Edinburgh residents	35%	43%	58%	45%	49%	7%	37%	10%
Welcoming to tourists and other visitors	88%	91%	95%	97%	93%	75%	90%	77%
An enjoyable experience	44%	49%	81%	93%	65%	7%	51%	16%
An experience unique to Edinburgh	39%	43%	67%	82%	54%	18%	43%	25%
Affordable	18%	18%	39%	64%	29%	3%	21%	9%
Beneficial for Edinburgh businesses	57%	66%	84%	90%	74%	39%	66%	44%
Environmentally sustainable	12%	13%	35%	43%	22%	3%	15%	6%

The most common reasons for disagreeing with the statements about previous Winter Festivals included the expense of the festival, its perceived environmental impact, and the impact on local residents.

Reasons for disagreeing with statements about previous Christmas and Hogmanay celebrations (overall)

Issues by order of response	Number of responses (5,709)
Cost / expensive	2,489
Environmental impact	2,368
Impact on residents	2,235
Impact of location/size	1,777
Not unique	1,449
Funding/contractual issues	1,168
Impact on businesses	837
Impact on people	385
Exclusion	307
Activities	185
Other negative	1,325

Respondents felt many aspects of the Winter Festivals were expensive, including the food and drink available at the markets, and the rides/attractions. Some respondents felt this excluded families or people with low incomes.

Expensive	No	Example of verbatim comments
Expensive - general / vague	1,066	<i>"Crazy prices that are unaffordable to many residents"</i>
Market is expensive	531	<i>"Having visited Christmas markets around Europe in the past, I find Edinburgh market hugely expensive in comparison. I have attended: Hamburg, Warsaw and Berlin Christmas markets and these are all affordable"</i>
Attractions / Events are expensive	437	<i>"Events are pretty expensive so not affordable for everyone"</i>
Food and drink - expensive	348	<i>"These events are extremely not affordable. The only affordable elements is what the museums used to do on the morning after Hogmanay - wish that would be back! The food stalls especially are super expensive and there is nothing healthy, nothing cheap, nothing for families who might want to come again..."</i>
Rides are expensive	339	<i>"I feel that the cost of the rides etc. at Edinburgh's Christmas were too high (even with the EH discount). It meant that many local families could not enjoy the fun."</i>
Families / can't afford	282	<i>"I think tickets are too expensive and, therefore, probably rule out a vast majority of families attending events, considering 1 in 5 families live in poverty."</i>

Hogmanay / Street party - expensive	149	<i>"The street party is prohibitively expensive for many people. It is insufficiently accessible for people with impaired mobility and there aren't enough sitting areas (not on the ground)."</i>
Other goods are expensive	125	<i>"Everything is very expensive even though so many people attend. Prices of products and services could be reduced to make more accessible to more people"</i>
Exclusion	No	Example of verbatim comments
Excludes low income	208	<i>"I think it's very expensive. Even the food and drink and any games or rides, it's a shame as it makes it less accessible for those of us that live there but are on low incomes."</i>
Pitch fees too high	72	<i>"The Christmas market is completely unaffordable for Edinburgh local businesses which is surely what we should be championing. It should be all UK businesses, not from overseas."</i>
Excludes disabled	34	<i>"I'm an older Edinburgh resident without children. I've had mobility issues in the last few years. I enjoy cinema, theatre, Edinburgh's open spaces, lovely buildings and music. The December festivals are overcrowded and often dangerous to those with access issues. They have nothing to do with what I find enjoyable about life in the city"</i>
Excludes other faiths	2	<i>"Christmas is a religious festival and excludes a large section of the community. ..."</i>

Q6. You disagreed with one or more of the statements. Please tell us more about that.

Environmental issues encompassed a range of factors, including the rubbish and waste created by festival attendees, the lack of recycling points, and noise and light pollution that disrupted local residents in particular.



Environment	No	Example of verbatim comments
Damages garden / green spaces / trees	1,427	<i>"I don't think it's affordable for majority of residents and the damage done to Princes St gardens last year was extremely disappointing. It was out of use for approx. 6 months which should never happen again."</i>
Rubbish / waste	562	<i>"Ordinary Edinburgh families can't afford to access the Festivals. Huge amounts of rubbish created and more could be done to encourage recycling, e.g. deposits for cups etc."</i>
Unsustainable	491	<i>"affordability, some marginalized people cannot buy the tickets. Sustainability must be tempered with environmental concerns"</i>
Environment - general / vague	417	<i>"Entrance & participation in events/activities seems to be highly priced and not conducive to larger families or people on low income. Large footfall must have a negative environmental impact in the city."</i>
Plastics / un-recyclables	219	<i>"Need more recycling points and retailers using paper bags and food vendors using alternatives to plastic or have cup/drinks vessel deposit scheme used by all drink vendors and collection points near exits as well as through vendors"</i>

Environment	No	Example of verbatim comments
Resource usage / carbon footprint	217	<i>"... Any form of excessive consumption, which Christmas and Hogmanay are, is simply unsustainable. Branding these events as environmentally sustainable is simply green washing..."</i>
Noise in the street and outside	128	<i>"The noise of the music is excessive. Why is it necessary to play music in the city centre at a volume which can be heard in Leith? And loud enough to be a disturbance and nuisance."</i>
Light / pollution	31	<i>"Damage caused Princes Street Gardens last year & St Andrews Square in previous years. Noise & light pollution, amount of waste created over a six week period."</i>
Noise caused in my building/block of flats/stairs	2	<i>"I have friends who live more centrally whose lives - and sleep - are severely disrupted by the noise in the streets with late night carousers, not to mention the noise in tenements, too many of which are now Airbnb, with partying and little consideration for local residents."</i>

Concern about the impact of the Winter Festivals on local residents centred around the view that these celebrations are designed for tourists and not local people. Respondents commonly cited issues accessing their home and local amenities.



Impact on residents	No	Example of verbatim comments
Residents feel unwelcomed / aimed at tourists	1084	<i>"They are not welcoming to city centre residents, only tourists and out-of-towners"</i>
Disruption for residents	689	<i>"The disruption to public space that citizens live in is too great."</i>
Access to streets / public spaces	388	<i>"Fencing off areas of publicly accessible land paid for by Edinburgh council tax payers should definitely NOT happen."</i>
Residents don't benefit	350	<i>"These events are no way designed to be of benefit for citizens of Edinburgh."</i>
Discount wanted for residents	238	<i>"More discounts and priority booking should be available to Edinburgh residents"</i>

Impact on residents	No	Example of verbatim comments
No consideration for residents	230	<i>"Apart from repeated "consultations", there is minimal consideration given to Edinburgh residents, especially those living in the Old Town."</i>
Rental / AirBnB issues	105	<i>"need more control of tourist accommodation e.g. airbnb in private residential areas."</i>
Road closures	93	<i>"Road closures make life difficult for residents."</i>
Access to my home/permits	81	<i>"Residents needing wristbands to get to their houses is ridiculous."</i>
Property prices increase	14	<i>"The event is busy, expensive and trashes princess street gardens every year. Brexit will make it impossible for traders from the EU to come. The centre of the city is turned into a tourist attraction that most ordinary families fine out of reach. I doubt that money made stays in Scotland. The rise in tourism fuels air b and b which creates drives up the price of rental property for ordinary residents."</i>

Many respondents felt the Winter Festivals were, overcrowded, too big and in the wrong location. Some wanted to see them more spread out across the city which would reduce the pressure on local infrastructure.

Impact on location	No	Example of verbatim comments
Overcrowded	1,192	<i>"At times it got too busy in the markets and became unbearable- the volume of people needs to be addressed."</i>
Too big	565	<i>"The city becomes chaotic during the Christmas markets and Hogmanay, it needs to be toned down to remain enjoyable."</i>
Too centralised	293	<i>"All activities are squashed into a relatively small area. It would be better to spread the attractions out across the city"</i>
Wrong location	174	<i>"I would like to see the celebration moved out of the gardens and moved to George street but not away from the city centre"</i>
Lack of facilities (toilet/seating etc.)	31	<i>"The festivals are not accessible for wheelchair users. None of the rides are suitable for children with mobility needs. There are no changing places toilets available. Carers tickets cannot be purchased in advance, and require people to queue twice, in very long queues, to buy them on the day - making the whole experience very stressful."</i>

Impact on people	No	Example of verbatim comments
Safety - crowds	161	<i>"Expensive experience - especially the Christmas market and fun fair. Extremely crowded to the point of being unpleasant and unsafe with small children sometimes. Litter everywhere."</i>
Not family / child friendly	126	<i>"The tickets are priced for holiday makers not families in Edinburgh"</i>
Drunkenness	95	<i>"The events are perceived as alcohol fuelled young people's event. If you don't fill that profile it's not for you"</i>
Safety - traffic	29	<i>"Christmas markets in Germany are much more stylish, quieter and enjoyable, giving a real social experience. Edinburgh Christmas is a tatty rip-off designed to make money for Underbelly. Also, thanks to traffic in Princess street, it stinks of petrol and you have to fear for your life when you move between the venues."</i>
Crime / antisocial behaviour	28	<i>"I disagree with a lot of thing because of the anti social behaviour that it causes .."</i>

A minority of respondents felt the Winter Festivals did not feel unique or reflect the culture and traditions of a Scotland. The sentiment among these respondents was that you could be ‘anywhere’ when attending these festivals.

Not unique	No	Example of verbatim comments
Not unique to Edinburgh / Same as other places	986	<i>“It could be any festive celebration anywhere. It's not unique to Edinburgh- take away the castle and other landmarks and you could be anywhere.”</i>
Doesn't represent Scotland / Edinburgh	414	<i>“It should more focused on Scottish Christmas and Hogmanay- what's a German market got to do with a Scottish Xmas”</i>
Stalls / products repetitive	413	<i>“Xmas markets are not unique, in fact quite the opposite multiple stalls etc. are just repeated over and over”</i>

Activities not good	No	Example of verbatim comments
Rides / attractions (negative)	131	<i>“The cost of rides is too expensive for what you get. I.e. happy with cost but not length duration. Of rides.”</i>
Fireworks (negative)	57	<i>“The drone display was nice but the fireworks disperse lots of ash and soot all over Edinburgh, which cannot be healthy in the long term.”</i>

Similar to the themes about the impact on local residents, respondents also felt that local businesses did not benefit from the Winter Festivals as much as they could. Respondents wanted Scottish businesses to have a greater presence at the markets.

Impact on business	No	Example of verbatim comments
Local businesses underrepresented	365	<i>"The prices at the Christmas market are very high and it's crowded. It feels like we're being over-charged and it also doesn't feel like many local businesses are involved."</i>
Local businesses (small / independents) don't benefit	335	<i>"It is not in any way shape or form beneficial to Edinburgh businesses whatsoever."</i>
Local suppliers / producers underrepresented	167	<i>"It's too expensive, it doesn't feature enough local/Scottish producers. It is no different from the 100s of other Christmas markets"</i>
Takes trade away from local business	130	<i>"The Christmas Market I think takes trade away from some small traders who pay rates / council taxes all year."</i>
Local crafts / arts underrepresented	113	<i>"The events are not unique to Edinburgh as there are many Christmas Fairs around Europe that have the exact same stalls, etc. It would be nice to promote local artists and artisans instead."</i>

Contractual issues	No	Example of verbatim comments
Profit-driven / commercial	922	<i>"The festivals have degenerated into money making fiasco as witness the East princes Street monster."</i>
current management complaints	420	<i>"In recent years, ie since xxxx took over the operations the costs have risen dramatically and sometimes doubled in price which has made the whole experience less inviting and enjoyable."</i>
Criticism over funding	66	<i>"A waste of public money that should have been allocated elsewhere."</i>

Other, more isolated issues included the length of the Winter Festivals and perceptions that they were ‘not like they used to be’. These respondents wanted a return to previous incarnations of the festival.

Other issues	No	Example of verbatim comments
Tacky / distasteful / low quality general	499	<i>“It is tacky and makes our city centre a circus over Christmas and New Year.”</i>
Tacky / low quality – goods & products	378	<i>“German market unsafe and stalls sell substandard goods”</i>
Used to be better / not like it used to be	241	<i>“The Christmas market became to commercial in the last years. The original traditional German Christmas market was much nicer.”</i>
Tourist complaints	107	<i>“I think there are too many tourists during the Christmas festival and more could be done for out lying areas.”</i>
Too long	86	<i>“The impact left and the time it takes to put some of the venues back to what they were take too long”</i>
Lacks true Christmas spirit	79	<i>“Rampant commercialisation has removed all and any “spirit” of the celebrations.”</i>
Miss a specific element	65	<i>“Bring back The Night Before, the v Street performance evening on the 30th, and remove huge ugly machines that belittle monuments: wheel and others”</i>
Lacks planning permission	55	<i>“People’s safety and planning permission don’t seem to be a priority.”</i>
Other	163	<i>“It’s a hard thing to balance tourism and local ecology and needs more thought like this consultation...ie what might be good value for money may not be locally supportive . Equally is the high income generated worth the expense of recovery, especially as this also applies for summer festival.”</i>



Previous Winter Festivals

When asked about previous Winter Festivals, views were mixed. While many of the comments were positive a larger number were negative. Many of the comments made in response to this question echo the ideas expressed previously.

Positive views on past Winter Festivals

Points of contentment	Number of responses (2,132)
Specific points of enjoyment	1,808
General positives	533
Social benefits	237
Economic Benefits	231

Negative views on past Winter Festivals

Points of contention	Number of responses (4,329)
Impact of location/size	2,243
Other negative	1,709
Impact on residents	1,175
Funding & contractual issues	968
Cost / Expensive	941
Environmental impact	938
Not unique	930
Impact on businesses	493
Impact of people	420
Activities	158
Exclusion	153

Many of the comments around points of enjoyment reflect an appreciation of the enjoyment that the Winter Festivals bring. Other comment on specific events and attractions such as the Christmas market, the ice rink, fireworks and so forth.



Points of enjoyment	No	Example of verbatim comments
General positive / enjoyment	1,126	<i>"Loved both the market and the Hogmanay street party. Will definitely attend both if they take place."</i>
Christmas Market	345	<i>"The fireworks are something that I cherish a lot, even if I only observe them from a distance."</i>
Ice Rink	191	<i>"Definitely missed the ice skating rink when that was dropped one year."</i>
Fireworks / light show	188	<i>"The fireworks are something that I cherish a lot, even if I only observe them from a distance."</i>
Family events	126	<i>"I've been coming for a few years with my daughters and granddaughters. We walk about on the Friday night then visit Santa and the pantomime on the Saturday."</i>

Points of enjoyment	No	Example of verbatim comments
Torchlight procession	108	<i>"I really enjoyed the Hogmanay torchlit procession, especially when it was led by the vikings from Up Helly Aa."</i>
Music / concert	94	<i>"Yes, I have previously attended (and loved) the Ross bandstand concerts on Hogmanay."</i>
Rides / attractions	86	<i>"I finally fulfilled an almost lifetime ambition by riding on the Carousel - using my grandson as an excuse."</i>
Other specific event	173	<i>"The year the ice sculpture venue was in George street was lovely and very different to what's been in edinburgh before."</i>

Respondents expressed a clear desire to keep the winter celebrations and many commented on how they are now part of Edinburgh’s tradition, and how it was missed in 2020.

General positives	No	Example of verbatim comments
Part of Edinburgh's spirit / tradition	262	<i>“Christmas and New year celebrations are part of Edinburghs culture and it's an absolute tradition now”</i>
Keep it	154	<i>“Love the celebrations, please please please do not cancel them!!!!”</i>
Makes winter more enjoyable	116	<i>“Fantastic way to bring cheer to the city at what can be a miserable time of year.”</i>
Want it back after 2020 cancelled	102	<i>“It was sorely missed last year when it wasn’t on. Such a special time of year and makes the Center of Edinburgh a social hub. Last year it was dead and soulless.”</i>
Don't change it	13	<i>“There must be over 100,000 visitors to the Edinburgh Christmas every year and growing. I think that is the best answer to your question. Also the the best indication that people do want the Christmas festival. The Edinburgh Christmas festival is one of the best in the world. Why change something that is so good for Scotland.”</i>

Many of those who gave positive comment remarked on the social and economic benefits to the winter festival.



Social benefits	No	Example of verbatim comments
Well organised	126	<i>"We felt so safe with friendly police in all key areas. The event was well sign posted and security was high but not intrusive."</i>
Popular	70	<i>"Obviously they are very popular as they are always busy."</i>
Discount good	36	<i>"I appreciate the 'local discount' for the Christmas rides, I would hope that would continue in future."</i>
Not too disruptive / harmful	23	<i>"I think they're done in a way that balances being mindful of local residents and attracting tourists- keeping Hogmanay just to certain city centre areas is excellent"</i>

Economic benefits	No	Example of verbatim comments
Economy / business benefits	158	<i>"These bring valuable revenue to Edinburgh businesses"</i>
Tourism benefits	119	<i>"It brings much needed tourism to the City during the winter months."</i>

The impact of holding the festival in one central place is a theme that repeats throughout the consultation. Key concerns reported at this point in the consultation related to overcrowding, the size being too big, too centralised and so forth.



