

LIVERPOOL IRISH FESTIVAL

Bringing Liverpool and
Ireland closer together
using arts and culture

A photograph of two people shaking hands, with a teal diagonal background element. The image is split diagonally from the top right to the bottom left. The upper left portion is a solid teal color, containing the festival's title and tagline. The lower right portion is a dark, low-key photograph of two people shaking hands. The person on the right is shirtless and has their arm extended towards the center. The person on the left is partially visible, wearing a dark top and a bracelet, with their hand reaching towards the center. The handshake is the focal point of the image.

FESTIVAL REVIEW 2018

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OVERVIEW

Liverpool Irish Festival 2018's theme of 'Migration' developed from 2016's theme of 'conviviality' and 2017's theme 'what does it mean to be Irish?'. Using the theme, our programme explored local and international stories about the causes, effects, influences and impacts of Irish migration. Doing so progressed and embedded our three programme trails an inspired discussions about the diverse communities, creative practices and stances that generate views, identities, gateways and barriers to Irish culture.

As with previous years, the team worked to create and warm and positive touchpoints with partners and audiences, delivering an expansive, far-reaching and accessible festival around a nexus of activity. This critical mass of activity, debate and exhibition, expressed through traditional and contemporary practices, discourse and creativity, wholly centred on Irish creative culture and relevance to/influence on Liverpool.

Following previous Festival Review success, we have generated considerable data (490 forms compared to 342 in 2017). Whilst 2017 showed a 40% decline in all feedback, this year we have seen an increase, which is surprising given the 2018 GDPR roll out.

Feedback was collected by a committed team of volunteers, engaging on-to-one in the field, for earnest and useable data. More expansive, digital forms have proven far harder to engage participants in during 'rich media' times so paper feedback forms remain our best way of gaining intelligence. We're pleased to report that audiences deemed *#LIF2018* 'fun, interesting and good', shifting slightly from 2016 and 2017 when we were 'fun, interesting and informative'. "Entertaining" and "excellent" have crept up the rankings and "informative" remains up there in fourth place. These 6 descriptions account for over 20% of all words used to describe the festival.

As in previous years, *#LIF2018* occurred in a mix of high end cultural spaces and community venues, bringing variety and depth to the programme and its atmosphere.

Generating large scale civic interventions to improve artistic reputation, resonance and legacy -truly underpinning the festival- is desired, in order we revisit the reputational plaudits raised by ideas such as the *Irish Sea Sessions*. The *#LIF2018* was frequently applauded for its ambition, diversity and scale, but individual events were less well recognised.

In future, *LIF* aims to build on public realm and high profile work, but 2017-18 has proven this requires multiyear planning, investment and significant partner collaboration. Due to the funding deadlines and turnaround issues faced in 2016-18, we could not progress public realm

work, but conversations with Derry and Strabane about multi-site work are ongoing, whilst other temporary interventions, such as celtic knot mandala building using natural materials are also considerations. These are a nice to have, but longer lasting, permanent pieces are much desired.

Greening the City for St Patrick's Day delivered some success, with civic buildings turning green in Ireland's honour, as led by our work. Conservative estimations suggest over 9k will have seen this work. The *Three Festivals Tall Ships Regatta*, in partnership with *Liverpool City Council*, took us to 6k people and conversations are underway for 2019. New leadership with *Liverpool Pride* meant there was no *World Stage* this year, but we hope to develop *Pride* projects as they develop their creative endeavours. We also provided many local contacts for the *Liverpool Feis*, which we understand to have been a commercial success in 2018.

Our work to beat the funding curve and create longer planning cycles meant we had programmes and press releases out much further ahead than usual, with some released in early June. Festival brochures were delivered three weeks earlier than in 2017 and a festival newspaper (delivered early Oct 2018) also allowed us to make corrections, include late programme and expand the content shared with audiences. Planned ahead, advertising could be sold in this, creating a significant income model.

Securing a high profile artist and headline act allowed us to build press contact and provided a long-term strategic lead for fundraising and commissioning, which enriched the artistic integrity and reputational value of the festival. That said, one of selections proved to be an extremely hard sell and. We learned, however much we do, if the city has a large scale event -such as the Giants- we will suffer a lack of media penetration and wide cultural buy-in from audiences. Alignment is more and more necessary to stop competing needs.

#LIF2018 continued using multiple channels for discourse, continuing the delivery of social media outputs, in-conversation events, family days, seisiúns, essays and blogs, engaging deeply with audiences and multiple arts collaborators and agents (i.e., *Everyman Playhouse*, *Liverpool Irish Centre*, *Liverpool Comhaltas*, and *Museum of Liverpool*). This gained good audiences and improved local interest/knowledge.

2018 reiterated that 'closed events', specific to individual relationships (i.e., fresher's fair at *LIPA*), can bring benefits (volunteers, knowledge sharing, artist interactions and

event attendees), but it was in the free, social events where the festival felt its warmest and most effective.

#LIF2018 developed essays, brochures, trails, posters, art works and stories, working with 197 artists, creatives and supporters and showed work from many more for whom we do not have monitoring information (i.e., dance schools, *Comhaltas*, *Melody Makers*, play performers, etc). We generated an in-house volunteer team; developed 88 exhibition days (93.3 in 2017 and 81 in 2016) and more besides!

Feedback from creative and community peers such as the artists and writers we have worked with, partners, network peers (i.e., COoL and members of *Culture Ireland*, *Cork National Museums*, etc) all suggest we make a positive contribution to cultural excellence and are improving our arts reputation. Feedback shows we deliver something unique to the field and we remain the only arts and culture led Irish festival in the world!

Our specificity remains our USP. Liverpool's unique connection to Irish communities and our determination to address Irishness and diasporic peoples and culture as a spectrum of ideas and abilities draws people in to sharing creative culture beyond the Liverpool, Liverpool Irish and Irish of the city.

Our focus on specific stories, rather than broad cultures 'on the Island' is dynamic and relevant, engaging audiences in the artistry of Irish culture through popular and niche work. Inviting audiences to join us and meet others as makers and co-creators develops friendships (artistically, professionally and personally) in ways individuals experience deeply. Our appetite to import stories and 'export' the *Liverpool Irish Festival* to tell our stories abroad should create and spread connections, develop exchanges and truly 'bring Liverpool and Ireland closer together'.

We'd like to thank our artists, partners, sponsors, collaborators, volunteers, organisations, venues and friends, along with each and every visitor and audience member for helping to make **#LIF2018** the success it was. Thank you! Please, join us again for **#LIF2019** (17-27 October).



Emma Smith, Director -
Liverpool Irish Festival

Irish Builders of Britain, #LIF2018.



2018 HEADLINE ACHIEVEMENTS AND FUNDING FACTS

- In 2018, the *Liverpool Irish Festival* gained 24,232 visits to 75 events they had direct involvement in and 4 exhibits. We showcased 197 artists, speakers and other creatives over the 10 days. This compares to 9,336 visitors to 69 events and 3 exhibits showcasing 127 artists, speakers and creatives in 2017 and 8,812 visitors (6% growth), 53 events and 4 exhibits showcasing 107 creatives (19% growth) in 2016
- #LIF2018 received visits from 32 of 40 Liverpool post codes and many more national and international visitors
- We worked with 59 partners (up from 55 last year and 30 in 2016), including venues, sponsors and funders
- 95.13% of visitors rated #LIF2018 as 4 or 5 out of 5, down very slightly on 96.6% for #LIF2017, which was up 2.6% on #LIF2016. The overall festival rating was 4.6 out of 5
- 96.2% of visitors are quite or very likely to recommend LIF
- #LIF2018 had a press reach of 26m compared to #LIF2017's reach of 6.5m.

Between 30 Oct 2017 and 28 Oct 2018 (final day of *Liverpool Irish Festivals* 2017 and 2018) the Festival Director worked for 258 days (an increase from 196 for the same period the previous year) ...