Impact of locations and size	No	Example of verbatim comments
Overcrowded	1376	<i>"Just far too many people/attractions in a small area."</i>
Too big	740	<i>"I do think they've grown out of control and need to be curtailed."</i>
Too centralised	361	<i>"the celebrations are concentrated in too small an area and should be spread out across city so it is of benefit the whole city"</i>
Wrong location	214	<i>"st andrews square/princes st gardens are not suitable for high footfall during winter. need to look at the long term option of george st or some other area like leith or the west end"</i>
Lack of facilities (toilet/seating etc)	59	<i>"More temporary toilet facilities are badly needed for public use"</i>

Many lamented that it isn't like it used to be and made comments about the poor quality. Some missed attractions that featured in the past, others were concerned about planning and durations of the festivals.



Other points	No	Example of verbatim comments
Used to be better / not like it used to be	581	<i>"When the celebrations started around 1992 it was lovely, small scale, it felt like it was for the people of Edinburgh, it was something special. Open-air cinema, sound and light show in prince's Street Gardens, it was excellent."</i>
Tacky / distasteful / low quality general	486	<i>"The Christmas Festival area is tacky and cheap looking and not in keeping with Edinburgh's World Heritage Site status."</i>
Tacky / low quality – goods & products	261	<i>"Christmas market a bit tacky - be nice to see things handcrafted and individual"</i>
Miss a specific element	190	<i>"Bring the ice skating back"</i>

Other points	No	Example of verbatim comments
Too long	119	<i>"Do think Christmas celebrations should maybe not be so long, maybe just December."</i>
Lacks planning permission	83	<i>"Concerned no planning was required for organisers. One rule for one one rule for another."</i>
Lacks true Christmas spirit	73	<i>"They have been very commercial and remarkably lacking in any real content of the story of Christmas itself"</i>
Tourist complaints	51	<i>"Far too crowded. Too many tourists"</i>
Other	283	<i>"I tend to avoid them as much as possible."</i>

The negative impact on residents is a major point of concern to many. Many residents feel that it isn't designed for them, they face access issues and can see the negative effect on property prices and houses being taken up by Air B&B.



Topic	No	Example of verbatim comments
Residents feel unwelcomed / aimed at tourists	535	<i>"It seems to be marketed to tourists and visitors - not anything special for residents"</i>
Disruption for residents	324	<i>"There were even more celebrations on offer making the city an unpleasant experience for residents to get about the city centre and get on with their work and life. There are so many industries and people in non related festival daily work."</i>
Access to streets/Public Spaces	239	<i>"Paying £16 to have access to Princess street and not being allowed to go to Carlton hill to watch the fireworks was unacceptable"</i>
Residents don't benefit	161	<i>"Totally out of touch with what the residents of this city need purely a commercial exercise with absolutely no benefit to the council tax payer"</i>
No consideration for residents	106	<i>"I don't like the way residents' needs are disregarded. This isn't a theme park."</i>

Topic	No	Example of verbatim comments
Discount wanted for residents	76	<i>"Priority tickets and lower prices should be offered to residents"</i>
Access to my home/permits	55	<i>"Let people who actually live in the areas you're using be able to enter their own homes and invite friends to join them without having to ask for permission."</i>
Road closures	27	<i>"Access to North Bridge is essential to maintain bus services for those less mobile. Scotland's demographic is weighted to older ages. Also poor access to transport for disabled. Christmas & Hogmanay 2019 had excessive road closures not in any way advertised for passengers arriving at Waverley station."</i>
Rental / AirBnB issues	26	<i>"Have been very enjoyable, although sometimes areas are packed. Hotels can be difficult to find and often expensive."</i>
Property prices increase	5	<i>"...Many people find it extremely disrespectful to the local community that the council is allowing artists studios, music venues and independent businesses in the hearts of communities to be demolished around the city in favour of luxury flats, which are often rented out to tourists during the festival period and push the cost of rent up for permanent residents..."</i>

Many feel that the festival is run for profit at the cost of all else, criticisms of the current management and funding model were made. Many comments were made about the expense of the festivals.



Contractual issues	No	Example of verbatim comments
Profit-driven / commercial	716	<i>"Their sole purpose has gradually become commercial. To extract as much money from visitors and residents alike."</i>
Current management complaints	344	<i>"Underbelly = bad. Stop using them."</i>
Criticism over funding	45	<i>"Council funding given to private enterprise is a terrible waste of public funds"</i>

Expensive	No	Example of verbatim comments
Expensive - general / vague	496	<i>"Prices are quite high"</i>
Market is expensive	155	<i>"Faire at Christmas market very expensive, local discount is good but still an expensive day out"</i>
Food and drink	89	<i>"The food and drinks are extortionate."</i>
Hogmanay / Street party - expensive	78	<i>"Some Hogmanay events are getting too pricey."</i>
Rides	74	<i>"Some of the rides, like the wheel, are very expensive. You see it virtually empty. Reduce the price and more people would be able to take part."</i>
Attractions / Events are expensive	66	<i>"It's a moneygrab. Prices far too high, ticketed events which cost more and more each year is wrong."</i>
Families / can't afford	60	<i>"If you are a family with children, even just 1 child it can turn into a very expensive day with some of the prices charged. This can make you less likely to return for several visits the same year, which some may prefer to do."</i>
Other goods	56	<i>"Too expensive for Edinburgh residents, £10 for a plastic ornament! Too much focus on the city centre where Leith and other communities could benefit from tourism"</i>

Environmental impact is a major concern for many. The themes here echo those voiced earlier in the consultation, including damage to green spaces, unsustainability and carbon footprint.

Environment	No	Example of verbatim comments
Damages garden / green spaces / trees	645	<i>"Gardens left in a disgraceful state and trees were cut down unnecessarily"</i>
Environment - general / vague	145	<i>"Far too much going on and no notice taken of environmental issues"</i>
Rubbish / waste	120	<i>"Event organizers could do a much better job of collecting garbage and recyclables at the bigger events. Attendees shouldn't have to go far to dispose of trash and recyclables. The containers need to be cleared on a regular basis during the event."</i>
Noise in the street and outside	87	<i>"The noise levels of music were unnecessary - need to be controlled so that they are neither a nuisance nor a disturbance to residents."</i>
Unsustainable	84	<i>"More attention needs to be paid to making all the holiday events sufficiently environmentally sustainable. This does not seem to have been a priority in the past, but it should be a top priority."</i>

Environment	No	Example of verbatim comments
Resource usage / carbon footprint	32	<i>"The biggest challenge is to align with the aspiration to be a net zero carbon city by 2030. Unless all these celebrations actively contribute to that objective then they will have failed the political and the practical test."</i>
Plastics / unrecyclables	20	<i>"The celebrations produce a lot of recycling/waste and the city should look to reduce that in similar ways that music festivals have by not selling plastic water bottles and plastic cups."</i>
Light pollution	6	<i>"Over the years it's become more and more commercialised, taking over streets like George Street are overpriced and unnecessary illumination events."</i>
Noise caused in my building/block of flats/Stairs	1	<i>"Too many Air BnBs steal the city from its residents and very often cause unwelcome noise from parties. "</i>

The issue of the festival not being unique to Edinburgh came up again, this is largely focused on the nature of the German market. Some felt that the festivals negatively impact local business.



Not unique	No	Example of verbatim comments
Stalls / products repetitive	430	<i>"Too many of the market stalls sell the same products; too much repetition"</i>
Not unique to Edinburgh / Same as other places	353	<i>"They're not particularly different from any other city. Glasgow has very similar events"</i>
Doesn't represent Scotland / Edinburgh	326	<i>"A bit more flavour of Edinburgh and Scotland would be an improvement"</i>

Negative impact on business	No	Example of verbatim comments
Local businesses underrepresented	225	<i>"I want to see local traders in markets selling good quality Scottish goods"</i>
Local businesses (small / independents) don't benefit	155	<i>"They should be more inclusive and supportive of existing retailers and hospitality around the city."</i>
Local suppliers / producers underrepresented	119	<i>"Would like to see more local products surely we can boost more made in Scotland products as opposed to the Scandanavian/German image"</i>
Local crafts / arts underrepresented	98	<i>"Could invite more local artists (painting, pottery, jewellery etc.) / coffee shops"</i>
Takes trade away from local business	50	<i>"The vendors are not Edinburgh based so they are taking business away from local traders"</i>

Negative impact on people, negative comments about some of the attractions and concerns about exclusion were points made by a small number of respondents.



Negative impact on people	No	Example of verbatim comments
Safety - crowds	228	<i>"Sometimes too crowded to the point of it being a risk to public safety"</i>
Not family / child friendly	125	<i>"Since having kids I find them it far too stressful trying to navigate crowds & with nowhere to shelter with a baby or easily change them"</i>
Drunkenness	100	<i>"if your not falling about drunk, your looked on as something strange."</i>
Crime / antisocial behaviour	30	<i>"Broken glass everywhere fights vomit lieing on the streets people urinating in stairs behind cars people roaring and shouting totally embarrassing for a capital city"</i>
Safety - traffic	12	<i>"The security at recent events has not been well planned, long queues along the road are not very safe."</i>

Negative events	No	Example of verbatim comments
Rides / attractions (negative)	122	<i>"The big wheel is an eyesore and not appropriate to Edinburgh's Christmas"</i>
Fireworks (negative)	39	<i>"The only thing I really don't like are the noises from the fireworks. If there was a ban on all fireworks being noisy it would be a great improvement."</i>

Exclusion	No	Example of verbatim comments
Excludes low income	70	<i>"Even with local discounts the costs involved are not affordable for people on average or bflow average earnings."</i>
Excludes disabled	45	<i>"I'm in a wheelchair and the park where it's held is VERY steep and not very accessible"</i>
Pitch fees too high	39	<i>"Give local SMEs a chance and stop charging them £15k for a stall. No local SME can afford that!"</i>
Excludes other faiths	4	<i>"Too commercialised. As a non secular/diverse city we should be pay respect to numerous winter festivals."</i>



Future of the Winter Festivals

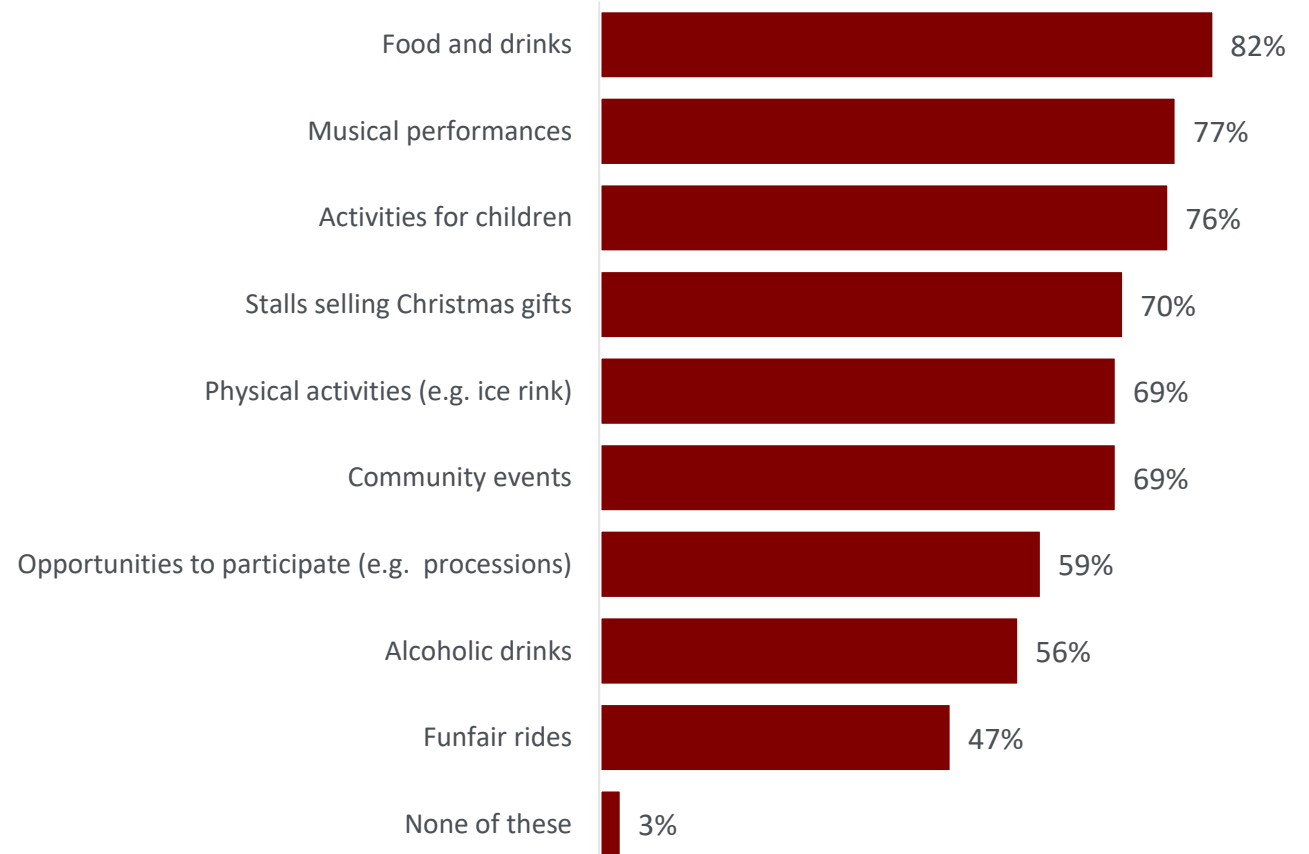
Activities for Christmas

- Those least in favour of funfair rides were:
 - Age: 65+ (36%)
 - Postcodes: EH1/2 (41%) EH3/7/8/ (36%)
 - Children: those with none (42%)
 - Gender: Men (46%)
 - SEG: AB (46%)
 - Attendance: those who had not attended (17%)
- Those least in favour of alcoholic drinks were:
 - Age: 65+ (36%)
 - Postcodes: those residing in Edinburgh (52%)
 - SEG: DE (47%)
 - Ethnic: BAME (48%)
 - Attendance: those who had not attended (24%)

Funfair rides and alcoholic drinks were the least wanted activities.



Activities wanted in future Christmas celebrations



Q7. If Edinburgh were to have a Christmas celebration in future, what activities would you want to see included? *Please tick all that apply*

As to be expected, parents were more in favour of activities for children and funfair rides than those without children. Older respondents were less in favour of funfair rides, alcohol and stalls than their younger counterparts.



Activities for future Christmas festivals (% net agree)

	Respondent type		Children		Age						SEG		
	Individual (8,614)	Org (35) ⚠	Yes (2,434)	No (5,655)	18-24 (295)	25-34 (1,503)	35-44 (1,891)	45-54 (2,029)	55-64 (1,592)	65+ (921)	AB (4,353)	C1C2 (2,314)	DE (633)
Funfair rides	47%	46%	63%	42%	72%	54%	55%	46%	41%	36%	46%	55%	51%
Food and drinks	82%	80%	86%	84%	97%	92%	86%	82%	78%	69%	83%	87%	79%
Alcoholic drinks	56%	60%	60%	57%	88%	74%	61%	57%	47%	36%	58%	64%	47%
Stalls selling Christmas gifts	70%	71%	74%	70%	88%	80%	74%	68%	68%	58%	70%	77%	71%
Musical performances	77%	83%	77%	78%	79%	77%	75%	78%	80%	78%	78%	78%	80%
Community events	69%	77%	68%	70%	65%	70%	69%	70%	69%	67%	71%	67%	67%
Opportunities to participate	59%	69%	61%	60%	49%	56%	59%	63%	64%	57%	62%	57%	59%
Physical activities (e.g. ice rink)	69%	71%	77%	68%	87%	79%	75%	67%	64%	60%	71%	74%	66%
Activities for children	76%	83%	90%	71%	68%	72%	81%	76%	76%	80%	77%	76%	79%

Q7. If Edinburgh were to have a Christmas celebration in future, what activities would you want to see included? *Please tick all that apply*

Edinburgh residents were less in favour of funfair, food, alcohol, gifts and more in favour of community events than respondents from outside of Edinburgh. Those who had not attended favoured community events over other more commercial attractions.

Activities for future Christmas festivals (% net agree)

	Region				Attendance of Festivals			
	Central EH (1,369)	R/EH (4,506)	R/Scot (1,943)	R/UK (600)	Attended (7,842)	Not attended either (795)	Not attended Hogmanay (4,621)	Not attended Christmas (966)
Funfair rides	37%	41%	64%	61%	51%	13%	43%	17%
Food and drinks	73%	78%	92%	94%	86%	42%	78%	47%
Alcoholic drinks	50%	52%	65%	74%	60%	19%	49%	24%
Stalls selling Christmas gifts	60%	64%	84%	93%	74%	31%	67%	35%
Musical performances	72%	75%	82%	85%	80%	51%	71%	56%
Community events	74%	73%	60%	57%	69%	62%	64%	62%
Opportunities to participate	58%	61%	58%	58%	61%	41%	51%	44%
Physical activities (e.g. ice rink)	65%	67%	77%	75%	73%	37%	63%	40%
Activities for children	72%	77%	80%	66%	78%	56%	73%	57%

Q7. If Edinburgh were to have a Christmas celebration in future, what activities would you want to see included? *Please tick all that apply*

Additional activities mentioned for Christmas were similar to those mentioned for Hogmanay and included a range of events and activities, the involvement of local business and people, charitable events and inclusions of all communities.



Other activities for Christmas celebrations

Issues by order of response	Number of responses (3,006)
Events	1,056
Attractions	833
Local	823
Other	807
Inclusion	575
Charitable	209

Examples of events wanted for Christmas included live performances of music, dance events, exhibition, workshops as well as large community events such as processions and sporting events.



Events	No	Example of verbatim comments
Music	189	<i>"More outdoor music, bands, traditional Christmas music."</i>
Carol singing	176	<i>"Christmas carol sing a long"</i>
Indoor entertainment / theatre/comedy / etc	156	<i>"Theatre and shows - like a Christmas mini festival."</i>
Art exhibitions	128	<i>"Winter themed art events i.e. ice sculptures or open air galleries"</i>
Dancing / ceilidhs / disco	97	<i>"Outdoor Scottish dancing led by experts."</i>
Street performers / street theatre	87	<i>"Street performers, including theatre companies, making use of public space"</i>
Guided walks / tours	78	<i>"A self-guided walking tour to show Edinburgh at its Winter best."</i>
Art workshops / activities	78	<i>"Craft activities for adults - wreath making, decorations etc."</i>

Events	No	Example of verbatim comments
Parade / procession (e.g. with singers / bands)	75	<i>"Would like to see a traditional Christmas parade with carol singers and musical bands"</i>
History / museum exhibitions	65	<i>"Celebrating the history of Christmas through the ages in Scotland."</i>
Sporting events	51	<i>"Walking, running and cycling events through town could be good."</i>
Opening ceremony / switching on lights	33	<i>"I'd attend a switching on of the lights ceremony"</i>
Storytelling	32	<i>"Storytelling"</i>
Candlelit / torchlit procession	30	<i>"Torchlit procession & bonfire"</i>
Open air movies	25	<i>"Pop up cinema in Princess Street Gardens (not sure about the cold!)."</i>
Literature	17	<i>"Literary events, writing in the city. Bringing the city's communities together in a pro-active inclusive way."</i>

Attractions and activities that respondents wanted for Christmas included many of the traditional elements that have featured in the past, including: Christmas lights, ice rink, rides, reindeer etc.



Attractions	No	Example of verbatim comments
Christmas decorations / tree / lights	206	<i>"Proper decorations on The Mound, Princes Street, Rose Street, George Street to create a festive feel."</i>
Santa	170	<i>"Santa's grotto, don't leave it out. Your Santa's are the best!"</i>
Food and drink	116	<i>"I am reluctant to include food and drinks because of the quality of the past years, but this should be a feature if the offering could be improved and supplied by local businesses."</i>
Ice rink	73	<i>"I would definitely like to see the ice rink return to St Andrews Square!"</i>
Rides	52	<i>"Carousel & old school stuff like helter skelter"</i>
Reindeer	48	<i>"Bring the reindeer back!!!"</i>

Attractions	No	Example of verbatim comments
Outdoor seating / facilities	35	<i>"More areas to sit and enjoy the event. It seems to be getting very full of stalls and less space to mingle, chat and enjoy. Other Christmas events in Germany, etc seem more open and have space."</i>
Fireworks (not silent)	35	<i>"Fireworks!"</i>
Alcohol	25	<i>"More outside areas for drinking and bookable tables or booths"</i>
Drones / lights in the sky / alternatives to fireworks	19	<i>"Many major cities now stage light festivals throughout the winter months, and I believe that with it's unique architecture and environs, Edinburgh would be able to stage a very successful such event"</i>
Other	220	<i>"A talent contest."</i>

For future Christmas celebrations respondents wanted local involvement which included local products, Scottish themes elements local artists and artisans.



Local	No	Example of verbatim comments
Local products / food / etc	306	<i>“Stalls selling traditional products, food and drink from local producers eg farmers and artisans.”</i>
Scottish / local theme and culture	285	<i>“It would be nice if it somehow was more uniquely related to Edinburgh, or even Scotland.”</i>
Local business involvement	201	<i>“Focus on small business. Give Edinburgh based small businesses discounted participation rates.”</i>
Local community involvement	183	<i>“It is mentioned above but I would really like to highlight community at this time and think it would be much nicer to celebrate community groups rather than have big corporate celebrations”</i>
Local artists, bands, choirs, etc	140	<i>“Promote local bands/songwriters. Give them a free platform around the city center in which to perform.”</i>
Funding for local projects	18	<i>“More local events community arranged but with CEC funding available currently given to corporate organisations.”</i>

Elements of inclusion were mentioned in the context of faith, wider society, community groups and affordability. A minority mentioned virtual online events.



Inclusion	No	Example of verbatim comments
Christianity / church / nativity	162	<i>"A proper recognition of the fact that Christmas is a major Christian religious feast as well as a secular celebration."</i>
Free / cheaper events	149	<i>"Free performances for all in the Gardens on the stage....not big names and ticket only and not closed off!"</i>
Family-friendly (or kids) shows / events	147	<i>"More fun, Christmas related fun for children of all ages."</i>
Inclusion of marginalised - elderly, disabled, etc	78	<i>"Ways for additional support needs children to join in, perhaps a quiet hour open only to those with additional needs"</i>
Multi-faith inclusion	47	<i>"More diversity of the holidays. Kwanzaa and Hanukkah are celebrated at the same time, so reference to those celebrations would be most welcome and feel more inclusive."</i>

Inclusion	No	Example of verbatim comments
School events	33	<i>"A stage for local school children to showcase their skills."</i>
Non-alcoholic venues / events	27	<i>"quiet, non-alcoholic venues -fun and celebrations does not always have to be loud and drunken"</i>
Affordable food / drink	21	<i>"More affordable & local gift & food stalls"</i>
Virtual / online events	16	<i>"I think there should still be a virtual aspect to the celebration for locals who can't physically attend."</i>

Charitable events included eco-related events, fundraising and civic events. Other comments related to the quality of offering, locations and size of celebrations.



Charitable	No	Example of verbatim comments
Charity events / fundraising / volunteering	114	<i>"It would be nice to do some sort of charity event to raise money for homeless people or the sick kids etc"</i>
Eco-related events/practices (ie, recycling, renewables etc)	91	<i>"Include, and make such very visual, sustainability efforts such as recycling points, visually obvious recycling team as we work toward lower emissions and carbon neutral country"</i>
Civic events - tree planting, litter picking etc	9	<i>"Common activities. Cleaning the city. Planting trees."</i>

Other comments	No	Example of verbatim comments
Less tacky / less touristy / more tasteful	308	<i>"MUCH better markets. They are so lazy - repeated stalls of tat, nothing worth buying."</i>
Spread events across city	302	<i>"Everything should not be city centre. We have a whole city but everything is crammed into town. Make things more accessible to communities"</i>
Smaller / less disruption / less crowds / etc	257	<i>"The above, but the key thing here is proportion. Don't let these thing overtake public spaces and dwarf the offer or existing shops. Should be a bit of extra excitement, variety or novelty that complements year round traders' efforts at this time of the year"</i>
Complaints - general	153	<i>"Honestly it's not the concept that's gone wrong with previous versions of Edinburgh's Christmas/Hogmanay. All of these things are fine, it's just that they've been so TERRIBLY executed."</i>

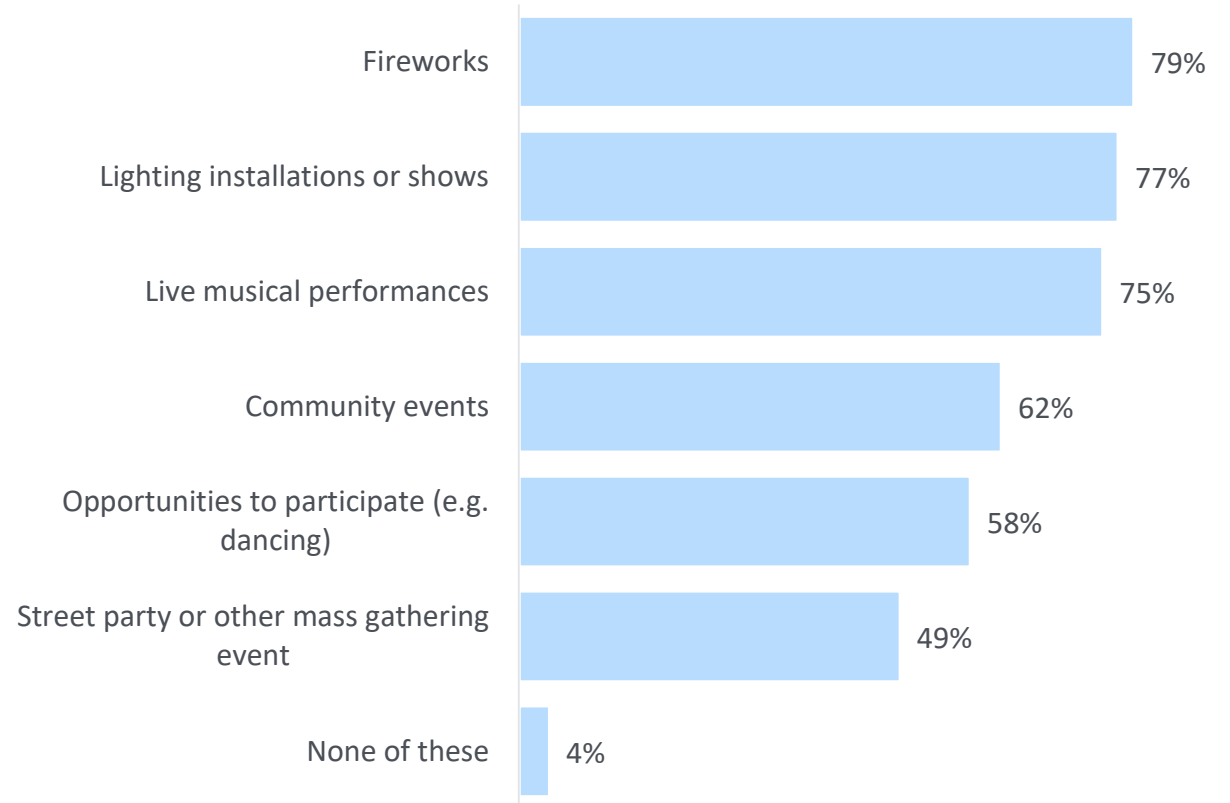
Activities for Hogmanay

- Those least in favour of street parties were:
 - Age: 65+ (36%)
 - Postcodes: EH (44%)
 - Gender: Women (47%)
 - SEG: DE (47%)
 - Attendance: those who had not attended (38%)
- Those least in favour of opportunities to participate such as dancing were:
 - Age: 65+ (52%)
 - SEG: DE (55%)
 - Attendance: those who had not attended (47%)

Street party or other mass gatherings were the least wanted activities



Activities wanted in future Hogmanay celebrations



Q9. If Edinburgh were to have a Hogmanay celebration in future, what activities would you want to see included? *Please tick all that apply*

The older the age the less likely street parties, live musical events and lighting installations would be wanted - these events were favoured by those aged 18-24.

Activities for future Hogmanay festivals (% net agree)

	Respondent type		Children		Age						SEG		
	Individual (8,614)	Org (35)	Yes (2,434)	No (5,655)	18-24 (295)	25-34 (1,503)	35-44 (1,891)	45-54 (2,029)	55-64 (1,592)	65+ (921)	AB (4,353)	C1C2 (2,314)	DE (633)
Street party or other mass gathering	49%	66%	54%	49%	77%	62%	54%	46%	43%	36%	50%	56%	47%
Live musical performances	75%	80%	78%	75%	91%	82%	77%	74%	72%	67%	76%	79%	74%
Community events	62%	80%	61%	62%	54%	61%	63%	62%	63%	60%	63%	61%	59%
Opportunities to participate	58%	69%	58%	59%	60%	61%	59%	58%	59%	52%	60%	58%	55%
Lighting installations or shows	77%	80%	81%	76%	88%	83%	81%	75%	75%	68%	78%	80%	75%
Fireworks	79%	80%	85%	78%	86%	86%	82%	77%	75%	75%	82%	79%	74%

Q9. If Edinburgh were to have a Hogmanay celebration in future, what activities would you want to see included? *Please tick all that apply*



Those living in the rest of UK were most in favour of fireworks. Respondents from Edinburgh were more likely than respondents from other regions to want community events. Those who had not attended Hogmanay were less likely to want street parties or mass gatherings than those who had attended events.

Activities for future Hogmanay festivals (% net agree)

	Region				Attendance of Festivals			
	Central EH (1,369)	R/EH (4,506)	R/Scot (1,943)	R/UK (600)	Attended (7,842)	Not attended either (795)	Not attended Hogmanay (4,621)	Not attended Christmas (966)
Street party or other mass gathering	45%	44%	58%	68%	52%	19%	38%	27%
Live musical performances	68%	71%	84%	86%	78%	42%	67%	50%
Community events	67%	66%	52%	52%	62%	56%	55%	58%
Opportunities to participate	58%	57%	57%	60%	60%	34%	47%	40%
Lighting installations or shows	71%	74%	83%	86%	80%	47%	71%	52%
Fireworks	76%	78%	81%	85%	81%	53%	73%	58%

Q9. If Edinburgh were to have a Hogmanay celebration in future, what activities would you want to see included? *Please tick all that apply*

Respondents cited a range of other activities and events that they would like to see at future Hogmanay Festivals. They most commonly wanted to see specific attractions and activities, or one-off events, but also greater involvement of local people.

Other activities respondents would like to see at future Hogmanay celebrations (overall)

Issues by order of response	Number of responses (1,811)
Attractions and facilities	480
Local involvement	421
Events	419
Inclusion	358
Charitable	57
Other	696

Specific attractions and activities respondents wanted at future Winter Festivals included alternatives to fireworks and the proliferation of activities around New Years' Day.



Other attractions	No	Example of verbatim comments
Drones / lights in the sky / alternatives to fireworks	195	<i>"I'd like to see the fireworks replaced with something more sustainable than burning chemicals in the sky, such as a drone light show."</i>
30th Dec / 1st Jan activities	89	<i>"Activities like those held on New Years Day with fun and games"</i>
Fireworks (not silent)	76	<i>"Fireworks at the bells"</i>
Food and drink	73	<i>"Maybe some street food stalls"</i>
Outdoor seating / facilities	29	<i>"Any live performances in Princes Street Gdns. should have seating areas for people who would like to enjoy the music/entertainment in comfort, with toilet facilities available."</i>

Other attractions	No	Example of verbatim comments
Alcohol related ideas	27	<i>"Pop up open air bars"</i>
Christmas decorations / tree / lights	21	<i>"Simple magical with lights and things to see that everyone can enjoy."</i>
Rides	9	<i>"Proper fairground with traditional fairground atmosphere. I enjoyed the thrill rides on Market Street."</i>
Ice rink	8	<i>"Ice rink to stay for winter"</i>

Q10 - What other activities, not mentioned above, would you like to see included in future Hogmanay celebrations?

Local involvement encompassed a range of themes. Respondents most commonly wanted to see more local involvement in the organisation of the Winter Festivals. They also wanted the festivals to be more strongly connected to Scottish culture.

Local involvement	No	Example of verbatim comments
Local community involvement	184	<i>"Genuinely "community organised" events - not just a community event that is put on for the lowest possible price."</i>
Scottish / local theme and culture	178	<i>"More activities that introduce people (both local and foreign) to the unique, contemporary culture of Edinburgh and Scotland."</i>
Local artists, bands, choirs, etc.	58	<i>"Scottish musicians and artists being promoted"</i>
Local business involvement	51	<i>"Promotions for small, local businesses (not nationwide ones)."</i>
Local products / food / etc.	23	<i>"Traditional food"</i>
Funding for local projects	14	<i>"Can we use it to support local Scottish craft and artists producing work rather than goods that can be bought at any Christmas Fair anywhere in the UK."</i>

Two themes stood out in relation to specific events respondents wanted to see more of at future Winter Festivals: live music and dancing. They also cited previous events and performances that they would like to see return.



Events	No	Example of verbatim comments
Music	155	<i>"Live music is a definite. Some fantastic artists have played in the gardens over the past couple of decades."</i>
Dancing / ceilidhs / disco	126	<i>"A big dance like we had in George Street years ago"</i>
Indoor entertainment / theatre/comedy / etc.	47	<i>"More indoor events so in the event of bad weather not everything is cancelled"</i>
Candlelit / torchlit procession	46	<i>"I've always loved the Torchlight Procession"</i>
Street performers / street theatre	39	<i>"Activities like fire eaters jugglers street entertainers as in the summer festival"</i>
Art exhibitions	29	<i>"Reflective space linked to art or light installation or walk-through experience"</i>
Sporting events	29	<i>"Sport events or activities that promote health and well-being."</i>

Events	No	Example of verbatim comments
Parade / procession (e.g. with singers / bands)	21	<i>"Pipe band processions."</i>
History / museum exhibitions	17	<i>"Encouraging the galleries/museums to put on some sort of special Hogmanay show, something along the lines of the NGS's Turner in January."</i>
Guided walks / tours	15	<i>"More walking tours - Arthur's Seat, R L Stevenson etc"</i>
Storytelling	14	<i>"Theatre and storytelling"</i>
Art workshops / activities	14	<i>"Some art, exhibitions themed to be presented at the same time"</i>
Literature	10	<i>"Again, workshops or literary gatherings"</i>
Carol singing	3	<i>"The Winter Festival in the Botanic Gardens are a real treat and more decoration throughout the city such as this would be beautiful some musical performances would be good but reduced in number Local Carol singing or street celebrations rather than one huge thing on Princes Street"</i>

Q10 - What other activities, not mentioned above, would you like to see included in future Hogmanay celebrations?