- participating, leading or engaging in 276 (up from 188) individual meetings
- sending 6,427 emails (25 per day, down 8 per day on 2017)
- delivering monthly Board reports, including strategic direction documents, brand guidance, website updates and festival collateral (including one save the date card, one 36 page brochure, one 8 page newsletter, new feedback forms, 4 posters and one 16 page *In:Visible Women* brochure).

#LIF2018 delivered 75 events, across 80 sessions over 11 days, as well as 4 exhibits, generating 88.8 exhibition days.

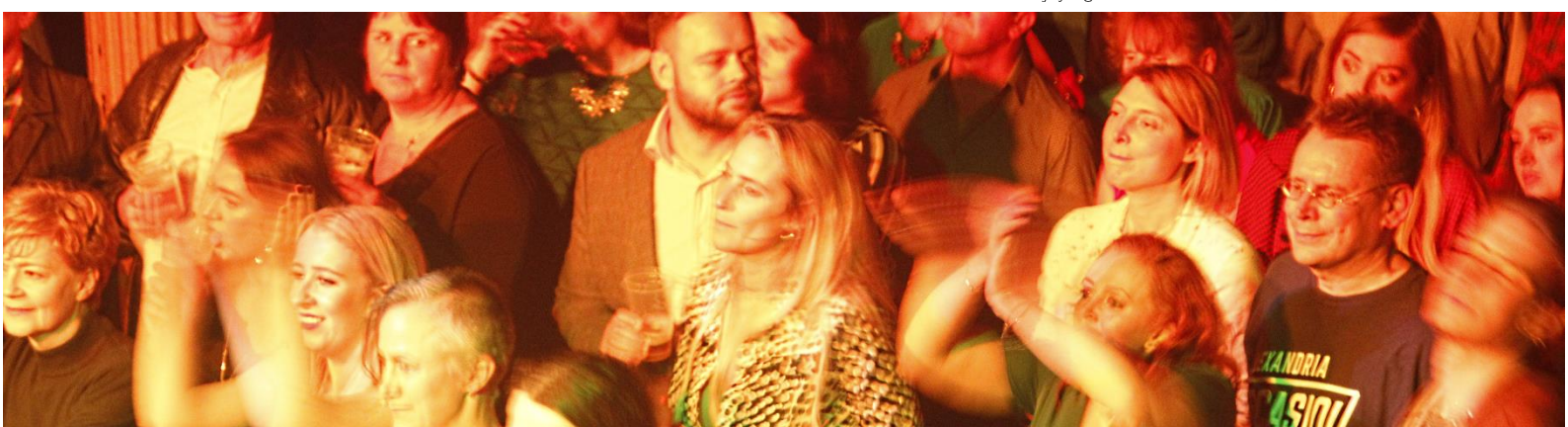
It is worth noting that *Arts Council England* determine a session as a morning, afternoon or evening, so if an event spans a number of hours, it may be worth more than 1 session, hence 75 events totalling 80 sessions.

In 2018, the *Liverpool Irish Festival* was supported by *Arts Council England* (£15k), the Irish Government *Emigrant Support Programme* (£11k), *Liverpool City Council's Cultural Investment Programme* (£19k), *Tourism Ireland* (£2.5k), *TG 4* (£2.5k), *Eleanor Rathbone Charitable Trust* (£1k), *Culture Ireland* (for a match amount total of no more than 7,000EUR/c.£6.13k) and a personal donation of £500, from a festival friend, meaning that in 2018, the *Liverpool Irish Festival* raised a total of £57k. Although this presents a decrease from £63.5k in the prior year in total awards granted, we are up on income streams and the lower amount reflects a £15k rather than £30k ask to *Arts Council England*. To support our work, we additionally earned £12,000 in service provision fees from *Liverpool City Council* for *Three Festivals Tall Ships Regatta* in summer 2018.

At the time of writing, a number of trust and foundation applications have been identified and await approval/submission whilst ongoing annual funding plans for 2019 applications are in train. Local authority support will continue to be offered, subject to Cabinet approvals, in a rolling 3 or 4 year programme, decreasing by approximately 5% each year, if successful. Our application for this is under preparation at the time of writing.

Emigrant Support Programme applications open early in 2019 – possibly for multi-year consideration, though this is more likely to be in place for 2020. Subject to suitable project evaluation and processes - LIF aim to further build their relationship with *Arts Council England* as well as *TG 4*, *Tourism Ireland*, *Culture Ireland*, *Arts Council Ireland* and many more, with a view to building multi-year incomes for future years.

Audiences enjoying *Kíla* at the *Arts Club*, #LIF2018.



ANNUAL ENGAGEMENT AND MONITORING

Out-of-festival events and annual growth

As well as running its own festival, the *Liverpool Irish Festival* also made contributions to events across the cultural calendar including:

- *Greening the City* for St Patrick's Day, creating a passive audience of c. 9,785
- Participating in *LJMU's An Evening with Brendan Behan* panel discussion at *Royal Court*, running an *LJMU* career session, hosting acts for *Smithdown Road Festival* and contributing 20 acts to the *Three festivals Tall Ships Regatta*, generating further active audiences of 6,158. These collaborations signposted the festival and built audience engagement, adding 15,943 participations to our annual total.

These activities are hugely important in reaching new audiences, but also build our reputation for actively supporting other creative forms, partnership, communities and knowledge sectors. They demonstrate we are multi-disciplined, committed collaborators and deepen relations with partners, activating new creative opportunities that allow us to work with more artists and generate content for our mailing and social media subscribers across the year, rather than just once.

As well as building audiences, these satellite events split the risk of diminished festival activity in testing times, such as the weather and travel conditions in 2017 and the post-Giant spectacular in 2018. Relying on one space in the calendar year leaves us vulnerable to the impact of such issues. Spreading activity –as well as developing the high point we are recognised for– allows us to find new audiences, offer opportunities and pick up engagement beyond the remit of the festival. Learning this last year means we have increased this audience from 3,700 in 2017 to almost double that in 2018, not including passive viewers!

Total audiences for *#LIF2018* specifically were up 4% on planned activities and proposed numbers, whilst annual figures were 19% above anticipated/ planning figures based on programme predictions.

High yielding events included the *Family Day* at *Museum of Liverpool*, *Three festivals Tall Ships Regatta* and *Greening the City*. *#LIF2018* shows a staggering 285% growth on *#LIF2017* and there is no way this could be repeated.

Greening the City is the most significant addition to the festival portfolio and contributed over 9k visits to the total. Although this is a very conservatively drawn figure (base on a 2% population extrapolation), by maintaining this project year-to-year, just as *Chinese New Year* team manages, we should be able to continue to develop such figures.

Sell out events included *The Guilty Feminist*, *The James Connolly Reader* session and *Kitty*. A couple of events proved to be difficult to sell tickets for, and we had lower attendance at some events than anticipated, associated –we believe– with an increasingly strong cultural offer in the city in October and our following the *Giants Spectacular*, which made media and press penetration difficult.

It is clear to see that the scale of festival programme can be attributed to the increase in Director's hours. Full-time work across the year means a better relationship with partners and deeper collaboration. This aided fundraising and the depth of programme (such as *It's the Travelling Life* and our offer for *Three Festivals Tall Ships Regatta*, which included song commissions, essays, dance school involvement, etc). This also impacted on our ability to get information out about the programme earlier and deliver print in a more timely fashion for the festival start. We know this had an impact, because our ability to pull people in from the North West region was reflected in the attendance figures and post code breakdowns.

The fact that we were able to draw 8,289 people (vs 5,356 in 2017) to the festival is in itself an achievement to be proud of. That we underpinned the festival with additional activity across the year builds on our learning from 2017 and helps to crystallise the importance of partnership working and collaboration. In essence our year-on-year (YOY) growth is something to be proud of, trebling our audience.

Participants and visitors*

	2016		2017		2018	
	Events	Exhibits	Events	Exhibits	Events	Exhibits
Expected	3,608	975	6,495	1,030	19,625	760
Achieved	5,569	3,243	7,252	1,253	23,309	923
Visitor total		88,12		8,505		24,232
% > (actual vs expected)	154.35	332.62	111.66	121.65	118.77	121.45

* All these figures are derived from audience counts or calculated extrapolations from automated door counts.