Respondents that wanted future Winter Festivals to be more inclusive were most likely to report activities and events that were family-friendly and cheaper. This would make the festivals more accessible to children and people on lower incomes.



Inclusion	No	Example of verbatim comments
Family-friendly (or kids) shows / events	147	<i>"Something for kids - the earlier fireworks that was done before was brilliant for children"</i>
Free / cheaper events	135	<i>"All the above but they should be free / cheaper for local people"</i>
Inclusion of marginalised - elderly, disabled, etc	44	<i>"Provision for older people - Hogmanay seems geared to only young people"</i>
Non-alcoholic venues / events	26	<i>"Less access to alcohol and a no tolerance to drunken and unsociable behaviour. You just don't see that type of behaviour in other countries at Christmas."</i>

Inclusion	No	Example of verbatim comments
Virtual / online / televised events	20	<i>"A live stream to allow participation from home (small fee if necessary)"</i>
Multi-faith inclusion	9	<i>"Alcohol free events Wishing trees around the city where citizens can hang their wishes on for the year ahead. Art installations celebrating local achievements in that year A spiritual space where people of all faiths and none can congregate to meditate or just be still and contemplative A small fun run open to edinburgh and lothian residents to highlight the plight of homeless people and raise funds for homeless people at Christmas."</i>
Affordable food / drink	8	<i>"Local craftspeople able to sell and promote their products in an affordable manner. Local food and drink suppliers being able to offer their products services competitively and not priced out of involvement."</i>
Christianity / church / nativity	7	<i>"More local Community-based (ie churches or community centres) Hogmanay celebrations"</i>

Some respondents wanted to see more eco-related events and practices at the festival. Others wanted broader fundraising events to support people in need during the festival period.



Charitable	No	Example of verbatim comments
Eco-related events/practices (i.e., re-cycling, renewables etc.)	31	<i>“Environmental activities showcasing Edinburgh's commitment to the environment and climate change”</i>
Charity events / fundraising / volunteering	24	<i>“As for Christmas, events that raise awareness and provide practical help to those in need”</i>
Civic events - tree planting, litter picking etc	4	<i>“A deep clean of the city of all the damage to the pavements and building caused by previous festivals”</i>

Other comments	No	Example of verbatim comments
Smaller / less disruption / less crowds / etc.	310	<i>“I think it just needs to be scaled back in size”</i>
Spread events across city	235	<i>“More local events throughout the city”</i>
Complaints - general	160	<i>“If a street party it needs to be open to all and not barricaded in”</i>
Less tacky / less touristy / more tasteful	116	<i>“Same comment as the Christmas celebrations - just do something memorable and stylish, don't simply grub for money”</i>
Other	77	<i>“Not an activity but a lot more stewards on the street helping, particularly people who've had too much too drink and ensure they are safe”</i>

Q10 - What other activities, not mentioned above, would you like to see included in future Hogmanay celebrations?



Access

Physical access (e.g., wheelchair accessibility) was the most common way respondents felt the Winter Festivals could be more accessible to disabled people. Another common suggestion was restricting the number and position of stalls.

Making future Christmas and Hogmanay celebrations more accessible to people with disabilities (overall)

Issues by order of response	Number of responses (4,375)
Physical access	2,020
Restrictions	1,623
Location	822
Early Planning	558
Sensory impact	450
Inclusive policies	371

Respondents that felt improvements could be made to physical access cited the use of accessible venues instead of ones that required additional infrastructure. Clear identification of ramps and accessible toilets were other key suggestions.



Physical access	No	Example of verbatim comments
Use accessible venues / locations	624	<i>“Staging it in an area that is more accessible and not in the gardens where infrastructure would be required. Find somewhere everyone can be together that does not impact the city further down the line”</i>
Access - general / vague	480	<i>“Make more of them accessible”</i>
Wheelchair / mobility access	368	<i>“Wheelchair access & less slippery walking surfaces in the markets would help.”</i>
Ramps	294	<i>“Event Maps need to clearly indicate where ramps are located. Maybe maps can show all accessible features.”</i>
Toilets / facilities	253	<i>“Toilet accessibility, toilets should have a changing table and be able to offer some sort of hoist. Obviously would be expensive but people with disabilities need access to a toilet where they can be changed with dignity.”</i>
Widen/clear pavements / paths	199	<i>“Ensure that the area in use is large enough to accommodate a high footfall whilst allowing enough room for people with disabilities and ideally on flat ground”</i>

Physical access	No	Example of verbatim comments
More seating areas and rest stops	193	<i>“More seating areas for eating/drinking. The number of people standing in the walk way makes it difficult to navigate”</i>
Tailored/adapted events, attractions, rides etc	125	<i>“More disability access and maybe some rides that can accommodate wheelchairs, so as people who need them do not miss out.”</i>
Marshals, volunteers, stewards (to help disabled)	116	<i>“Set up a local voluntary network to assist and coordinate specific safe areas and access routes to venues.”</i>
More / improved information / signposting / apps	102	<i>“Provide information for people with disabilities that clearly indicate the areas and events that are disability friendly”</i>
Subtitles / sign language at events	80	<i>“Providing BSL interpreters at events.”</i>
Braille information / audio guides	54	<i>“Audio description, adequate advanced information on the site.”</i>

Respondents who felt Winter Festivals could be more accessible through the use of restrictions wanted numbers at events to be limited as well as stalls to be better positioned to allow free movement between them. They talked about low capacity events and planning.



Restrictions	No	Example of verbatim comments
Less crowding / limited numbers	1,082	<i>“Crowd control and reducing size/scale of events. As someone with mobility issues, the events of recent years neither feel welcoming nor inclusive. And that’s before the safety concerns of the overcrowding in Princes St Gardens in recent years”</i>
Spaced out / height adjusted stalls / attractions	390	<i>“Increasing the space between stalls would help not just disabled people, but able bodied people as well”</i>
Specific/low capacity times for those with disabilities	387	<i>“Perhaps times they could attend when it is less busy so as not to be so overwhelming to the senses. Not all disabilities are visible.”</i>

Early Planning	No	Example of verbatim comments
Better / serious planning	253	<i>“Think about them when planning events and layout of activities”</i>
Speak to disabled people	244	<i>“You would have to consult people with disabilities”</i>
Speak to advocacy groups / charities	226	<i>“Consult with relevant disability groups when planning.”</i>

Making the location of Winter Festivals more accessible most meant having events spread throughout the city and not concentrated in the city centre. Others wanted better transport access (either parking facilities or public transport).



Location	No	Example of verbatim comments
Events spread throughout the city	441	<i>"Stop overcrowding the city centre and allow everyone more space which will give people with additional needs more confidence to attend."</i>
Better parking	125	<i>"Free and easy parking for Blue Badge holders."</i>
Improved public transport	119	<i>"Better and more frequent access by buses"</i>
Local events (easier to get to)	80	<i>"Stop large events that require closing areas of the city. Local community events set up by communities themselves without commercial leadership are much more likely to be inclusive."</i>

Location	No	Example of verbatim comments
Open roads / car access	73	<i>"Closing streets is an attractive thing to do and feels quite magical, but it excludes people like me who have limited ability to walk and need to be able to get a bus to fairly near the streets."</i>
Designated entry-points	63	<i>"Time to allow them to access and have the same experience as others, like in supermarket shops. Dedicated entrance and exits"</i>
Close roads	32	<i>"Make Princes Street a pedestrian only zone, the same with George Street, which would make it easier for disabled people to get around."</i>

Making Winter Festivals more accessible from a sensory perspective encompassed three, equally common themes: lowering the sensory impact of the festivals, having breaks between periods of high sensory impact, and creating low-sensory spaces.

Sensory impact	No	Example of verbatim comments
Lower sensory impact / autism-friendly	184	<i>"Don't have the market in Princes Street Gardens, parts of it are inaccessible to those in wheelchairs, consider those that find noise and lights overwhelming, offer ear defenders, etc."</i>
Low sensory times	183	<i>"Have a session with reduced noise/lights for those who find the celebrations overwhelming."</i>
Low sensory spaces	179	<i>"Create a safe space/tent for those who need an area to calm down if they feel overwhelmed with the situation or mass gathering."</i>
Quiet alternatives to fireworks (drones etc)	38	<i>"Silent fireworks!"</i>

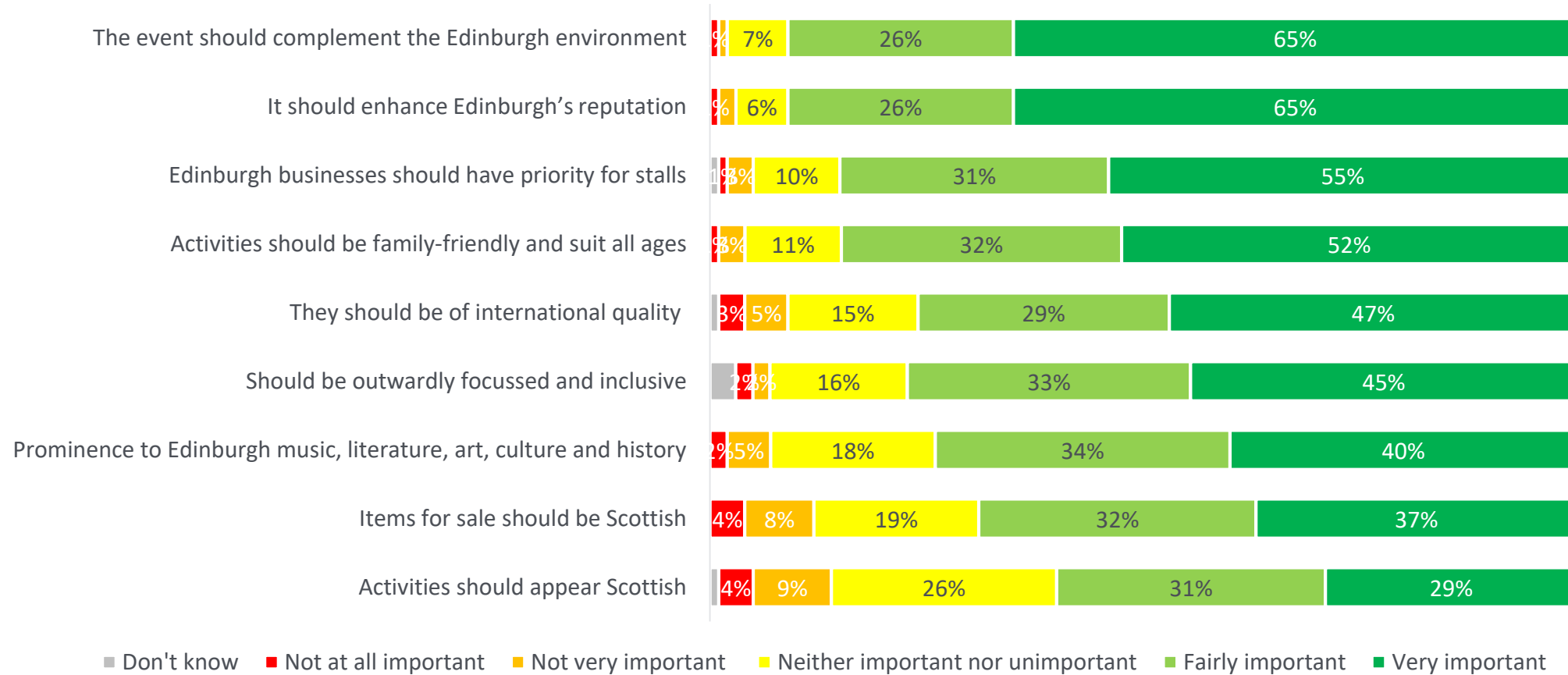
Inclusive policies	No	Example of verbatim comments
Cheap / free tickets	149	<i>"Cheaper tickets so they can enjoy it too, maybe some have to take carers so can be an added expense"</i>
Priority access for disabled / carers	129	<i>"Priority access.. Queue jumper tickets... Early access"</i>
Consider invisible disabilities	113	<i>"For those with hidden disabilities, perhaps some kind of badge or lanyard could be considered so those around then were aware."</i>
Virtual access to events	22	<i>"Have days / times such as autistic friendly set ups so lights off and sound stopped. Something similar for other disabilities. Maybe a VR tour of the festival available offline"</i>



Principles

Principles that benefit Edinburgh’s environment, its reputation and local businesses were those thought most important, followed by the need to be family-friendly and suit all ages. All principles gained high levels of importance.

Views on key principles of the Winter Festival events



Q11. If Edinburgh were to have Christmas and Hogmanay celebrations in future, how important or unimportant are each of the following principles

Base (All): individuals 8,614 organisations 35

Many reiterated the importance of inclusivity and environment when they were asked for additional principles. The main additional principle that was mentioned was the importance of considering local issues.

Additional principles to include when planning

Issues by order of response	Number of responses
Local focus	2,231
Inclusivity	2,056
Change the scope	1,695
Environmental concerns	1,613
Changes to management	1,282
Atmosphere	942
Safety concerns	504

Local elements focused the local population, local businesses, consideration of Scottish themed events and the needs of local residents. Inclusion centred largely on cultural and financial; catering for families and accessible by public transport.



Local focus	No	Example of verbatim comments
Focus FOR local people (rather than pulling in tourists)	1,002	<i>"I just want more focus on locals instead of tourists. I know we need their business but we already have such a wonderful city and reputation so they will still come"</i>
Benefit local business (selling local products)	661	<i>"More local businesses and crafts should be given the chance to hold a stall, buying goods & delicacies unique to Edinburgh and the area would be amazing."</i>
Inclusion of a Scottish Theme	485	<i>"Making it different from other cities' festivals is important or it is just the same. Emphasising the Scottishness of it is important."</i>
Less disruption for residents	451	<i>"More regard for the people who live and continue to work in Edinburgh. While it is nice to have events etc many of us are simply trying to get to work or more annoyingly get home through a huge increase of people, road closures and diversions."</i>

Inclusive	No	Example of verbatim comments
Inclusive/Accessible/Welcoming	981	<i>"That the celebrations be open to all, encouraging less represented groups to become involved in planning and encouraging participation."</i>
Affordability	795	<i>"Just make it value for money...stop trying to charge as much as you think folk will pay. Agree that some fee is appropriate but feel too much is charged, the Christmas market stalls are nice to see the merchandise but a lot of it far too expensive - the eatery outlets again have fantastic produce but I ain't paying £5 for a small slab of cake plus a further £3 for a tiny coffee."</i>
Family friendly / focused	283	<i>"Plenty for the children to do. There's always a lot of focus on stalls and bars but never seems to be a great deal for the kids."</i>
International connections	240	<i>"Please let this not become about a "local Christmas for local people" or a stick to beat "foreign things" as has been stated in some press articles. Edinburgh is an international city and there is nothing wrong with celebrating and fostering this to appeal to an international audience too."</i>
Better public transport / more buses	154	<i>"More public transport available for people to travel in and out of the city centre, including from arwas outwith the city centre."</i>

Some thought the winter festivals need rescoping in terms of location, size and qualities of offering. Environment was mentioned by a substantial number of people.



Rescope	No	Example of verbatim comments
Spread it out / local focus	679	<i>"Maybe more investment in spreading the festivals around the city - have it less focused on the city centre, help communities feel involved by holding events in the numerous districts."</i>
Make is smaller / less busy	677	<i>"Scale should be appropriate I.e. festival set up should not take all available space."</i>
Less tacky / higher quality	457	<i>"High quality - less 'tatt' and loud music and flashy lights, we have a beautiful city and these celebrations could enhance things rather than turn the city centre into a tacky funfair"</i>
Make it shorter/briefer	81	<i>"Christmas doesn't need to last 6 weeks. Shorten the amount of time the Christmas Market is there"</i>
Cancel it all	37	<i>"Stop doing them, you are trashing the city"</i>
Make it bigger / longer	21	<i>"Bigger and better! Expand the Christmas celebrations to various areas around Edinburgh. Make use of all gardens in the city centre"</i>

Environment	No	Example of verbatim comments
Environment / impact / sustainability	1,268	<i>"Carbon, and environmental impact needs to be huge priority. Everything needs to re used and made from realistically compostable or recyclable material and transport impact assessed."</i>
More care taken to avoid damage (gardens)	502	<i>"The care of Princes St Gardens needs to be paramount. Those gardens are unique to Edinburgh in the shadow of the Castle and should not be left in the the un-usable state they were in 2019."</i>

Some felt that the current management model needs to be reviewed in terms of being less corporate, less profit driven and involving locals in planning decisions.



Management	No	Example of verbatim comments
Anti- corporate management - general	350	<i>"Let the focus be on gathering, community, connection and celebration rather than consumption and transaction"</i>
Not for profit / profits to go to community	329	<i>"An Edinburgh based event management company should be created to run the events, with profits going back into the city rather than being extracted by London-based companies"</i>
Better management / organisation	315	<i>"It needs a long term approach... a ten year horizon line, starting again from scratch. Establish the vision and first principles, build on from there with a ten year delivery plan for the overall event with regular reviews on progress and direction. A high level team must be given the ability to deliver it regularly in line with the vision. The deliver team doesn't get to change the vision, they deliver to it. If the budget is £x, and that can only pay for a handful of events... then that's what it is... There's no point in trying to do everything. Do less, better might be a pro-active way forwards."</i>
Locals involved in planning	277	<i>"The council should ensure that non-elected representation is present in all working groups, committees and planning groups to ensure that the residents voice is heard. These could be voluntary and advertised and recruited through normal recruitment channels."</i>

Management	No	Example of verbatim comments
Anti-Current management	216	<i>"I strongly believe that current provider has been given far too much power and control in relation to these events and I would like to see that significantly scaled back."</i>
More transparency (about spending / contracts)	107	<i>"Everything should be transparent. There is too much shady behaviour surrounding CEC and its awarding of contracts and skipping red tape that others have to follow"</i>
Pay staff fair/better wages	36	<i>"Staff wellbeing should also be prioritised. There's no point boasting about locals getting employments when they're miserable, overworked, and underpaid."</i>
Pro- Current management	3	<i>"I think people forget how badly run Christmas events were before the current provider took over in 2013. Hogmanay has not changed since they took it over, residents have always had to be informed and have wristbands it's the same in every country around the world at New Year for those who live in the city centre. It's the horrid Edinburgh media that has portrayed the current management in such a bad light."</i>

The following comments were made by small numbers of respondents, enough to be noted as a theme but many not relevant to principles.



Overall atmosphere	No	Example of verbatim comments
Arts, crafts, music, culture, heritage	295	<i>"Edinburgh is renowned for The Fringe. Incorporate some of those elements where appropriate- street theatre and Panto"</i>
More variety	254	<i>"I think there needs to be an overview of what is on offer and not to have so much duplication of goods for sale or too much emphasis on one particular age group."</i>
Traditional / Christmas focus	179	<i>"It would be good to see the religious element of Christmas more prominent in the celebration."</i>
In keeping with the city	173	<i>"Less of Las Vegas, more of Edinburgh character."</i>
Fun/Enjoyment/Excitement etc	148	<i>"Scotland coming together, celebrating of life after what we have been through as a nation"</i>

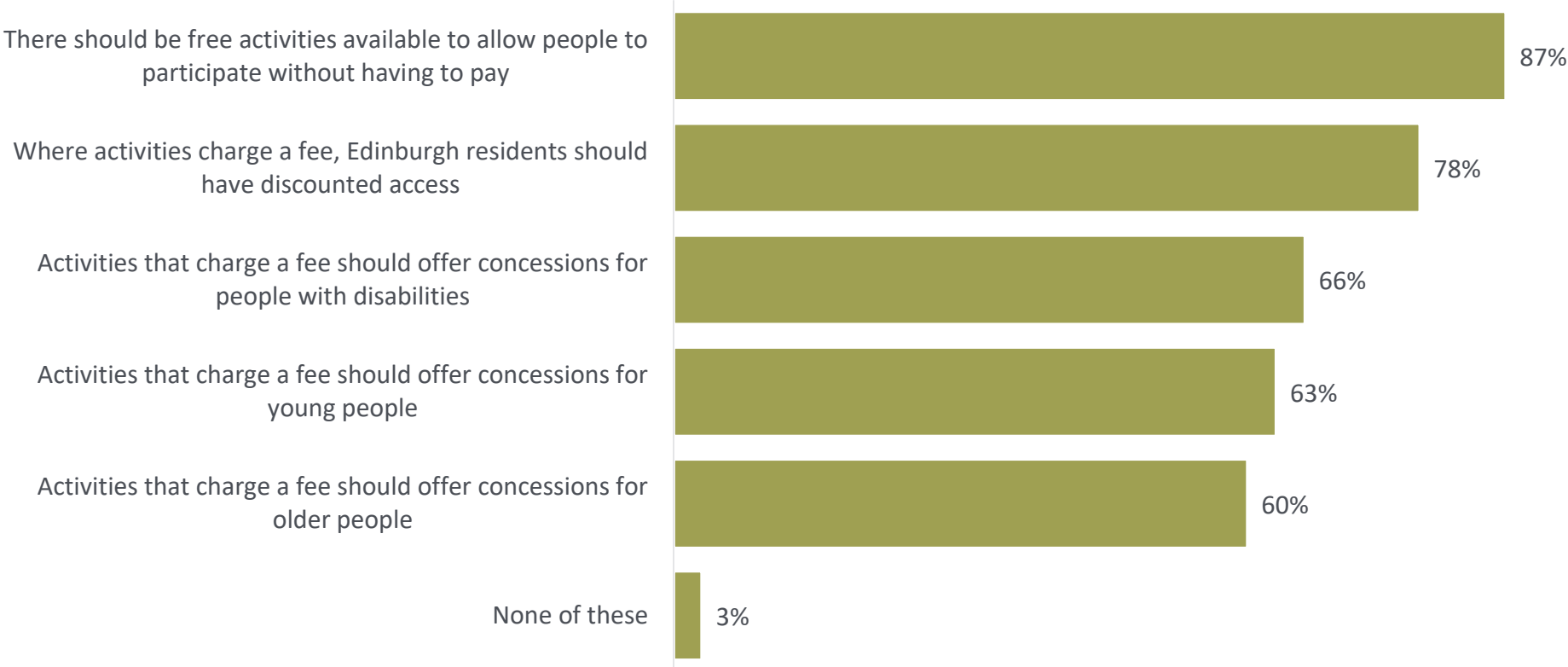
Safety	No	Example of verbatim comments
Safety / security	333	<i>"Safety should be a priority. Numbers may have to be limited now at some events."</i>
Less alcohol	109	<i>"Less bars and areas set aside for people to get hammered. I enjoy having a drink when there, but there are too many people who take it too far and it ruins the ambience and spirit."</i>
Social distance / Covid comments	90	<i>"Covid planning is important. Whether or not to go ahead isn't up to public but Public Health."</i>



Concessions

The most wanted concession was to have free activities, this was closely followed by having discounted rates for Edinburgh residents. Two thirds wanted concessions for disabled and young people. Three fifths wanted concessions for older people.

Concessions at future Winter Festival events



Women, those with children and younger people were more likely to want concessions for younger people.

Views on charging and concessions (% net agree)

	Gender		Children		Age						SEG		
	Men (2,764)	Women (5,474)	Yes (2,434)	No (5,655)	18-24 (295)	25-34 (1,503)	35-44 (1,891)	45-54 (2,029)	55-64 (1,592)	65+ (921)	AB (4,353)	C1C2 (2,314)	DE (633)
There should be some free activities	87%	88%	89%	87%	86%	86%	88%	89%	88%	86%	88%	87%	90%
Edinburgh residents should be given a discounts	76%	80%	80%	79%	76%	82%	79%	81%	77%	71%	80%	78%	75%
Young people should be given concessions	61%	65%	74%	60%	72%	63%	66%	63%	63%	61%	63%	66%	63%
Older people should be given concessions	56%	62%	62%	59%	61%	60%	59%	59%	62%	61%	57%	63%	68%
People with disabilities should be given concessions	65%	67%	67%	67%	70%	69%	64%	65%	68%	68%	66%	68%	69%



Edinburgh residents were more likely than residents outwith Edinburgh to want discounts for themselves. Those who had not attended either events were generally less in favour of concessions than those who had attended.

Views on charging and concessions (% net agree)

	Region				Attendance of Festivals			
	Central EH (1,369)	R/EH (4,506)	R/Scot (1,943)	R/UK (600)	Attended (7,842)	Not attended either (795)	Not attended Hogmanay (4,621)	Not attended Christmas (966)
There should be some free activities	85%	88%	90%	83%	88%	78%	87%	79%
Edinburgh residents should be given a discounts	82%	84%	66%	67%	80%	67%	75%	67%
Young people should be given concessions	59%	64%	69%	53%	65%	47%	62%	48%
Older people should be given concessions	56%	59%	65%	55%	61%	48%	58%	49%
People with disabilities should be given concessions	66%	68%	66%	57%	68%	54%	64%	56%

Q13. Which of the following would you want to see at any future Christmas and Hogmanay celebrations? *Please tick all that apply*

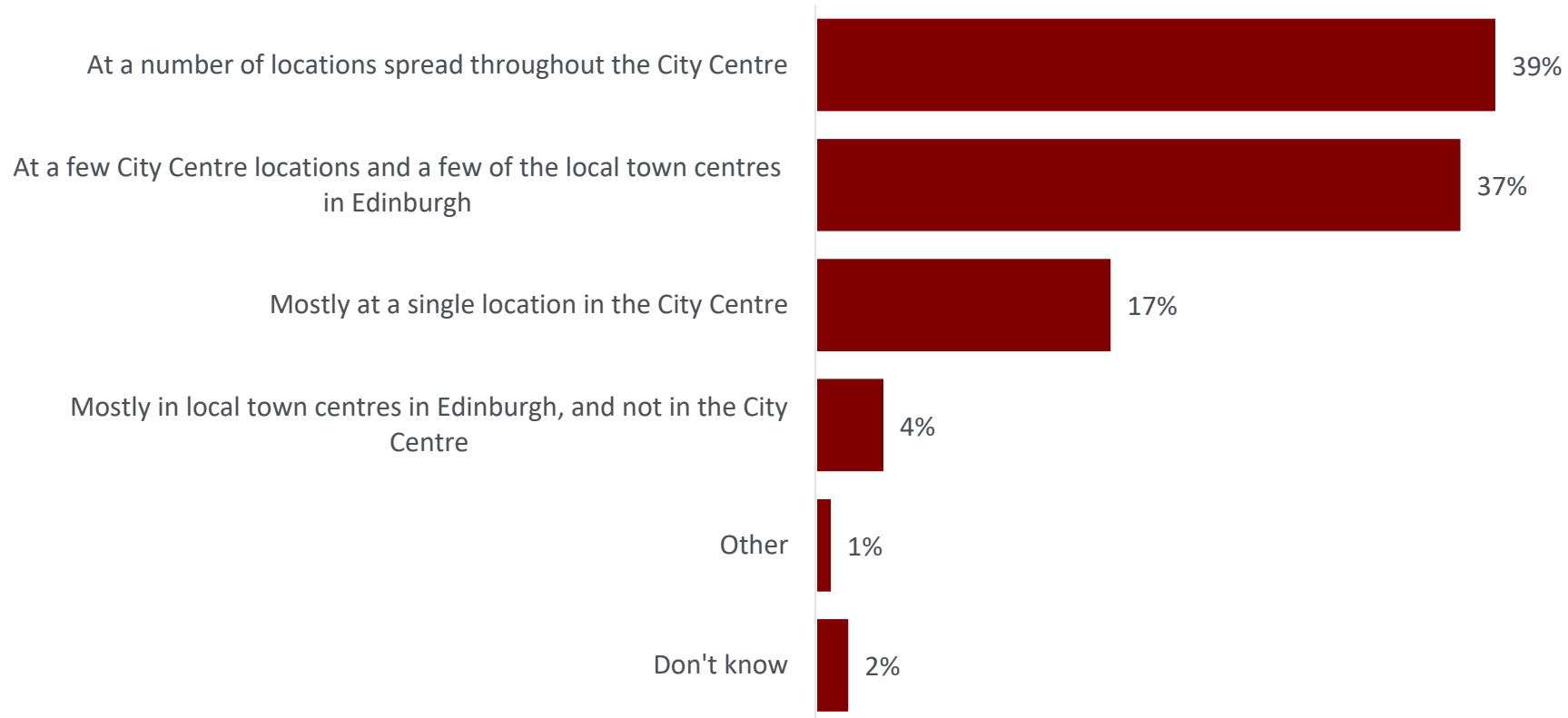


Location of Winter Festivals

The majority favoured a dispersal model. Over a third wanted Christmas celebrations to be staged at a number of locations spread throughout the city centre, followed by a similar proportion who wanted a few city centre locations and a few local town centres. Just under one in five wanted a single location.



Preferred location for Christmas festival



Parents and younger respondents were more in favour of a single location than their counterparts.

Preferred location for Christmas celebrations (% net agree)

	Respondent type		Children		Age						SEG		
	Individual (8,614)	Org (35)	Yes (2,434)	No (5,655)	18-24 (295)	25-34 (1,503)	35-44 (1,891)	45-54 (2,029)	55-64 (1,592)	65+ (921)	AB (4,353)	C1C2 (2,314)	DE (633)
A single location in the City Centre	17%	11%	21%	15%	28%	18%	18%	17%	15%	12%	14%	19%	21%
A number of locations throughout the City Centre	39%	49%	40%	40%	45%	42%	38%	40%	40%	38%	40%	42%	38%
A few City Centre locations and a few of the local town centres	37%	37%	34%	38%	24%	35%	38%	37%	37%	41%	40%	33%	33%
Mostly in local town centres in Edinburgh	4%	-	3%	4%	2%	3%	3%	4%	4%	6%	4%	4%	5%



Respondents from Edinburgh were less in favour of a central location or a number of locations throughout the city and more in favour of a combination of city centre locations and local town centres than residents from elsewhere. Those who had attended were least in favour of local town centres than those who had not attended either or both festivals.

Preferred location for Christmas celebrations (% net agree)

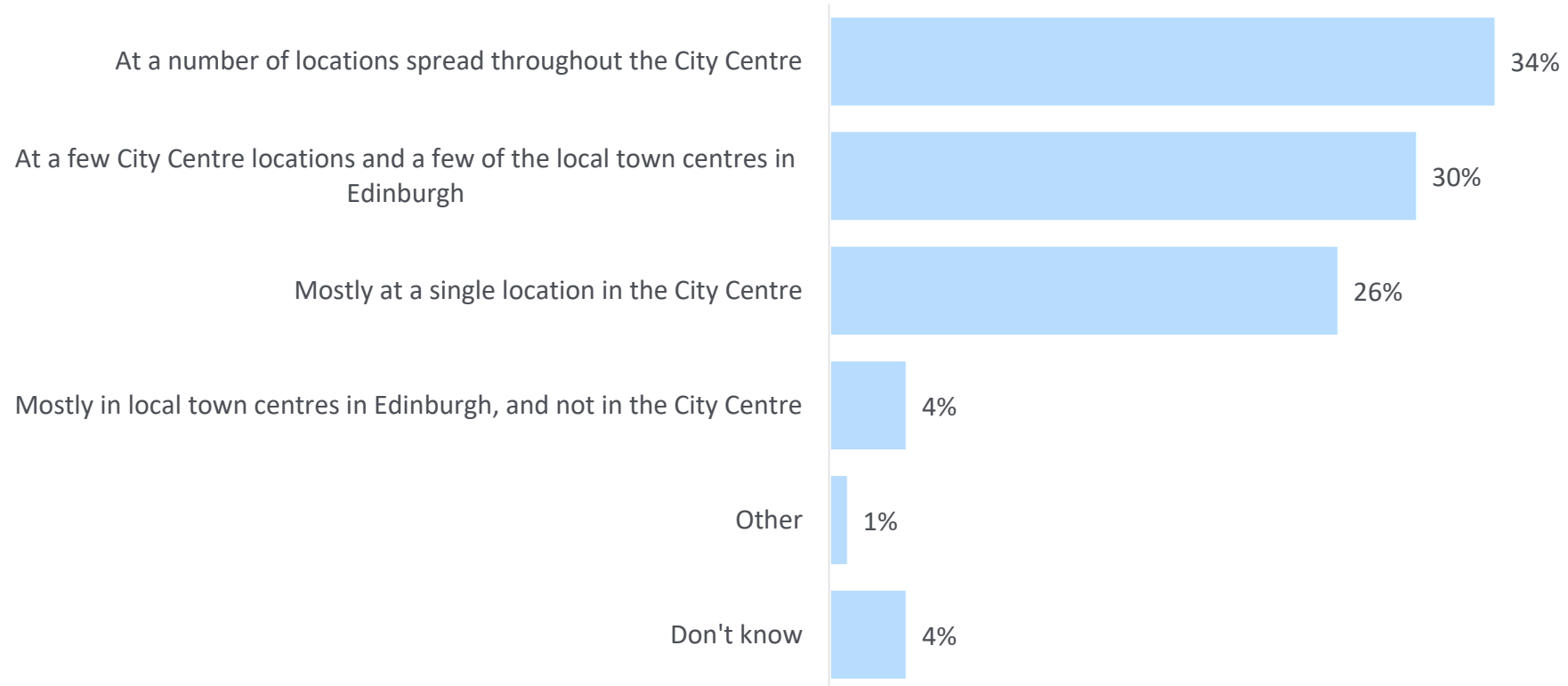
	Region				Attendance of Festivals			
	Central EH (1,369)	R/EH (4,506)	R/Scot (1,943)	R/UK (600)	Attended (7,842)	Not attended either (795)	Not attended Hogmanay (4,621)	Not attended Christmas (966)
A single location in the City Centre	11%	13%	26%	21%	17%	12%	18%	12%
A number of locations throughout the City Centre	34%	34%	49%	60%	41%	19%	36%	22%
A few City Centre locations and a few of the local town centres	43%	45%	20%	14%	36%	42%	37%	41%
Mostly in local town centres in Edinburgh	8%	5%	2%	2%	3%	16%	5%	15%

Q16. If Edinburgh were to have Christmas celebrations in future, would you prefer those celebrations to be..... *Select one answer only*

As with Christmas celebrations just over a third wanted Hogmanay to be staged at a number of locations spread throughout the city centre, followed by a similar proportion who wanted a few city centre locations and a few local town centres. One in four wanted the Hogmanay celebrations to be staged in a single location.