Audience attendances

	2016		2017		2018	
	No.	Aud	No.	Aud	No.	Aud
Workshops	5	1046	17	436	13	566
Performance	14	2124	31	5,088	34	2829
Event	27	2052	16	2459	18	1675
Other	7	347	1	100	10	18239
Exhibitions	4	3243	3	1,253	4	923
Total	57	8812	69	9,336	79	24232

Arts Council England defines audience engagement in these categories to help determine depth of engagement versus passive exposure. LIP's workshops and 'other' (including walks, tours, etc) demonstrate a high rate of firm engagement. In 2018 it is worth noting the spike in audience for 'other', which includes 'active' audiences for the *Three Festivals Tall Ships Regatta* and 'passive' audiences for *Greening the City*.

Live programme attendance breakdowns

	2016				2017				2018			
	No of each	% of live prog	Visitors/ participants	% total audience	No of each	% of live prog	Visitors/ participants	% total audience	No of each	% of live prog	Visitors/ participants	% total audience
Live programme build												
Workshops (cellf classes, family day, student lecture)	5	9	1046	19	17	26	436	5	13	17	566	2
Performances (music and theatre etc)	14	26	2124	38	31	48	5,088	63	34	45	2,829	12
Events (talks and musical seisiúns)	27	51	2052	37	16	25	2,459	30	18	24	1,675	7
Other (St Patrick's breakfast, Greening the City, River Festival)	7	13	347	6	1	2	100	1	10	13	18239	78
TOTAL	53	100	5,569	100	65	100	8,083	100	75	100	23,309	100

NB The table above only considers 'live programme' so doesn't include the exhibits, thus % totals are 100% of live programme.

Exhibition figures

For #LIF2018 we showed 4 exhibitions: Berina Kelly at the *Bluecoat Display Centre*, the *Materials Library* at the *Everyman*, *It's the Travelling Life* at *The Brink* and at *George Henry Lee's* and Sorcha Boyle's work at *OUTPUT Gallery*. Total exhibition attendees in 2018 are 923 compared to over 1,200 in 2017. Strong exhibitions clearly improve numbers and this figure will rise, but presently the figures for *The Brink* are not known as the exhibit doesn't end until Jan 2019.

Exhibition figures are extrapolations of building figures or official door counts. We have used a 15% rate for the *Bluecoat Display Centre*, based on the necessity to pass the window display within the shop to access the till. However, this does not account for those who look in to the display from outside (considerable) and so is believed to be a conservative estimate for those who stopped to enjoy Berina Kelly's eye-catching ceramics, as part of the *Bluecoat Display Centre's In the Window* programme.

Average ticket price*

	2016	2017	2018
No of tickets paid for	2714	1,550	3784
Income if average ticket was redeemed	£45,373.00	£19,362.50	£31,407.20
Average price of paid event ticket	£16.72	£7.35	£ 8.30
Av across all events (including free events)	£4.25	£3.47	£ 5.81

* Based on the average price of tickets (the value between full and concession prices, multiplied by the number of purchases made). Does not account for comps or free events.

Of 65 events programmed as part of #LIF2018 proper (not including pop-up events), 43 were ticketed (with 41 being pay to enter) leaving 28 free. The estimated potential income against every ticket created, based on average prices, amounts to £31,407.20 (up on £19,362.50 in 2017), shared across venues. This a gross income indicator, not an accounting figure.

As in previous years, LIF created box office % split deals with venues including: *Everyman Playhouse*, *Picture House*, *the Liverpool Irish Centre* and others, ranging between 5-70%, from which small income has been made. This followed a partnership with *Ticket Quarter* to vend our tickets, which we hoped would gain greater ticket buying audience by accessing their database of 300k+ consumers. In 2018, it is difficult to see the benefit of this. We need to improve sales and shares, though it is important to remember that free events must feature in order to drive engagement and fulfil *Liverpool City Council* and other funder obligations, as well as maintaining our egalitarianism, charity status and barrierless entry.

Average audience survey respondent age

Unfortunately, due to changes in data regulations (GDPR 2018) our feedback system was overhauled in 2018 and age was missed from the form. Consequently we cannot present #LIF2018 YOY figures. Below are those calculated for 2016 and 2017, to be carried forward and assessed during #LIF2019. What the 'Av' shows is that an average audience member's age in 2017 was 32, compared to 51 in 2016, reflecting our attempts to attract younger people via the nature of the programme and our distribution. Until we reapply the age field in to our feedback we cannot judge losses or gains according to programme. However, anecdotally, it seems as though targeting the 'right' media spaces for the 'right' event does help and shows that many of our older audiences are extremely hesitant to use new technology. A number of feedback completions say they receive emails and have used the site but prefer the brochure. Ideally, LIF would secure funds to develop digital means of collecting information from attendants during events and after. As with previous years, the digital survey struggled to attain completions and, despite an overhaul, remains labour intensive. Paper feedback is good for general feedback, but remains outdated, short and difficult to interpret.

		2016			2017		
Age	(Av)	Digital	Paper	Total	%	Combined	%
							Variance
Under 16	8	0	7	7	1.16	11	3.05
16-19	17.5	0	10	10	1.65	25	6.93
20-24	22	0	46	46	7.59	95	26.32
25-44	34.5	4	115	119	19.64	52	14.40
45-54	49.5	8	78	86	14.19	75	20.78
55-64	59.5	20	152	172	28.38	90	24.93
65+ (Life expectancy = 81*)	73	16	123	139	22.94	5	1.39
Prefer not to say	36.5	1	1	2	0.33	8	2.22
Completions		49	532	581	95.87	361	100
% answering question		100	95.51	95.87			
Total form fillers		49	557	606			

* The Global Burden of Diseases, Injuries, and Risk Factors Study 2013 (GBD 2013).

Ethnicity data

Ethnicity	2016 responses		2017 responses		2018 responses		YOY variance between 2017 and 2018
	2016 %		2017 %		2018 %		
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	3	1	0	0	11	3	3
Asian or Asian British - or other Asian background, not otherwise listed here	1	0	6	2	1	0	-1
Black or Black British - African	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Black or Black British - Caribbean	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Black or Black British - Other	0	0	2	1	1	0	0
Chinese	4	1	0	0	1	0	0
Mixed - White and Asian	2	0	1	0	0	0	0
Mixed - White and Black African	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Mixed - any other mixed backgrounds	5	1	0	0	3	1	1
White - British	364	67	70	19	103	27	7
White - Irish	137	25	26	7	15	4	-3
White - Anglo-Irish	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
White - any other White backgrounds	5	1	9	2	75	19	17
Unknown ethnicity - Irish	0	0	74	20	72	19	-2
Unknown ethnicity - British	0	0	104	29	77	20	-9
Unknown ethnicity - Anglo-Irish	0	0	15	4	3	1	-3
International mixed ethnicities	0	0	16	4	2	1	-4
I would prefer not to say	0	0	24	7	8	2	-5
Other	18	3	0	0	11	3	3
Not known/did not answer	0	0	14	4	0	0	-4
Completions	541	100	362	100	385	100	0
Total feedback forms collected	606		362		490		
% answering question	89		100		79		
All British and Irish ethnicity groups	502	93	296	82	272	71	-11

Year-on-year (YOY) figures for ethnicity provide certain issues. In 2017, feedback forms asked people to specify “Ethnicity and nationality” in a freeform manner, resulting in a lot of variations and incompletions (such as ‘white’, ‘black’, ‘Scouse’, ‘UK’ only presenting part answers). This year we asked for “Ethnicity” and this, compared to specific YOY comparators, has led to some inconsistency. To account for this, we have coded all of the answers to create the count, thus “white” has been coded to ‘White – any other backgrounds’, while any “British, White” have been coded as ‘White – British’, to standardise responses. When asked about ‘ethnicity’ many people write “British” rather than “White British”, along with many other freeform responses, such as “Scouse”, “European” and “Why does it matter?”. Such answers have been judged as fairly as can be, using the criteria used for the last 2 years and shown in the table. Where someone used a hyphen, we have attributed this to ‘Prefer not to say’ and where one aspect of ethnicity has been offered, we have tried to attribute this fairly too – i.e., “Scouse” may not mean ‘White’, but will mean ‘British’ and therefore has been attributed to ‘Unknown ethnicity – British’. What is interesting to note is that between #LIF2017 and #LIF2018, British and Irish ethnicity has decreased by 11% showing we have broadened our audience, though much of this may be made up with ‘White – any other White backgrounds’.