Preferred location for Hogmanay festival



Those with children were more likely to favour a single location than those without children as were young people.

Preferred location for Hogmanay celebrations (% net agree)

	Respondent type		Children		Age						SEG		
	Individual (8,614)	Org (35) 	Yes (2,434)	No (5,655)	18-24 (295)	25-34 (1,503)	35-44 (1,891)	45-54 (2,029)	55-64 (1,592)	65+ (921)	AB (4,353)	C1C2 (2,314)	DE (633)
A single location in the City Centre	27%	14%	31%	25%	40%	31%	29%	26%	23%	21%	25%	29%	27%
A number of locations throughout the City Centre	34%	51%	34%	35%	35%	35%	34%	36%	36%	32%	36%	35%	34%
A few City Centre locations and a few of the local town centres	30%	29%	27%	32%	19%	29%	29%	30%	31%	37%	32%	27%	28%
Mostly in local town centres in Edinburgh	4%	3%	3%	4%	2%	2%	3%	4%	4%	5%	3%	3%	5%

Respondents from Edinburgh were more in favour of a combination of city centre locations and a few local town centres than residents from elsewhere. Those who had attended were least in favour of local town centres than those who had not attended either or both festivals.

Preferred location for Hogmanay celebrations (% net agree)

	Region				Attendance of Festivals			
	Central EH (1,369)	R/EH (4,506)	R/Scot (1,943)	R/UK (600)	Attended (7,842)	Not attended either (795)	Not attended Hogmanay (4,621)	Not attended Christmas (966)
A single location in the City Centre	21%	24%	36%	29%	27%	19%	27%	19%
A number of locations throughout the City Centre	33%	31%	38%	49%	36%	21%	30%	25%
A few City Centre locations and a few of the local town centres	35%	37%	17%	12%	29%	35%	31%	34%
Mostly in local town centres in Edinburgh	6%	5%	2%	2%	3%	14%	5%	13%

Q17. If Edinburgh were to have a Hogmanay celebration in future, would you prefer those celebrations to be..... *Select one answer only*

Many felt that Christmas is inherently Christian and Hogmanay is a Scottish tradition and neither should change their qualities. Others gave examples of how to increase diversity, or suggested consulting representatives of local religious groups.

Making future Christmas and Hogmanay celebrations more welcoming to different cultures and religion

Issues by order of response	Number of responses (3,401)
Nothing / it shouldn't be	926
Increase diversity	697
Nothing / it already is	604
Make more inclusive	455
Miscellaneous positive	436
Consult	334
Food & Drink options	311
Less religion	258
Communicate & inform	209
Miscellaneous negative	104

Many felt that the Winter Festivals are welcoming from a religious/cultural standpoint. These respondents felt it was already culturally inclusive as an inherently Christian celebration it shouldn't change.



Nothing needs to be done	No	Example of verbatim comments
Christmas is inherently Christian	434	<i>"Not a great deal - people generally recognise the more Christian focus that is inevitable even if not themselves of that faith. Other religious celebrations do not make or need to make changes - Diwali and others for example"</i>
Nothing / unnecessary	245	<i>"I don't think this is an issue."</i>
Retain unique identity of Christmas / Hogmanay	238	<i>"I think it is very interesting for people from different religions and cultures (as myself) to see the traditional way of how Scottish people celebrate Christmas and Hogmanay. So, stick to our traditions."</i>
Keep/Make it Scottish	163	<i>"The priority should be on Scottish heritage and culture so that it is not only enjoyable but educational"</i>
Hogmanay is inherently Scottish	75	<i>"The festival should keep its Scottish roots as this is why Hogmanay is so great and what attracts so many people - I wouldn't have thought the festival is not welcoming"</i>
Negative comments re: question	61	<i>"That's a strange question. Why should religion come into it? It's a celebration for all."</i>

It's already is welcoming	No	Example of verbatim comments
Already welcoming / inclusive	446	<i>"I think the activities are welcoming to all as they are"</i>
Already non-religious / secular / commercialised	213	<i>"At present I don't see the events as overly religious."</i>

Increasing the diversity of performers or stall vendors was seen as the most common way of increasing diversity. Some felt putting on similar events, for other religious celebrations, at different times of the year would be beneficial.



Increase Diversity	No	Example of verbatim comments
Events by diverse groups / performers	422	<i>"The musical acts or entertainment could be reflective of the diversity of Scottish culture."</i>
Stalls by diverse groups	182	<i>"Invite stall holders from other religions and cultures. Edinburgh is a very diverse city after all."</i>
Diversity at management / planning level	103	<i>"Ensure people from and representing different faith groups are included as members of the planning committees."</i>
Multi-lingual events / information	95	<i>"Maps and guides in different languages"</i>
Employ people from different religions / cultures	35	<i>"Include people from different religions / cultures in the man power behind the event."</i>

Make more inclusive	No	Example of verbatim comments
Increased prominence for other celebrations	351	<i>"Celebrate other religious festivals at different times of the year with equal importance."</i>
Inclusive naming, e.g. "Winter Festival"	122	<i>"Make it a winter festival- it doesn't have to be advertised as Christmas"</i>

Wider range food & drink	No	Example of verbatim comments
Food / drink options	210	<i>"Range of foods to include veggie, vegan, halal & kosher"</i>
Less / no alcohol	119	<i>"Less of a focus on alcohol and drunken partying, more space for reflection and calm."</i>

A relative minority of respondents felt the festival could be more welcoming from a religious standpoint by completely removing religion from the festival. Others were less strong, and felt making Christian symbols less prominent would suffice.



Make less religious	No	Example of verbatim comments
Less religious focus generally / make it secular	167	<i>"Keep religion out of it"</i>
Less Christian focus	89	<i>"Less prominence of Christian symbols, nativity scenes etc."</i>
General anti-religious sentiments	13	<i>"Abolish all religion"</i>

Consulting local religious groups or cultural institutions was seen as a way of stimulating a wider discussion about making the Winter Festivals more welcoming for people from different religions.



Consult	No	Example of verbatim comments
Consult other cultural/unspecified groups	253	<i>"Consultation with community groups"</i>
Consult local religious groups	214	<i>"Engage with the mosque, churches, synagogues and other religious groups in the city to ask them."</i>

Communicate and inform	No	Example of verbatim comments
Education of people about / promotion of other religions / cultures	136	<i>"Community activities that inform about different cultures and related activities"</i>
Communicate / advertise the diverse nature of things (PR)	82	<i>"More explanation - emphasis on being welcoming and open to all"</i>

Common among miscellaneous responses to this question was that Edinburgh is a ethnically diverse community that should be inclusive. Others felt inclusivity from a religious perspective was an important issue that organisers should prioritise.



Miscellaneous positive comments	No	Example of verbatim comments
Be welcoming / inclusive (vague)	391	<i>"Edinburgh is a European city of culture and celebrations should be inclusive of different religions and cultures"</i>
Vague positive / important question	46	<i>"I am not sure but I do think this is important and more thought should go in to it"</i>

Miscellaneous negative comments	No	Example of verbatim comments
Less profit-driven	83	<i>"Less emphasis on big money making events, more on community celebrations"</i>
Cancel it all	21	<i>"Don't have them then no one is missing out"</i>

When asked about the impact on Businesses of dispersing celebrations, the majority of comments were positive.



All verbatim comments (22) ⚠️

As a Social Enterprise based on Edinburgh we loved to play our part in delivering our activities (Nordic Experience Twilight Experience) as part of the future programme.

Would be beneficial to have some in Portobello, but still have a central attraction as tourists enjoy going into the city centre too

Just to be more included, so we can organise markets and events for local businesses and with affordability as well sustainability at the heart. We would love to be more involved in planning t as well delivery.

It is difficult to move around the city , but if it pre planned well I don't see any adverse affect

It might encourage people to explore areas outwith the centre of the City

Noise reduction. Less difficulty accessing the restaurant, not having to put on extra staff to make sure guests get past the poorly trained, rude rocksteady staff.

I think it would give visitors the opportunity to spend more time as they could go to differing areas each day. I think locals would also feel there was something in it for them too.

Strengthen the overall appeal . The City must elevate itself in totality . We don't exist in a vacuum, and many other cities are becoming increasingly creative in turning their entire city centres into a journey, an experience that encourages repeat visits.

Spread the love and the historic Old Town should have stalls and events to bring public into the area.

Depending on where the main attractions are this could impact on footfall and turnover, if local areas are given more emphasis

Number of people coming into the centre of the city would be depleted & I do not think that running multiple events would leave enough money to create a spectacular festive programme

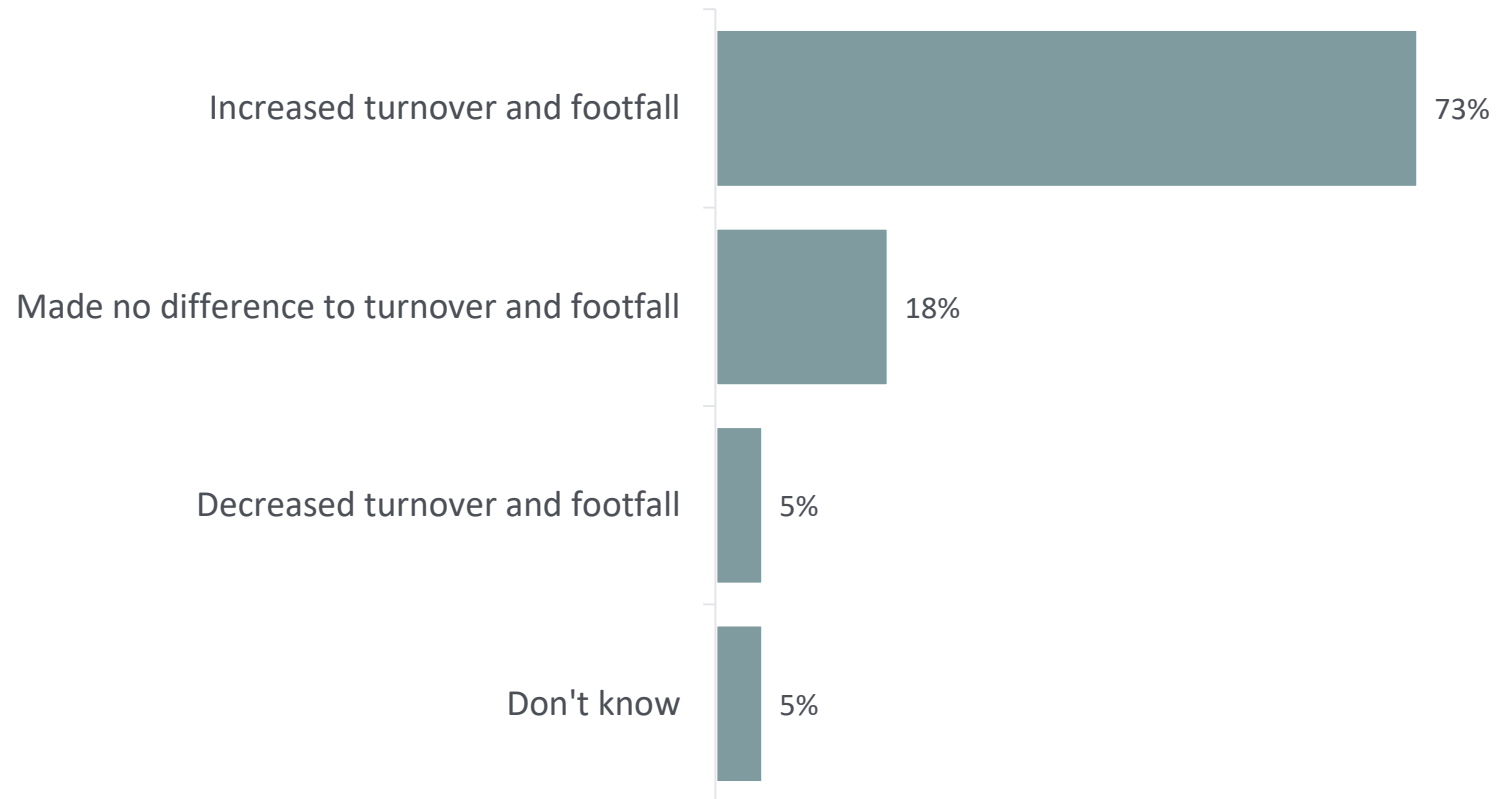
Any move to disperse celebrations across the city would obviously effect the income of city centre retailers and hospitality businesses.

None X 3 respondents

LESS POSITIVE COMMENTS

While the base is very small, the majority of business owners/managers in Edinburgh claimed the festivals have increased turnover.

Impact of Christmas and Hogmanay on business



Family Friendly

This section brings together findings that pertain to making the celebrations family friendly

Parents were in favour of the celebrations. Cost is undoubtedly an issue even so, parents find the celebrations enjoyable.



Summary of attitudes

- Parents tended to be more in favour of Christmas and Hogmanay.
- They were more likely to have attended Christmas celebrations and slightly less likely to have attended Hogmanay.

Cost is an issue

- Parents were more likely to perceive Christmas celebrations as expensive.
- Cost is a major barrier for parents who have to balance the extra costs of winter (such as heating and clothing) with their children's desire to be part of mainstream society and join in the Christmas celebrations.
- The funfair rides and costs of food and drinks etc. in the German market sometimes means that that families either can't go, they go and are restricted in what they can do or they go once as it is a special occasion. This applies to parents of younger children aged 5–10 and parents of teenagers aged 12-16.
 - *"I think tickets are too expensive and, therefore, probably rule out a vast majority of families attending events, considering 1 in 5 families live in poverty."*
 - *"If you are a family with children, even just 1 child it can turn into a very expensive day with some of the prices charged. This can make you less likely to return for several visits the same year, which some may prefer to do."*
 - *Went and thought it was expensive... prices are beyond a joke... don't give you much of a discount... will admit it is nice... I was deflated with the prices*
 - *I have avoided going over the years... because of the crowds... having four children... two years ago we got to with Goodtrees, free tickets and stuff... was a lovely day and was amazing... just going up and seeing the magical side of it is beautiful... if I didn't go with Goodtrees, wouldn't have been able to relax with the prices*
 - *Can be quite hard... only go on two rides... else it's half the shopping money for the week*
- Respondents who wanted future Winter Festivals to be more inclusive were most likely to report activities and events that were family-friendly and cheaper.

But it is enjoyable

- Despite concerns over cost parents were more likely to see the celebrations as an enjoyable experience.

The importance of making the celebrations family friendly was made clear throughout the consultation. This includes creating alcohol free zones, less crowded zones and focus on children at Hogmanay.



Importance of being family friendly

- In the wider consultation **activities that are family-friendly** was placed fourth in line of important principles when organising winter celebrations.
- The vast majority of parents voted in favour of activities for children to be included in future celebrations.
- Creating family-friendly festivals was a recurring theme that came up in many of the open ended questions related to shaping the future of the celebrations.
- Alcohol stalls can lead to people being under the influence and inconsiderate to the needs of parents and children.
- Some felt that Hogmanay doesn't cater for families and that events need to be put on earlier if children are to attend.

Physical access

- Responses from the groups discussions and some of the verbatim quotes in the wider consultation illustrate the point of the festivals being too crowded and unsafe for children. Small children can easily get lost in crowds.
- We also heard that it is hard to manipulate pushchairs through crowds and uphill
 - *“Since having kids I find them it far too stressful trying to navigate crowds & with nowhere to shelter with a baby or easily change them”*
- Physical access and overcrowding are major problems for those who are disabled and for those who have infants in pushchairs.
 - *Many disabled people feel excluded, rather stay at home, than face the perils of the crowds and the noise. Believe there should be marshals and helpers on hand, volunteers to assist, proactive volunteers who look for opportunity to help.*

Respondents at the group discussions were asked what might encourage them to attend the Winter Festivals. They discussed separation of attractions and family events.



Separation

- Parents commonly suggested having places that were dedicated to children as a way of increasing their likelihood of enjoying the festivals. These would need to be away from people who are drinking and in places that are less crowded.
- Some of those with physical disabilities called for the same thing, others had mixed feelings about segregation.
 - *Separate it, different parts of the gardens, have a part for the bars and then the shows. People at one side for the wine, food and vans, then shows and families on the other side. Manic in the gardens, at night, especially for the kids. Bit more intimidating for kids.*
- Parents and those with disabilities also suggested dedicated times during the day/evening or zones in the festivals as well as areas with lower sensory impact
 - *“Create a safe space/tent for those who need an area to calm down if they feel overwhelmed with the situation or mass gathering.”*

Family Events

- Parents called for events that were family oriented and put on specifically for children of different age groups. These should be free as far as possible but affordable at least.
 - *Little shows like at the fringe... even during the day, when the holidays break off... pin point that time solely for children*

Other issues that came up in groups discussions included access for disabled people and parents and affordability.