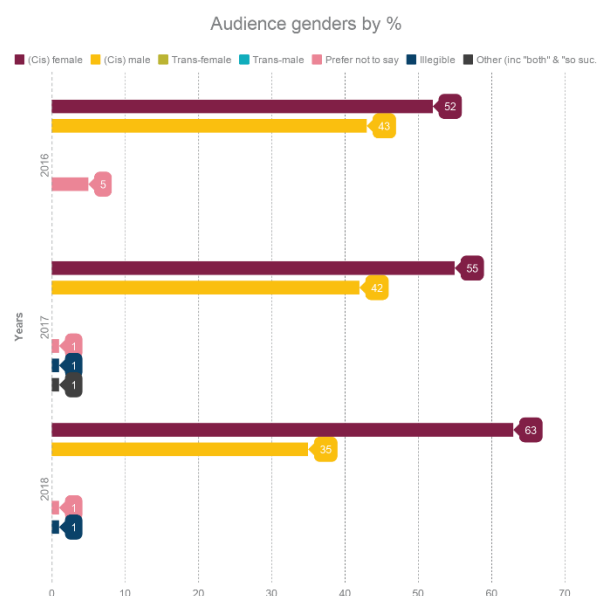
‘White British’, ‘White Irish’, ‘Anglo-Irish’, ‘British’ and ‘Irish’ audiences generate just over 70% of our audience, compared to 93% in 2016. We have seen small growths in the international audience (though not reflected in post codes) and with freedom of choice, many more people have identified themselves as Anglo-Irish rather than one or the other, suggesting that 2016’s figures only helped to tell part of the story by defining ‘British’ and ‘Irish’. Accordingly, we tried to look at this slightly differently this year, but also within the realm of GDPR this can be difficult.

During #LIF2018 we asked audiences where they were born and where they are resident now in the hope of finding out where people are moving to Liverpool from and whether there are particular areas of Ireland we attract people from. 465 of 490 gave some kind of response. Of the 15 people who gave an Irish residence, 3 lived in County Clare and 3 lived in Dublin, though 8 had been born in Dublin. 8 Liverpool residents had been born in Northern Ireland, 3 in Belfast; with 32 being born in Ireland, 3 from Cavan, 4 from Cork and 12 from Dublin. Of 7 Northern Irish residents, 4 had travelled from Derry and Strabane. 266 identified themselves as living in Liverpool (rather than Merseyside), but of them only 109 said they were born in the city, with 10 from London, 8 from Northern Ireland and 35 from Ireland.

Gender and audiences

As identified in 2017, we have tried harder, in view of an increasingly intersectional audience and language, to understand the differences and diversity within gender and sexuality groups using our paper feedback, which we have not previously. 'Prefer not to say's were not as high as anticipated, but it is clear that by permitting free form answers there are other things to be learned. Despite the development of intersectional language, many people cannot spell 'heterosexual', many confuse gender and sexuality and for some, sexuality is still a topic they prefer not to discuss.

Gender	2016		2017		2018		Variance
	Responses	% of those who replied	Responses	% of those who replied	Responses	% of those who replied	
(Cis) female	316	52	201	55	264	63	8
(Cis) male	259	43	154	42	145	35	-8
Trans-female	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
Trans-male	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Prefer not to say	30	5	3	1	4	1	0
Illegible	0	0	3	1	5	1	0
Other (inc "both" & "so such thing")	0	0	3	1	0	0	-1
Completions	606	100	364	100	420	100	0



Our audience gender figures suggest we have continued to increase our female audience share. This could be accounted for by the female focussed programme, but equally may represent a feedback bias. This will be something to watch for in 2019.

The slight increase in non-cis-gendered/non-binary audiences is not really enough to learn anything specific from. If 2:420 respondents self-identify as transgendered, we could extrapolate that 0.476% of the #LIF2018 audience may identify this way, or 115 people in our total audience.

We expect to see significant fluctuations in this next year when we undertake feedback at out-of-year events as well as our own. Completing

these at events such as *Liverpool Pride*, *River Festival* and events in partnership with other companies such as *Writing on the Wall*, will help us to show how we reach other communities.

Reaching non-cis-gendered audiences, in line with the work we did with Paul Dowling and the diaspora policy, should be given some focus in future. Our low non-binary figures may be representative of LIF lacking relevant content, but a lack of evidence is not a compelling argument for radical change, so we ought to attempt something artistically credible (and monitor it) to see what happens, especially as long-term advocates for the *Creative Case* (see below) and work with the Irish diaspora. Future feedback should show a shift towards matching at least the national trend figures, such as 0.4% for non-binary attendees.

Sexuality

Responses	%	Sexuality self-identifier
10	3.45	Bisexual
1	0.34	Confused
15	5.17	Provided gender not sexuality
205	70.69	Heterosexual/straight/H
5	1.72	Lesbian
1	0.34	Pan
5	1.72	Prefer Not to Say
36	12.41	N/A/-/?/Illegible
12	4.14	Gay
290	100	Totals
	10.00	Non-binary identifier total
		PNTS, marked without intent to supply definitive answer or incorrect response
	19.31	
	70.69	Heterosexual
	100	% Total

We added sexuality monitoring to our paper forms for the first time this year. We gave people the freedom to write whatever they wanted under the header 'Sexuality'. 58% of feedback form respondents provided an answer of some kind. Having cleaned the data to standardise answers, the table (left) shows that 70% of our audience is heterosexual, with 10% opting for a "non-binary" self-identifier, such as 'gay', 'pan' or 'bi-sexual'. 12% spoiled their answer, though only 1.72% used 'prefer not to say'. Understanding our audience in this way enables us to understand who we are missing and issues in our audience. It is clear some people don't understand why we would collect this sort of data and that some would prefer to make a joke. There are also a number of people (over 5%) who do not understand sexuality as distinct from gender and therefore we may need to offer clearer contextualisation for the question.

Audience post code breakdowns and analysis

Post code breakdowns indicate market penetration and/or audience hotspots/travel time. Our post code data shows us that we have a high percent of audiences traveling regionally and nationally though international travel seems to have dropped. We suspect this is an anomaly of feedback collection rather than a reality of our audiences because it did not feel significantly different. Anecdotally, our feedback suggests we had no visitors from Dublin, when we know there were people present from there, so we believe there are some omissions, naturally occurring as a result of random collections. As we cannot collect data from 100% of audiences, these things will occur from time to time.

In 2016 we managed to get a feedback answer from someone in every Liverpool residential postcode. In 2018, we managed to get 32:40 postcodes (up two from 2017), suggesting we pull audiences from 80% of the city.

Collecting data across the year would significantly help our data as people coming to the docks for River Festival work will not necessarily be the same as those at city centre events, though we would expect some crossover and cross-sell. We could not to do this in July 2018 as we were transitioning from the *General Data Protection Regulation* legislation changes in May 2018 and had no GDPR compliant feedback forms to use. This will not be an issue in future.

It is very clear when looking at the Liverpool residential post code data (page 14) that showing work in South Liverpool locations has a direct effect on audiences though it could also be argued that we are collecting feedback in those locations so we are bound to see increases. The Toxteth knock on effect is also evident in the South Liverpool pull, so of greater interest is the draw in from Bootle. This is perhaps the effects of the *It's The Travelling Life* exhibit and project, whilst L12 and L13 seem to be frequenters of the Irish Centre in L6.

LIPs post code breakdowns show we received almost 58% of our audience from Liverpool (down on 65% last year.). We have grown our North West audience by 8% rising to 28% of total audiences. With just 1.64% travelling internationally, it appears we have grown our national audience by 12%, up on 7% the year previous. We suspect that the international rate reflected in the feedback is lower than reality, but what these figures do show is that we have widened our reach and we are getting audiences in from further afield than in previous years.

Extrapolated across the festival, the figures suggest that #LIF2018 welcomed

- 397/1.64% international visitors compared to 432/4.63% in 2017 and just 48 in 2016
- 6,882/28.4% compared to 1,970/21.1% non-Liverpool North West visitors in 2017
- 14,164/58.45% Liverpudlians and
- 2,787/11.5% compared to 917/64.45% in national visits.

The following table shows the national and international feedback responses and the YOY changes.

All responses	2016	%	2017	%	2018	%
Bath or Bristol	4	0.73	0	0	2	0.47
Belfast	5	0.91	2	0.58	8	1.88
Birmingham	1	0.18	0	0	1	0.23
Blackburn and Bolton	1	0.18	3	0.87	2	0.47
Blackpool	2	0.37	0	0	0	0.00
Bradford, Halifax, Leeds, Sheffield and York	2	0.37	5	1.45	9	2.11
Chester and Wirral	99	18.1	56	16.18	86	20.19
Coventry, Derby and Leicester	1	0.18	2	0.58	2	0.47
Crewe	3	0.55	1	0.29	1	0.23
Dublin	2	0.37	5	1.45	0	0.00
Durham and Darlington	0	0	2	0.58	1	0.23
Edinburgh and Glasgow	3	0.55	1	0.29	0	0.00
Gloucester	1	0.18	0	0	0	0.00
Guildford/Woking	1	0.18	2	0.58	0	0.00
Inverness	2	0.37	0	0	0	0.00
Ipswich	0	0	1	0.29	0	0.00
Jersey	0	0	1	0.29	0	0.00
Lancaster	1	0.18	0	0	2	0.47
Liverpool	339	61.97	223	64.45	249	58.45
Llandudno, Powys, Llandridod and Cardiff	10	1.83	3	0.87	4	0.94
London* (all)	14	2.56	10	2.89	14	3.29
Manchester	5	0.91	5	1.45	9	2.11
Northampton and Kettering	1	0.18	2	0.58	5	1.17
Norwich	1	0.18	0	0	0	0.00
Nottingham	2	0.37	0	0	0	0.00
Oldham	1	0.18	1	0.29	1	0.23
Other international/Queensland, Australia	1	0.18	11	3.18	7	1.64
Paisley	1	0.18	0	0	0	0.00
Plymouth	1	0.18	0	0	0	0.00
Portsmouth	1	0.18	0	0	0	0.00
Preston and Skelmersdale	9	1.65	3	0.87	10	2.35
Shrewsbury	1	0.18	0	0	0	0.00
Southend-on-Sea	1	0.18	0	0	0	0.00
Stockport	2	0.37	0	0	0	0.00
Stoke-on-Trent	1	0.18	0	0	1	0.23
Torquay	2	0.37	0	0	0	0.00
Warrington/St Helens	17	3.11	6	1.73	11	2.58
Wigan	9	1.65	1	0.29	1	0.23
Totals	547	100	346	100	426	100

If out of town visits account for 397+2787 (=3,184) visits, based on a city visit multiplier of 0.4% this means we generated 1,274 overnight stays. Without using our 2016 festival day attendance rate of 3.2days (which would triple this figure) and using the [Liverpool Hotels Update 2016 \(£70.03\)](#), LIF believe we encouraged a minimum hotel income of £89,190.

The table on the following page lists Liverpool's residential post codes and the number of feedback respondents gained from each from 2016 to 2018.

A = Attendees			2016			2017			2018		
C = Extrapolated number of Liverpool visits			339		5461	223		6017	249		14032
Location	Authority		A	%	C	A	%	C	A	%	C
L1	City Centre	Liverpool	13	4	209	13	6	351	6	2	338
L2	City Centre	Liverpool	1	0	16		0	0	3	1	169
L3	City Centre, Everton, Vauxhall	Liverpool	14	4	226	10	4	270	13	5	733
L4	Anfield, Kirkdale, Walton	Liverpool	8	2	129	2	1	54	4	2	225
L5	Anfield, Everton, Kirkdale, Vauxhall	Liverpool	5	1	81	3	1	81		0	0
L6	Anfield, City Centre, Everton, Fairfield, Kensington, Tuebrook	Liverpool	8	2	129	5	2	135	4	2	225
L7	City Centre, Edge Hill, Fairfield, Kensington	Liverpool	18	5	290	4	2	108	7	3	394
L8	City Centre, Dingle, Toxteth	Liverpool	32	9	515	21	9	567	20	8	1127
L9	Aintree, Fazakerley, Orrell Park, Walton	Liverpool , Sefton	3	1	48	4	2	108	7	3	394
L10	Aintree Village, Fazakerley	Liverpool , Sefton , Knowsley	2	1	32	1	0	27		0	0
L11	Clubmoor, Croxteth, Gillmoss, Norris Green	Liverpool	7	2	113	2	1	54	1	0	56
L12	Croxteth Park, West Derby	Liverpool	10	3	161	9	4	243	12	5	676
L13	Clubmoor, Old Swan, Stoneycroft, Tuebrook	Liverpool	20	6	322	9	4	243	10	4	564
L14	Broadgreen, Dovecot, Knotty Ash, Page Moss	Liverpool , Knowsley	4	1	64	4	2	108	4	2	225
L15	Wavertree	Liverpool	19	6	306	16	7	432	16	6	902
L16	Broadgreen, Bowring Park, Childwall	Liverpool , Knowsley	8	2	129	3	1	81	12	5	676
L17	Aigburth, St Michael's Hamlet, Sefton Park	Liverpool	45	13	725	47	21	1268	36	14	2029
L18	Allerton, Mossley Hill	Liverpool	30	9	483	15	7	405	29	12	1634
L19	Aigburth, Garston, Grassendale, Mossley Hill	Liverpool	9	3	145	10	4	270	5	2	282
L20	Bootle, Orrell and Kirkdale	Sefton , Liverpool	3	1	48	2	1	54	3	1	169
L21	Ford, Litherland, Seaforth	Sefton , Liverpool	5	1	81	1	0	27	1	0	56
L22	Waterloo	Sefton	4	1	64	6	3	162	7	3	394
L23	Blundellsands, Brighton-le-Sands, Crosby, Little Crosby, Thornton	Sefton	11	3	177	4	2	108	9	4	507
L24	Hale, Speke	Halton , Liverpool	2	1	32		0	0		0	0
L25	Belle Vale, Gateacre, Hunts Cross, Woolton, Halewood	Liverpool , Knowsley	9	3	145	11	5	297	7	3	394
L26	Halewood	Liverpool , Knowsley	2	1	32	4	2	108	2	1	113
L27	Netherley	Liverpool	3	1	48	1	0	27		0	0
L28	Stockbridge Village	Liverpool , Knowsley	1	0	16		0	0	1	0	56
L29	Lunt, Sefton Village	Sefton	0	0	0		0	0		0	0
L30	Bootle, Netherton	Sefton	5	1	81	3	1	81	10	4	564
L31	Maghull, Lydiate, Melling, Waddicar	Sefton	4	1	64	1	0	27	4	2	225
L32	Kirkby	Knowsley	0	0	0		0	0	2	1	113
L33	Kirkby	Knowsley	4	1	64		0	0	1	0	56
L34	Prescot, Knowsley Village	Knowsley	3	1	48		0	0		0	0
L35	Prescot, Whiston, Rainhill	Knowsley , St Helens	3	1	48	5	2	135	4	2	225
L36	Huyton, Roby, Tarbock	Knowsley	4	1	64		0	0	2	1	113
L37	Formby, Little Altcar, Great Altcar	Sefton	5	1	81		0	0	3	1	169
L38	Ince Blundell, Hightown	Sefton	2	1	32		0	0		0	0
L39	Ormskirk, Aughton	West Lancashire	11	3	177	5	2	135	4	2	225
L40	Burscough, Mawdesley, Scarisbrick, Rufford, Holmeswood	West Lancashire , Chorley	2	1	32	2	1	54		0	0
			339	100	5461	223	100	6017	249	100	14032

The Creative Case: Performers, volunteers and Board members

The *Creative Case* is an important initiative driven by *Arts Council England* to readdress diversity by creating deeper inclusion in any *ACE* funded work. *LIF*'s figures in this area are notional, but do show us some interesting areas that we could look to improve on.