Access issues

- Parents with young children and physically disabled people would benefit from a location that is flat and easy to manoeuvre.
- Key needs are close by car parking and drop off points, toilets, wheelchair access, better ramps and more marshals.
 - *Believe there should be marshals and helpers on hand, volunteers to assist, proactive volunteers who look for opportunity to help. Taught to look out for people who could be made more comfortable.*

Affordability

- Many were of the opinion that 10% discount for residents is not enough and that 20 to 25% would be more of an encouragement to attend. Parents were in favour of family passes.
 - *Don't think the 10% discount for residents is enough... hard to say (what is enough) maybe 25%... a lot of it is funded by the council so we are contributing with our council tax.*
- Some had benefitted from tickets being given to them through organisations.
 - *It's our city, should be accessible to us. Come up with something that is meaningful and isn't tokenist. Groups in and the around the city, football clubs or larger events, tap into local organisations, there is a system in place, give away tickets to local families.*

When it came to discussing locations of the Winter Festivals, findings from the group discussions were in line with those from the online consultation.



A number of locations spread throughout the city centre

- This was the most popular option for most groups.
- Parents of younger children were very enthusiastic about spreading festivals throughout the city centre and many mentioned the Meadows as a natural location for this. They were in favour of this as it has proved to be a successful location for many other events; it is flat and easy to access with pushchairs and prams; and it has a park which gives the option of something to do with children that would be free.
 - *Meadows is a good idea, much bigger area, all flat ground and slightly easier parking wise... pressure on families and they avoid the town like the plague... there's a park nearby, can join in and get a hot chocolate*
 - *Inverleith Park, Leith Links, Festival Square on Lothian Road... the city isn't lacking open space... just not being used*
- Disabled people were in favour of spreading celebrations throughout the city centre because it would be easier for them to access than it has been in the past and it would reduce crowding and would preserve Princes Street gardens. However, they were concerned that this model could lead to more road closures as that would have the effect of reducing their access.
- Those aged 18-25 were keen to keep it in one central place because they enjoyed the buzz of it as it is and didn't want the hassle of getting from A to B.



Final comments

Respondents’ final comments about the Winter Festivals were more likely to be positive than negative. They did, however, suggest a range of issues that organisers should consider – these reinforced themes raised throughout the consultation.

Final comments on the future of the Winter Festivals (overall)

Issues by order of response	Number of responses (3,889)
General positive	1,369
General negative	1,262
Consider local impact	1,147
Funding contractual issues	823
Consider location	669
Consider inclusivity	403
Miscellaneous	327
Uniqueness of Edinburgh	324
Covid comments	224

Positive commentators felt the Winter Festivals should continue. They recognised that these events are important for the city’s identity as well as tourism and the economy.



Positive comments	No	Example of verbatim comments
Keep the festivals	872	<i>“Please keep them going. You can’t please everyone. People don’t realise how lucky we are to have this on our door step and trust me, they would really miss it if it was gone.”</i>
Enjoy the festivals	478	<i>“We live in the South East but love coming up to Edinburgh especially to the Christmas Markets. It’s such a beautiful place.”</i>
Important tradition / part of Edinburgh / Scotland's identity	326	<i>“I think they have become an important part of Edinburgh's identity.”</i>
Good for economy / tourism	311	<i>“Only to reiterate how important they are to the local economy and to the city's reputation. We need them more than ever if we're hoping to rebuild anything for this Christmas.”</i>

Making the Winter Festivals smaller and shorter in length were, by some distance, the most common themes among negative comments. Making the festivals more tasteful (in terms of activities and overall feel) was also fairly common.

Negative comments	No	Example of verbatim comments
Smaller / shorter	610	<i>"The last time I attended the Christmas market I was concerned about the numbers in attendance, it felt like a crush could develop within the crowd. Some means of controlling numbers should be looked into."</i>
Make it less tacky / more classy	308	<i>"A return to the tasteful times of the past and do away with turning the city into a fun fare"</i>
Needs a change from previous years / make it newer	198	<i>"I think the future celebrations should really focus on being physical and innovative in their design and approach. Similarly to this years drone show which was virtually broadcasted; this was at the forefront of exhibition/event innovation and that should be the driving force for new ideas and ways of running these events"</i>
Request for specific event / feature	159	<i>"Bring back Scot:lands, please. And have something for folks to do on New Year's Day itself. Maybe under cover too!"</i>
Cancel it all	105	<i>"I like our city the rest of the year round. We have the summer festivals which are intrusive but hugely popular and valuable tourist source so fair enough. I don't know why we need to repeat that in the winter"</i>
It used to be better	102	<i>"Things have got to change! Edinburgh at Christmas and Hogmanay has become a mess that I find unattractive with all the construction for weeks before and after in both Gardens. It puts me off as a resident from going into the city centre. If these festivals are to continue, they need to go back to the previous family oriented activities that they used to be."</i>
Learn from elsewhere (e.g. Europe)	49	<i>"Perhaps you could look at other cities and how they do it. Munich is a good example."</i>

Similar to themes explored elsewhere, making future festivals more inclusive for local people was a common theme. Similarly, favouring local businesses and products was considered to be important for the success of future Winter Festivals.

Consider local impact	No	Example of verbatim comments
Should be for locals / less touristy	458	<i>"It would just be nice to have celebrations that are aimed at locals rather than hoards of tourists straight off the airport bus or the LNER railway line"</i>
Favour local businesses / products	298	<i>"Include local businesses who are normally are missed out. Most of the things sold at the Christmas Market can be found in local businesses for cheaper."</i>
Manage by local orgs / don't outsource	254	<i>"let a local company run any commercial activity and keep the benefits in the City economy"</i>
Consideration for residents (e.g. access problems)	239	<i>"There needs to be a renewed focus on making them relevant and accessible to the people of Edinburgh."</i>
General complaints relating to disruption to residents	154	<i>"Public transport due to crowds was horrendous last couple of times the festival was on. Several times going to and from work I and other passengers were 'decanted' from one bus to another as the bus was so late, the next bus had caught up. Made my journey to and from work so stressful."</i>
Public spaces should remain open	54	<i>"Takeover of public green spaces is getting out of hand, and city centre roads/squares should be closed to traffic and used instead."</i>
Profits go back into the city	43	<i>"Develop a reasonable way to spread the commercial benefit experienced by businesses in the City with the resident population."</i>

The ongoing commercialisation of Winter Festivals was a key concern for some respondents. Others felt concerned about the environmental or sustainability credentials of future events.

Consider location	No	Example of verbatim comments
Environment / sustainability needs more consideration	370	<i>"I strongly resent the damage caused to green space - there is so little available."</i>
Spread out over locations	202	<i>"Spread across the city allows residents to enjoy Christmas in our home city and not feel taken over and second class."</i>
Location needs more consideration / changed	187	<i>"Yes have the Xmas Market on the Castle Esplanade and down the Royal Mile"</i>

Contractual issues	No	Example of verbatim comments
Make it less profit-driven / commercial	583	<i>"Take the commercialism out of the event! It's become more about profit than Christmas/new year"</i>
Negative sentiments in reference to contractor	366	<i>"Don't renew the contract with xxxxxxx, their unending greed has ruined the Winter Festivals."</i>

Linked to the commercialisation of the Winter Festivals, making them more strongly connected to local Edinburgh and wider Scottish culture was seen as a key consideration for the future.



Uniqueness	No	Example of verbatim comments
Should be Edinburgh / Scottish themed	212	<i>"Please don't forget the Scottish charm of festivals, otherwise it's ok."</i>
Should be unique / not generic	164	<i>"They need to stop looking just the same as every other major city and instead reflect our own uniqueness"</i>

Consider inclusivity	No	Example of verbatim comments
Cheaper / more affordable	264	<i>"Not to be quite so expensive, I'm sure they make a fortune so it would be nice to see it more affordable for all."</i>
Family focused / child friendly	90	<i>"Family should be the focus!"</i>
Inclusive for faiths, cultures etc.	84	<i>"Call them Winter festivals and incorporate more religions like Paganism, Judaism etc"</i>
Inclusive for disabilities	38	<i>"Please try and make it more disabled friendly, as most disabled people I know are scared of going into Edinburgh because of how inaccessible it is. It is a beautiful city that everyone deserves to be able to enjoy."</i>

Respondents reported that they would like organisers to act on their feedback for future Winter Festivals. A minority commented that they were pleased to have been consulted as part of the process.



Miscellaneous	No	Example of verbatim comments
Miscellaneous comments	207	<i>"Call it a Winter Festival, and accept that is there to lure tourists. Charge them accordingly!"</i>
Act on consultation responses	70	<i>"Please listen to the people of the city. We're sick of being pushed to the side during what should be the most enjoyable times of the year."</i>
Consultation - positive comments	63	<i>"Thank you for consulting us!"</i>

Response to Covid	No	Example of verbatim comments
Want it back after Covid - social reasons	127	<i>"It would be lovely to see the celebrations back after the Covid year we have had. We need things to look forward to again."</i>
Covid concerns	81	<i>"Covid means I do not want to encourage mass gathering or tourism this year."</i>
Want it back after Covid - business reasons	33	<i>"Let's get the festivals on everyone's agenda and get the economy and hospitality going again. Fight for Edinburgh to be open for business and tell the world"</i>



Summary & conclusions

Summary of findings



Reasons for non-attendance

- The main reasons for not attending Christmas and Hogmanay celebrations in the past were over crowding, designed for tourists and too expensive.

Perceptions of the winter celebrations

- The majority saw the celebrations as being welcoming for tourists but they were less likely to be seen as welcoming to residents. Most agreed that they are good for businesses but few perceived them as affordable or environmentally sustainable.
- Edinburgh respondents were less positive than respondents from the rest of Scotland and the UK about the winter celebrations being welcoming, enjoyable, unique affordable, beneficial to business and environmentally sustainable.
- When asked about previous celebrations views were mixed while many of the comments were positive a larger number were negative. The main concerns focused on the central location and impact on residents.

The future of winter festivals

- Food drink, musical performances and activities for children were the top three preferred activities for Christmas. Alcoholic drinks and funfair rides were the least wanted activities for Christmas celebrations.
- Fireworks, lighting installations and live music performances were the top three preferred activities for Hogmanay. Street party and mass gathering was the least wanted activity.
- Respondents also called for future winter celebrations to have local involvement of artists and performers and Scottish/local culture.
- Themes in response to making Christmas and Hogmanay more accessible to people with disabilities were dominated by physical access issues such as wheelchair accessibility and restrictions on the number of people attending.

Summary of findings cont:



Principles

- Principles that benefit Edinburgh's environment, its reputation and business were those thought most important. Followed by the need to be family-friendly and suit all ages.
- The most wanted concession was to have free activities, this was closely followed by having discounted rates for Edinburgh residents.

Locations of Winter Festivals

- The largest group wanted Christmas celebrations to be staged at a number of locations spread throughout the city centre. Followed by a similar proportion who wanted a few city centre locations and a few local town centres.
- As with Christmas celebrations, the largest group wanted Hogmanay to be staged at a number of locations spread throughout the city centre. Followed by a similar proportion who wanted a few city centre locations and a few local town centres.

Welcoming to different cultures and religions

- Many felt that the Winter Festivals are welcoming from a religious/cultural standpoint. Many felt that Christmas is inherently Christian and Hogmanay is a Scottish tradition and neither should change their qualities. Others gave examples of how to increase diversity.

Impact on Business

- While the base is very small the majority of business owner/managers in Edinburgh claimed the festivals have increased turnover.
- The largest group of business owner/managers wanted Christmas and Hogmanay celebrations to be staged at a number of locations spread throughout the city centre.

Family friendly

- Parents were in favour of the celebrations. Cost is undoubtedly an issue even so, parents find the celebrations enjoyable.
- The importance of making the celebrations family friendly was made clear throughout the consultation. This includes creating alcohol free zones, less crowded zones, a focus on children at Hogmanay, separate zones for children and those with disabilities

Conclusions



- There was overwhelming support for winter celebrations in Edinburgh to continue.
- Findings from the consultation point to the need to improve on the current delivery model by taking the following elements into consideration:
 - Continue to provide high quality Christmas and Hogmanay celebrations which will be valued by residents and visitors, and continue to enhance Edinburgh's reputation
 - Avoid overcrowding and improve access by distributing Christmas celebrations more widely through the city centre
 - Look for opportunities to extend Christmas celebrations to other parts of the city outside of the city centre
 - Improve and evidence the environmental sustainability of the winter festivals, including through the local sourcing of products
 - Improve access for those previously less able to participate, including through physical accessibility, the design of activities for those with a range of needs, and for people on lower incomes and from deprived areas
 - Focus on making the celebrations family friendly
 - Introduce alcohol-free times and / or areas within Christmas celebrations
 - Continue dialogue with representative organisations and seek further opportunities to reduce the negative impacts of winter festivals on Edinburgh residents
 - Seek opportunities to maximise community benefit, including by giving priority to existing local businesses and creatives
 - Seek opportunities to emphasise the character and culture of Edinburgh through the design and use of existing buildings and spaces, temporary constructions, events, branding and advertising



Appendices

The data was collected by online and paper self completion survey.

The target group for this research study was members of the public and businesses.

The consultation was open between 24th February to 19th May 2021

Respondents to paper and internet self-completion studies are self-selecting and complete the consultation without the assistance of a trained interviewer. This means that Progressive cannot strictly control sampling and in some cases, this can lead to findings skewed towards the views of those motivated to respond to the consultation.

The overall response rate to the survey was 8,612 individuals and 35 organisations, which is a high response rate and demonstrates the importance of the subject to residents of Edinburgh, the rest of Scotland and elsewhere in the UK.

Margins of error not calculated, but representativeness considered within the analysis.

When reading the tables of illustrative quotes it is important to note that the majority of quotes contain more than one idea. If respondents mentioned more than one point they will have been coded under more than one theme. We have not edited the quotes to express just one idea but have reported them verbatim. We believe that this gives the reader more context and a fuller understanding of the issues.

Record of how the consultation was publicised

CEC site 24/2/21: <https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/news/article/13112/have-your-say-on-the-future-of-winter-festivals-in-the-capital>

Media release on 24/2/21 – picked up by several Scottish newspapers but mainly Scotsman and Evening News.

@Edinburgh_CC Twitter on 24/2/21; 25/2/21; 26/2/21; 27/2/21; 2/3/21; 4/3/21; 5/3/21; 10/3/21; 12/3/21; 16/3/21; 18/3/21; 20/3/21; 22/3/21; 23/3/21; 25/3/21; 27/3/21; 28/3/21; 13/4/21; 14/4/21; 16/4/21; 18/4/21; 20/4/21; 23/4/21; 25/4/21; 29/4/21; 12/5/21; 14/5/21; 16/5/21; 19/5/21 (29 occasions)

CEC Consultation Hub <https://consultationhub.edinburgh.gov.uk/sfc/winterfestivals/>

Profile of the survey respondents



Individuals

Work in city centre	#	%
Yes	2,108	24%
No	6,506	76%
Base (individuals)	8,614	100%

Age	#	%
18-24	66	4%
25-34	1,503	17%
35-44	1,891	22%
45-54	2,029	24%
55-64	1,592	18%
65+	921	11%
Prefer not to say	383	4%
Base (individuals)	8,614	100%

Worked in the city for	#	%
> 2 years	225	11%
2- 5 years	474	22%
6 -10 years	420	20%
More than 10 years	978	46%
Don't Know	11	1%
Base (individuals)	2,108	100%

Children ≤ 16 in household	#	%
Under 5 years	785	9%
5-12 years	1,362	16%
13-16 years	886	10%
No children 16 or under at home	5,655	66%
Prefer not to say	525	6%
Base (individuals)	8,614	100%

Long-term illness/disability	#	%
Yes	1,071	12%
No	6,880	80%
Prefer not to say	663	8%
Base (individuals)	8,614	100%

Ethnic group	#	%
White	7,883	92%
Mixed	95	1%
Asian, Asian Scottish, Asian British	64	1%
African	7	<1%
Caribbean	7	<1%
Other ethnic group	58	1%
Prefer not to say	500	6%
Base (individuals)	8,614	100%

Profile of the survey respondents

Organisations



Number of employees in company	#
1 (sole trader)	2
2 to 5	5
6 to 10	2
11 to 25 employees	1
26 to 50 employees	2
51 to 100 employees	3
101 to 250 employees	1
251 to 500 employees	1
501 to 1000 employees	-
>1000 employees	1
Base (all commercial organisations)	18

Type of organisation	#
Business/Commercial	18
Community group	6
Trade/professional organisation	3
Heritage organisation	2
Religious/faith group	1
Other	5
Base (organisations)	35

Business premises in Edinburgh	#
Yes	22
No	1
Base (owners and managers)	23

Owner manager	#
Yes	23
No	12
Base (All organisations)	35

Profile of the consultation focus groups

Parents

- Kids aged 5 – 10
- All SEG C2DE
- Living in Edinburgh

- Group 1: 5 participants
- Group 2: 3 participants

Parents

- Kids aged 12 – 16
- All SEG C2DE
- Living in Edinburgh

- Group 1: 5 participants
- Group 2: 6 participants

Young people

- Aged 18 – 25
- All SEG C2DE
- All living in Edinburgh

- Group 1: 6 participants
- Group 2: 5 participants

Special interest groups

- Edinburgh Access Panel
- 7 respondents

- Unemployed parents
- 4 respondents

Groups and interviews were carried out between from 27th April to 11th May and lasted approximately one hour. Topic guides, tailored to each type of group, were used to guide all the discussions. All interviews were carried out online (using Zoom or Teams). All interviews/groups were recorded (with the participants' consent) to aid analysis. A total of three researchers were involved in moderating the group discussions.