ACE's aim is not simply 'equal opportunities repackaged'. It fundamentally alters how we consider diversity within our work, embed positivity for diversity in our organisational philosophy and conduct our work by creating meaningful content.

With a responsibility to alter all of our monitoring to account for GDPR we have not been able to undertake disability monitoring, too, and therefore cannot provide details on this. This is an area of work we must address in future, although no one has raised it as an issue to date. However, to fulfil our belief in tolerant working and thinking about how disability is managed in our city, the venues that we use, the content we commission, the partners we work with and the language we use is hoped to be disability friendly.

Another consideration for the *Creative Case* is where *LIF*'s practitioners come from. Access to aspiration and working across areas of deprivation as well as wealth are important factors to recognise and considering how this is supported in future is a concern. This should relate to our work on dovetailing work to support diverse audiences from varying post code areas. Peculiar to *LIF*, its work and the city trends (though unsurprising given our connections) are *LIF*'s scores for working with 'White Irish' (47% in both 2018 and 2017 and up to 60% in 2016) as opposed to 'White British'. However, we are clearly failing to attract – across our artists, Board members and volunteers - non-White practitioners. This is evident in our audience feedback and worth considering when commissioning work, content and multiple-histories/futures for later festivals. Considering Ireland's and Liverpool's complex and diverse identities this is a concern and suggests we are not working (or monitoring) in these communities well enough. Certainly, projects such as *#IAmIrish* and *#At Home Abroad*, should help to address this imbalance, but it is worthy of note and addressing as part of our programme.

The following short table demonstrates 3.6% of our artists and non-artists self-identify as LGBT (vs 7.4% in 2017 and 2.3% 2016), whilst 79.7% are heterosexual. We don't know the preference of some of our practitioners and have not done as much as we might have liked with monitoring this, as time was compromised in 2018 with the roll out of GDPR.

The *Office of National Statistics* believe c.1.7% of England's population self-identify as LGBT today, though other sources suggest as high as 10% (*Kinsey Report*). Our figures should reflect this as a minimum and at present we do beat these figures. We must work on inclusionary programme and diversity.

Sexual orientation	2016		2017		2018	
	Artists	Non-artists	Artists	Non-artists	Artists	Non-artists
Lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT)	3	0	2	0	7	0
Heterosexual	39	15	63	10	127	30
Other	0	0	6	0	0	0
Not known	65	10	36	10	27	6
TOTAL	107	25	107	20	161	36

Historically, we have suggested that because we didn't know an artist's or non-artist's sexual preference, we were not behaving discriminatorily. However, a core tenet of the *Creative Case* is that we "need to talk about it, until we don't need to talk about it". As sexual preference is still widely discriminated against, *LIF* needs to demonstrate it is working positively to drive the 'creative case' forward. Our ability to investigate our artist's sexual preference has not moved on from 2016 and therefore our results are still only notional.

Of the 197 artists and non-artists we worked with, we can show certain trends, i.e., we have improved the ratio of female:male artists worked with and have a good range of local, national and international representation. It has also made us aware that we don't monitor sexual preference well enough (see table and information that follows).

Creating longer planning cycles and creating more ticketed events means we have been able to ensure higher numbers of artists were paid this year, as shown in the table above. It is also fair to say that whilst in certain cases *LIF* have not paid artists directly, we may have negotiated a day rate for them with our partners,

which we cannot claim here. Often these were worked in to reciprocity agreements (i.e., programme in exchange for affinity/promotion), which accounts -to some extent- for our low percentage returns on box office, which often times are waived in favour of artist retaining the door take.

	2016		2017		2018		Var		2016		2017		2018		Var
Artists	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	%		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	%
Female artists	39	36	52	49	64	40	9	Local	25	23	32	30	78	48	7
Male artists	68	64	55	51	96	60	8	National	19	18	26	24	18	11	7
Paid	7	7	19	18	90	56	38	International	63	59	49	46	65	40	-13
Unpaid	100	93	87	81	71	44	-16	Total	107	100	107	100	161	100	
Artists & non-artists	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	%		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	%
Female artists	50	38	61	48	84	43	5	Local	45	34	47	37	105	53	3
Male artists	82	62	66	52	112	57	-9	National	23	17	28	22	24	12	5
Paid	10	8	22	17	92	47	29	International	64	48	52	41	68	35	-8
Unpaid	122	92	104	82	105	53	1	Total	132	100	127	100	197	100	
Non-artists	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	%		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	%
Female non-artists	11	44	9	45	20	56	-11	Local	20	80	15	75	27	75	-5
Male non-artists	14	56	11	55	16	44	33	National	4	16	2	10	6	17	-6
Paid	3	12	3	15	2	6	-9	International	1	4	3	15	3	8	11
Unpaid	22	88	17	85	34	94	17	Total	25	100	20	100	36	100	
Relationships	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	%		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	%
Artist shown	89	67	86	68	128	65	-3	Technician	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Board members	4	3	3	2	10	5	3	Producer	10	8	1	1	3	2	1
Curator	0	0	6	5	0	0	-5	Volunteer curator	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Partner	4	3	10	8	27	14	6	Volunteer	17	13	9	7	7	4	-4
PR	1	1	1	1	3	2	1	Staff	0	0	0	0	2	1	1
Speaker	7	5	11	9	17	9	0	Total	132	100	127	100	197	100	

A= Artists B=Non-artists		2016		2017		2018	
Ethnicity		A	B	A	B	A	B
White British		30	19	40	15	54	19
White Irish		75	4	59	4	94	14
White other		2	1	7	0	3	1
White & Black Caribbean		0	1	0	0	0	0
White & Black African		0	0	0	0	0	0
White & Asian		0	0	0	0	0	0
Mixed other		0	0	0	1	0	0
Asian British		0	0	1	0	1	0
Indian		0	0	0	0	0	0
Pakistani		0	0	0	0	0	0
Bangladeshi		0	0	0	0	0	0
Chinese		0	0	0	0	0	0
Asian other		0	0	0	0	0	0
Black British		0	0	0	0	1	0
Caribbean		0	0	0	0	0	0
African		0	0	0	0	0	0
Somali		0	0	0	0	0	0
Yemeni		0	0	0	0	0	0
Nigerian		0	0	0	0	0	0
Black other		0	0	0	0	3	0
Other ethnic minorities		0	0	0	0	2	2
Not known		0	0	0	0	2	
TOTAL		107	25	107	20	160	36
		132		127		196	

In the Ethnicity table shown here, we can see we are still predominantly working with white artists and non-artists. This is not wholly surprising, given the prevailing ethnic make-up of Liverpool and Ireland, but we would like to ensure we reach marginalised groups within our communities and understand these identity stories.

Cultivating and inspiring audiences- re-attendance

In 2017 over half our audiences identified as re-attending, compared to 2016 when under half did, bearing witness to the fact we are seeing repeat visits. This remained stable in 2018 with 49% stating they had been to *LIF* events before.

Pleasingly, 98.9% of *#LIF2018* audiences said they would attend *LIF* in future years. This is almost unheard of. Looking at the final 1.1% it is evident that those who said they would not re-attend were, in the main, from overseas! The figure improves on 2017's intended re-attenders by 3.6%, already 1.74% up on 2016!

Recommendation rates

A strong gauge of how audiences feel about their experience is whether they would recommend you to others. *LIF's* survey respondents were asked to mark their answers according to a

- very likely (5*)
- quite likely (4*)
- might/might not (3*)
- quite unlikely (2*)
- very unlikely (1*) range.

96.2% -down very slightly on #LIF2017 at 96.6% and equal to 2016- of respondents said they would be 'very' or 'quite' likely to recommend the *Liverpool Irish Festival*! Considering the growth of the programme, the range of venues and the challenging programme this is a brilliant success.

Travel

In 2017, 65% of audiences stated their main reason for travelling that day was to attend *Liverpool Irish Festival* events, marking a drop from 83% in 2016, which may indicate people are tying tourism visits with practical errands and/or city breaks, which might account for the drop as people consider their city visit the main 'purpose'. Based on a complete restructure of our 2018 questions, this was not asked at #LIF2018, but taking the median of the previous 2 years ($83-65=18/2=9$. $83-9=74\%$) we could argue that of 24,232 visits, 17,931 were made specifically for *LIF* events, a compelling case when considering our impact on tourism.

Quality

95.13% of visitors rated #LIF2018 as 4 or 5 out of 5, down very slightly on 96.6% for #LIF2017, which was up 2.6% on #LIF2016. The overall festival rating was 4.6 out of 5.

Where people have scored us 1 from 5, which happened a total of 3 times, we have also looked at whether they have said they would re-attend and in each case they have said 'yes'. This suggests that we need to make the scoring system slightly clearer to avoid mistakes in future.

Almost 69% of visitors awarded the festival with 5 or 5 stars or 'Excellent'.

PR FACTS, FIGURES AND TRENDS

Social media growth summary

	Aug 2016	Dec 2016	YOY %>	Dec 2017	YOY %>	Dec 2018	YOY %>
Facebook	3,777	4,007	6.09	4,332	8.1	4,598	6.14
Twitter	3,470	3,656	5.36	3,871	5.8	4,035	4.24
Instagram	132	185	40.15	266	43.7	397	49.25
Mailchimp*	1,727	1,650	-4.46	1,681	1.8	1,588	-5.53
Total	9,106			10,150		10,618	4.61

* *LIF's* Mailchimp data is very clean. Our open rate average in 2018 is 34.96%, with an average click rate of 5.16% surpassing the industry standard of 22.11% and 2.66% respectively. In 2017, our average open rate for email newsletters -across the year- was 43.78%, up on 2016's 38% vs that year's industry open rate of 23.34%, and average click rate of 13.54%.

What we are seeing is fewer people (globally) signing up to and using enewsletters. To consistently beat the industry standard is good, but we need to be smarter. There are interesting spikes to note – Our *Festival Review 2017* enewsletter (issued 22 Dec 2017) had our highest ever open rate of 60.71% with a click rate of 22.11%. The next largest spikes include:

- #LIF2018 launch invite (16 Oct 2018) – 47.84% and 5.5%
- #LIF2018 programme announcement (23 Aug 2018) – 42.16% and 9.38%.

This suggests we have a dedicated audience who really want the insider tips on what is happening. These enewsletters may be the best ones to sell to (affinity) advertisers as we can show success in the reach of these. A refresh of the enewsletter has kept it current and has brought it back in to play.



Twitter

4,035 followers; Following 1,498; Tweets in total 3,080; Likes 959

Festival Review				
	2016	PR campaign 2017	PR campaign 2018	YOY %>
Followers	3,660	3,871	4,035	4.24
Mentions	68	404	660	63.37
Profile visits	1,396	4,133	5,023	21.53
Tweet impressions	63,800	146,758	170,500	16.18

The */LivIrishFest* *Twitter* account has tipped 4k followers. Whilst it remains a key social network for engaging with press and artists, to some degree, it is not as successful as *Facebook* in engaging audiences.

Twitter –as a channel- is faster moving than *Facebook*, based on it being used for updates and news. For *Twitter*, content must be faster to digest and eye-catching. We should *Twitter* pragmatically to give headlines and link to the website. *Twitter* is populated by 'opinion formers' who raise profiles, even if they don't necessarily attend events.



Facebook

During October 2018 *LIF* gained a reach of 51,296 compared to 41,971 in 2017 and 46,025 in 2016. Top sources for page the */LivIrishFest* *Facebook* page include: *Facebook*, *Google*, *Livepoolirishfestival.com*

	2016	2017	2018	YOY %>
Likes	4018	4331	4598	6.16
Followers	Not recorded	4265	4549	6.66
Minutes of video views	Not recorded	1200	7742	545.17
Promoted posts	Not recorded	1	2	100

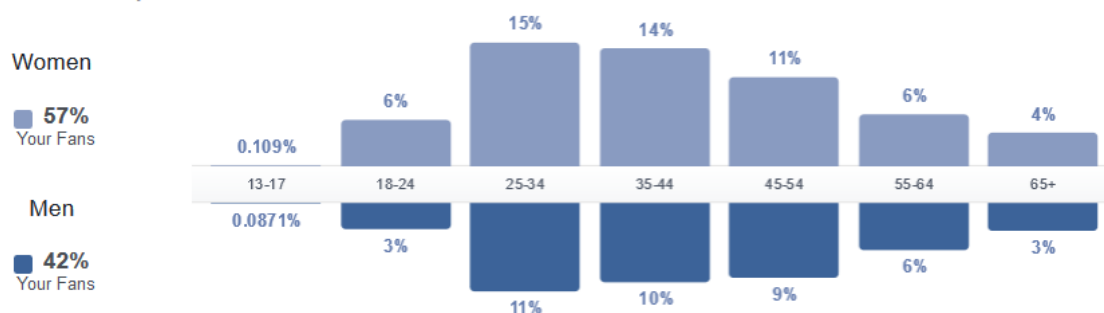
Rich content performed best. *LIF's* *Facebook* live posts –especially live filming–had excellent engagement again. Top performing videos included *Kila* live (947 minutes viewed), *Roisin Ban* (925 minutes viewed) followed by *Wee Bag Band* and the *Bolger Cunningham Dance School*, with each of the three later films being taken at the *Three Festival Tall Ships Regatta*.

Media pieces (web based essays, playlists, etc) continue to form good content, largely because of their profile and how many times they can be shared, thus reaching more people.

On *Facebook* our audience has shifted marginally over the years, with women taking a 57% share and men 42% in 2018.

Audience locations	2017	2018
UK based	3235	3377
Ireland based	649	704
Liverpool	1419	1543
Dublin	296	273
Belfast	125	123
Cork	Not recorded	64
Derry	Not recorded	49
Newry	Not recorded	42

Aggregated demographic data about the people who like your Page, based on the age and gender information they provide in their user profiles.



LIF website

LIF launched a new website in Sept 2016. That development yielded extremely high engagement, meaning we expected to see a drop-off the following year, despite hoping for growth. That said, in 2017, LIF encountered far more web traffic and web interaction in 2017/2016 compared with previous years. As our reporting methods improve, analytics have changed and more things are now measurable, meaning that in 2018 we can report slightly differently on web performance. For the sake of continuity we have included the figures we reported last year, but have also re-evaluated 2017 to look at YOY growth using the same metrics available to us for 2018. This should help us in 2019 and beyond, too. The discrepancy between 2017's reporting and that which we are doing now, is most likely to be a slight shift in Google's data capturing, but also the time period we're reporting on. For the sake of consistency, we will always review web activity based on the day following the preceding year's festival, to the end of the review year's festival, thus capturing the website's use across an entire cycle.

	Reported in 2017	Using 2018 metrics for 2017	2018	YOY %> or variance
Users	7642	12114	17449	44.04
New Users	Not reported	12027	17293	43.78
Sessions	11753	17667	23000	30.19
No of sessions per user	Not reported	1.46	1.32	90.41
Page views	40426	53524	55401	3.51
Pages per session	3.44	3.03	2.41	-20.46
Bounce rate (%)	51	56.1	62.97	12.25
Returning visitor rate	Not reported	16.3	13.6	-16.56

The home page is by far the strongest landing page with 14,035 views, following quickly by the events page. We have seen a growth in people filtering the list by art form – primarily music, followed by talks and tours then poetry. We believe this is to do with the way we listed all events on one page, to account for people not moving to Events pages 1 and 2. We believe the scale of the programme will have encouraged the use of the filters. It could be this search and find facility that accounts for the high bounce rate and short sessions – people are accessing what they need and quickly. Venues were high on the list of page views (fourth).