Profile of the engagement phase participants

Commercial

- Retail, Night economy, Hospitality, Creative arts, Chambers of Commerce, ETAG, Underbelly
- Group 1: 8 participants
- Group 2: 11 participants
- Paired depths: 1

Community

- Residents associations, Community councils, Community organisations
- Group 1: 7 participants
- Group 2: 3 participants
- Depth interviews: 1

Special interest

- Heritage, Equalities, Religious, Children and young people
- Group 1: 8 participants
- Group 2: 7 participants
- Depth interviews: 1

Public

- CEC councillors, Police, Fire, Festivals and Tourism
- Depth interviews: 13
- Paired depths: 2

Groups and interviews were carried out between 12th and 30th November and lasted between 45 minutes and 90 minutes. All interviews were carried out online (using Zoom or Teams). Topic guides, tailored to each type of group, were used to guide all the discussions. All interviews/groups were recorded (with the participants' consent) to aid analysis. A total of three researchers were involved in undertaking the interviews.

Response from Essential Edinburgh



Sarah Ainsworth
Progressive Partnership
Q Court, 3 Quality Street
Edinburgh,
EH4 5BP

18th May 2021

Dear Sarah,

Edinburgh's Christmas and Hogmanay Festivals

As part of the wider consultation process Essential Edinburgh have completed the online survey in regard to Edinburgh's Christmas and Hogmanay celebrations. However, as we believe the issue is of such high importance, please accept this letter as part of our formal response.

Essential Edinburgh is the Business Improvement District for the city centre and as such represents the interest of over 550 business located there. This includes all the major retailers and hospitality outlets in the area and all the large office-based employers. We are heavily involved each year in the discussions around the Festivals and provide operational support in delivering both Festivals.

The economic impact of these Festivals cannot be underestimated. At a crucial trading time of the year, the activities bring in thousands of people into the city centre who as well as going to the entertainment laid on by the Festivals, also shop, eat, drink and stay in the city's businesses.

Edinburgh is renowned across the world for its celebrations at Christmas and Hogmanay and the product we deliver entices people to visit the city from across the globe. The winter festivals attract our city's residents, domestic visitors and international tourists.

Edinburgh benefits enormously for these visitors and their spend whilst here, sustains many businesses and jobs in the city. In the last five years we have seen major redevelopments of buildings in the city centre such as the St James Quarter, Edinburgh Grand, Gleneagles, BHS, Johnnie Walker, Virgin Hotel, Kimpton Charlotte Square. At present there are plans to repurpose other historic buildings in the city centre such as Debenhams, the Royal Overseas League and Jenners.

These developments, and the protection of the historic fabric of our city is related directly to tourism and our visitor economy. Without this, these building would continue to lie empty and decay.

113 Rose Street, Edinburgh EH2 3DT | 0131 220 8580 | info@essentialedinburgh.co.uk | www.essentialedinburgh.co.uk
Essential Edinburgh registered in Scotland No. SC540382 Registered Office Calderston Exchange 15a Carron Street Edinburgh EH4 6AE VAT No. 95790462



As we embark on the road out of the pandemic, we need to restart our city centre economy, promote events and footfall and do everything we can to support the business community of the city. The city centre employs thousands of Edinburgh residents directly and even more through the supply chain.

The period from mid-November through to early January is crucial to the annual income of the majority of these businesses and to do anything to reduce visitors to the city centre at this time of year will have significant consequences for the city.

No one can argue that we cannot deliver our Festivals in a better and more sustainable way. It makes sense to look seriously at how and where we host outdoor events. We must address our carbon footprint and take cognisance of the views of the city's residents.

All this is being looked at by the Council and other partners and rightly so. It is also addressed in the city's 2030 Tourism Strategy. Essential Edinburgh are part of this process and are supportive of it.

However, to make decisions that may adversely affect the number of residents and visitors that will attend events, especially those in the city centre, will directly impact the business community, employment levels, the ability of the city centre to regenerate post COVID and our overall attractiveness as a destination. With over 800,000 tickets sold and approaching four million visitors during the period of the Christmas festivals, the impact is obvious.

All city partners need to look objectively at the Festivals, and we support the review and the need to address issues of sustainability and how we can do things better. The starting point for this however is to make the Festivals better and more attractive to residents and visitors, not to reduce their scale or economic impact on the city.

Regards,



Roddy Smith
Chief Executive

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Response from The Cockburn Association



the **cockburn** association

Winter Festivals 2022 and beyond

Response to the Consultation launched by the City Council on the future of the Winter Festivals

19 May 2021

Introduction

The Cockburn Association appreciates the popularity of the Winter Festivals. We have stated repeatedly over the past number of years that it adds vibrancy and vitality to the City. Edinburgh's Hogmanay is now a global icon that, at the turn of each year, markets the city to a global audience on par with Melbourne and New York City to name a few.

However, both the Christmas Market and the various Hogmanay events are major commercial events rather than cultural festivities. The Xmas market has moved considerably from the German market that once occupied the Mound with largely authentic products and produce to such a scale that it now modifies the Princes Street Gardens to suit its purposes rather than sits respectfully within them.

Now, these festive events impose significant restrictions on residents and those working in the city. Both are now geared to the tourist market rather than the local, with 2018 official figures indicating that less than half attendees of the Xmas market were local residents, which falls even further to just 20% for Hogmanay.

Pre-Covid, the Winter Festivals have been an increasing cause of concern for residents and civic organisations through the city. The erection of a massive space deck in East Princes Street Gardens by the Council's contractor Underbelly, together with other issues regarding the operation of Edinburgh's Hogmanay events (such as attempts to exclude local residents from the city centre) were merely the straw that broke the back of civic interest. The City Council's response to these issues was less than satisfactory and highlighted the conflicted interests that it has in such matters.

These issues prompted a joint response by the Cockburn and the five City Centre Community Councils prompted by the City of Edinburgh Council's Policy and Sustainability Committee (Thursday 20th August 2020).

Current Consultation

The Cockburn welcomes the consultation on the future of the Winter Festival. This was promised as a response to the unsatisfactory management and governance of recent festivals.

However, we are concerned with some of the information provided in the on-line consultation. For example, figures are put in the introduction with no links to the actual reports or data, which has been relatively unchallenged. Commercial confidentiality means that key information is unavailable for scrutiny.

Some issues were unexplored (environmental and carbon impacts), and others would benefit from further discussion and consultation. In this regard, we hope that the various stakeholder groups convened by the consultants would be re-established to receive the report from this consultation and have a chance to consider and discuss the findings.

Covid and Covid-secure challenges

The current uncertainty of restrictions and the general acceptance that we will be living with Covid and Covid-variants for some time needs to be reflected in any event post 2021.

An enhanced (and not just "adequate") security and people management ?? policy for all aspects of the Winter Festivals will be an absolute priority with respect to public protection. It is clear that for years to come, the implications of Covid and the management requirements caused by Covid will continue. The Winter Festivals should have the high levels of management to prevent overcrowding, protect public health and ensure social distancing.

For this reason, together with concerns about previous Winter Festivals, suggests the need for a carefully considered attendee dispersal strategy post-2021. Bigger isn't necessarily better.

It is our view that the Christmas Market, Hogmanay and associated events should not be held in East Princes Street Gardens or at least reduced to the extent that only the upper terrace is used. No space structure such as that erected on 2019 should be permitted.

Key Principles for the Winter Festivals post 2021

The principle of free access must underpin the Winter Festivals offer, especially for those activities that occupy public space. We accept that there will be some ticketed events (such as the Hogmanay Street Party) but these should be limited with a default position of no exclusive access to public areas.

No public or quasi-public areas with soft landscaped surfaces should be used for activities that require substantial infrastructure that might cause damage to those areas. For the Cockburn, it is unacceptable for a public space like east Princes Street Gardens to be unavailable for 6 months of the year to facilitate a commercial Christmas Market that operates for 6 weeks. There are other places and solutions available, such as integrating Waverley Bridge into the market, and using corporate sponsorship to fund entertainment activities.

There should be no loss of public circulation space resulting from measures put in place for these events. For the avoidance of doubt, such management and social distancing measures must not be a Trojan horse for increased commodification of public spaces including streets.

There must be a direct commitment from the Winter Festival management to contribute to **Edinburgh's carbon reduction targets**. All contracts should explicitly reference to ISO 20121 on sustainable events as a benchmark for management. Travel to the events by attendees (including a full breakdown of EH postcodes) should be included in any carbon counting exercise in order to assess, and therefore manage, the full carbon impact of the Festivals.

It is vital that absolute priority is given to supporting existing local businesses and micro-businesses including local social enterprises (Edinburgh Social Enterprise is the most appropriate source of assistance) through all aspects of the events. The aim to create an Edinburgh Christmas Makers' Market is welcome but important details will need to be developed.

Public interest and protection will be best served by scaling down the market. In 2019 67% of outlets in 2019 were non-local. There were also too many "repeat" stalls – i.e. stalls owned by the same retailer selling the same products, in many cases products available in traditional High Street shops. Clear reductions are needed in the number, as well as the proportion, of non-local exhibitors.

In particular, there should be no pop-up bars and food outlets, especially as these create direct competition, not additionally, to local all-year round businesses such as bars and cafes.

Response from The Cockburn Association cont:

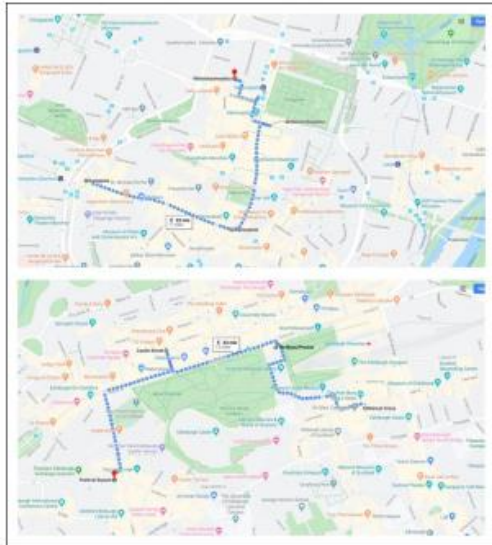


Dispersal of activities

A significant problem with the Winter Festivals pre-Covid was the desire of operators to concentrate activity in a small area. With the Xmas Market, this meant East Princes Street Gardens which were unable and unsuitable to cope with an ever-increasing activity.

Planning applications submitted in early 2020 proposed locating market stalls on High Street and George Street with possible other facilities located in streets will clearly have an impact on local residents for more than two months. We therefore ask that residents on all affected streets are consulted for a period of at least two weeks, before a decision is taken about where the market stalls will be located on the City Trail.

The Cockburn strongly advocates the creation of a **Christmas City Centre Trail** using sites across the City Centre in various locations for markets which could bring additional benefits to those areas. This should include existing markets, such as those in Stockbridge, Castle Terrace Car Park and the Grassmarket, as part of this trail. The map below shows a comparison of relative distances between Munich's famous Xmas market locations and Edinburgh. Festival Square and Conference Square provides an excellent location for the Winter Festivals which could be coupled with The Mound/Waverley Bridge and the possibly the High Street to form an excellent offer.



Summary

The 2019 Winter Festivals were a watershed moment where public concerns about the impact of the Christmas Market and the restrictions and impositions placed upon local residents and businesses for the Hogmanay events reached a tipping point.

This consultation is a direct result of the public disquiet at the approach taken by the Council in managing (or undermanaging) the impacts and the ambivalence of Underbelly, the City's contracted partner for the delivery of the Winter Festivals to these issues. The damage caused to East Princes Street Gardens, effectively removing public access for half a year directly caused by the Christmas Market and its space deck erected without proper consents was a low point in history of the Festivals.

Fundamental to any event that happens post-2021 is the need for the City Council so show leadership in managing the special place and unique qualities of the city. The Council must no longer simply hand over control of significant parts of the public realm to a commercial operator because it is expedient to do so.

The Cockburn would welcome the return of the Winter Festivals but only if past failures are rectified. No soft surfaced public space should be used for infrastructure. East Princes Street Gardens should be largely off-limits for use, but a more creative and dispersed approach could yield significant benefits for the city in a way that does not overwhelm more fragile neighbourhoods and localities.

Other cities in the world operate just such events in much more sustainable ways without the negative impact of the repeated damage caused here. There is no reason why Edinburgh cannot follow suit.

thecockburnassociation

Trunk's Close
55 High Street
Edinburgh EH1 1SR
www.cockburnassociation.org.uk
The Cockburn Association is a registered Scottish Charity SC011544

Response from Edinburgh World Heritage



18 May 2021

Sent via email to: events@edinburgh.gov.uk
Also submitted via online form

Dear Sir/Madam

WINTER FESTIVALS CONSULTATION

Edinburgh festivals are an important part of the city's rich cultural heritage, as well as being a source of pride and enjoyment for residents and visitors. Edinburgh's historic environment, including our ancient buildings and monuments, and our renowned parks and gardens, form a dramatic backdrop to the festivals, and was a key reason the city was chosen as the location for the first International Festival in 1947.

The festivals make many positive contributions to our historic environment. Concerts and live performances help provide a sustainable, long-term use for many buildings, which might otherwise be considered at risk. Large numbers of visitors from diverse backgrounds and all age groups come to the city as a result of the festivals and are able to enjoy and feel a strong connection to its unique environment. The festivals also continue the long tradition of music and performance which form part of the city's intangible cultural heritage.

For the future, we would expect all of Edinburgh's festivals to develop in a way that is sensitive to our historic environment, contributes to its conservation, and respects the needs of local communities and businesses. We support approaches which broaden the physical footprint of the festivals to reduce an over-concentration in certain parts of the Old Town.

The above statement applies to all of Edinburgh's Festivals. An additional consideration specific to the Winter Festivals is their impact on the Waverley Valley. This is an area of great importance to the Outstanding Universal Value to the World Heritage Site, particularly the dramatic reflection of the changes in European planning from the medieval Old Town to the Enlightenment planning of the New Town. It is the nodal point between the two sides of the city – creating key views where the 'two towns' can be appreciated as well as containing highly significant landscapes, monuments and architecture. Given the importance of this area to the World Heritage Site and city identity, it is essential that any intervention (whether temporary or permanent) in the valley conserves or enhances its heritage values.

In the past, the intensity of the Winter Festivals in the Waverley Valley has been detrimental to character of the designed landscape, setting of listed buildings as well as causing physical wear on the public realm. While this temporary in nature, it is regular and impacts on this important space for a significant period of the year (including set up, take down and landscape recovery time). The responses we have seen from consultations on numerous public realm initiatives and strategies indicates the management of public space in the city is an area of some contention for the local community, and it will be important to consider these views in moving forward.

At this stage, we make the following recommendations:

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- We recommend that the footprint of the winter festivals is broadened to reduce over-concentration and impact on the Waverley Valley and engage visitors with heritage in wider areas.
- We recommend that any intervention conserves or enhances the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage site, and any attributes or individual assets which contribute to it.
- We recommend that proportionate Heritage Statements are produced at a relatively early stage to clarify the heritage values potentially affected by any proposals, identify principles for any intervention, and develop proposals to protect or enhance the identified heritage values. This should be done on an area/street basis in order to reflect the varied characteristics and values between locations.
- We recommend that an overall or area-based mission statement/brief (or equivalent) should set out key principles or actions for how heritage values are to be conserved or enhanced – including but not limited to considerations of location, scale, style, lighting, materials, public realm interventions and management considerations. The engagement of heritage professionals throughout the development of proposals will aid in this, help mitigate any risks associated heritage designations and facilitate a balanced outcome.
- We recommend that proposals are developed in line with relevant adopted and developing strategies, including but not limited to: the Tourism Strategy for 2030, World Heritage Site Management Plan (currently gearing up for renewal in 2022), Public Space Management Plan and area strategies such as the Princes Street and Waverley Valley Strategy. Edinburgh World Heritage has responded to these consultations, and these should be referred to.
- We recommend that opportunities are sought to establish positive cyclical re-investment to support heritage through tourism – e.g. through the Transient Visitor Levy.
- We recommend that local communities are engaged in how to reform better, and their cultural resilience supported.

We hope the above advice is helpful to you in moving forward. We at Edinburgh World Heritage strongly believe that good historic city management is not about stopping change or thinking from 'within a heritage bubble' but enabling a positive and balanced approach which supports the heritage of the city and the many public benefits this brings current and future generations. To this end, we would welcome and expect regular engagement on this moving forward, building on the existing culture of engagement.

Kind regards,

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Thank you



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