Sessions are up by 30% and new users have grown by 44% and page views are rising steadily. Interestingly 47.7% of users access our website on their mobile devices, whilst 41.6% use their desktop computers. Just 10.7% use tablets to access our site.

Image left: Screen shot of LIF website, Dec 2017.

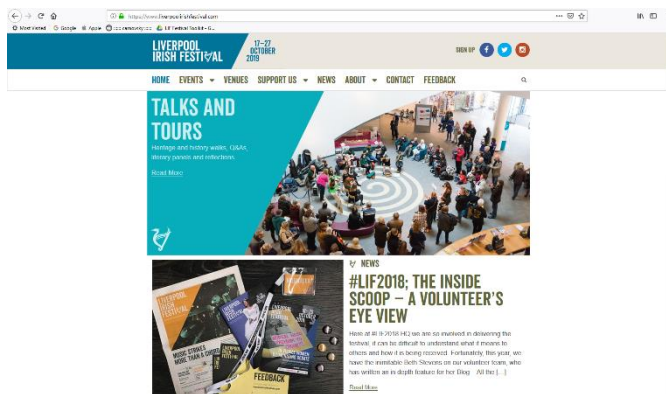


Image left: Screen shot of *LIF* website, Nov 2017. Reducing the slider and removing the 3 lower buttons means information is more accessible from the home screen.

According to the *PR and Social Media Report 2018*, the majority of our audience comes to us directly, showing we are easy to find and people know how to find us. A note in this report shows that referral from *Facebook* is very high and therefore it is likely that our social media is feeding site links well. We need to keep this working.

It would have been good to see positive referrals from partner sites, such as *visitliverpool.com* to show that their marketing teams were pushing festival events. This is a persistent issue for festivals and one we need to try and work in to our reciprocity agreements. Our evidence shows that the website performs well, but needs repopulating with content and refreshing regularly. Whilst editorials help to create turnover, it is not necessarily enough for people to engage with all year around so it is important to tie our social media in to the website more frequently and use the enewsletter more effectively for larger stories.

Best performing page: After the home page, the best performing page is 'events'.

Press achieved

- 53 pieces of coverage, beating 45 in 2017, which was more than double that of 2016, when we secured 20 pieces of individual coverage
- Social media rates as reported above
- Profile raising and providing engaging content on social media
- The Festival managed to secure an interview slot for Ciarán Hodgers on *BBC Radio 4's Front Row* whilst articles appeared in *The Big Issue North* and *The Echo*
- These contributions, and the hard work our PR and Communications consultant, achieved a reach of 26m across print, online and broadcasting. In 2017 we gained a press reach of 6.5m, significantly lower than the 15.5m in 2016, which was odd as the number of pieces of coverage achieved had risen. We believe reciprocity with *To Have to Shoot Irishmen* and the leading publicity we had for *The Guilty Feminist* and push we made for *Kila* account for this huge growth.

Publications List

As reported by PR and Communications Consultant, Laura Brown:

Publication Date	Media Type	Headline	Source	Content URL
30/07/2018	Internet	Liverpool Mental Health Festival 2018 reveals artists and musicians lined up for biggest festival yet	Getintothis (Blog)	http://www.getintothis.co.uk/2018/07/liverpool-mental-health-festival-2018-include-stealing-sheep-articipation-wellbeing-forum-creative-industries-david-hoyle/
09/08/2018	Internet	Liverpool Mental Health Festival returns this October with events across the city	Art in Liverpool (Web)	http://www.artinliverpool.com/liverpool-mental-health-festival-returns-this-october-with-events-across-the-city/
10/08/2018	Internet	Liverpool Mental Health Festival	Brit Events (Web)	http://www.britevents.com/whats-on/lancashire/liverpool/liverpool-mental-health-festival/818161/
23/08/2018	Internet	Baltic Triangle shipping container village launched, Whitechapel Fundraiser at IVF and a new anti-Brexit effort from IDLES	Getintothis (Blog)	http://www.getintothis.co.uk/2018/08/baltic-triangle-shipping-container-village-launched-whitechapel-fundraiser-ivf-new-anti-brexit-effort-idles/
02/09/2018	Internet	Lizzie Nunnery targets a true story for To Have to Shoot Irishmen drama	Stage Review (Web)	http://www.stagereview.co.uk/theatre-feature/lizzie-nunnery-targets-a-true-story-for-to-have-to-shoot-irishmen-drama/

12/09/2018	Internet	Simon Herron Live @ Naked Lunch Cafe	Brit Events (Web)	http://www.britevents.com/whats-on/lancashire/liverpool/simon-herron-live-naked-lunch-cafe/819951/
13/09/2018	Internet	Liverpool playwright Lizzie Nunnery presents To Have to Shoot Irishmen	Purple Revolver (Web)	http://www.purplerevolver.com/music/new-music/127524-liverpool-playwright-lizzie-nunnery-presents-to-have-to-shoot-irishmen.html
17/09/2018	Magazine, Consumer	IN PICTURES	The Big Issue in the North	
21/09/2018	Internet	David O'Doherty announced 3 new tour dates	Ents24.com (Web)	https://www.ents24.com/uk/tour-dates/david-odoherty/highlight/Events,New,5409182,5409186,5409243
21/09/2018	Internet	"It's a story that bridges the Irish Sea"	Morning Star Online (Web)	https://www.morningstaronline.co.uk/article/its-story-bridges-irish-sea
22/09/2018	Internet	It's the Travelling Life- new exhibition depicts life in Liverpool's Irish Traveller community	Art in Liverpool (Web)	http://www.artinliverpool.com/its-the-travelling-life-new-exhibition-depicts-life-in-liverpools-irish-traveller-community/
26/09/2018	UK Nationals	A story that bridges the Irish Sea	Morning Star	
27/09/2018	Internet	Open call for voices on the Repeal of the 8th Amendment	Art in Liverpool (Web)	http://www.artinliverpool.com/open-call-for-voices-on-the-repeal-of-the-8th-amendment/
30/09/2018	Internet	Theatre feature: Touring News ? October 2018	British Theatre Guide (Web)	http://www.britishtheatreguide.info/features/touring-news-october-2018-241
October	Print	Liverpool Irish Festival preview	Bido Lito	
October	Print	Liverpool Irish Festival preview	Lifestyle Monthly	
01/10/2018	Magazine, Consumer	UP FRONT	LivingEDGE	
01/10/2018	Internet	15 things to do in Liverpool: October 2018	Confidentials (Web)	https://confidentials.com/liverpool/15-things-to-do-in-liverpool-october-2018?id=5bb235060bbbd
2/10/2018	Broadcast	Gerald Kearns To Have to Shoot Irishmen and festival preview	BBC Radio 2 Sara Cox	https://www.bbc.co.uk/radio/play/m0000k8g
3/10/2018	Broadcast	Festival preview	Liverpool community radio	https://l-c-r.co.uk/
04/10/2018	UK Key Regionals	Thursday Q A	Irish News (Belfast)	
04/10/2018	Internet	Arts QA: Actor Gerard Kearns on Eminem, Michael Jackson and George Orwell	The Irish News (Web)	http://www.irishnews.com/arts/2018/10/04/news/arts-q-a-actor-gerard-kearns-on-eminem-michael-jackson-and-george-orwell-1445258/
5/10/2018	Internet	Limerick playwrights at Liverpool Irish Festival	Limerick Leader	https://www.limerickleader.ie/news/whats-on/342768/limerick-theatre-makers-to-take-flight-for-landmark-irish-arts-festival-in-uk.html
8/10/2018	Broadcast	Panel - Liverpool Irish festival promote	Radio City Talk	
09/10/2018	Internet	Ten days to go until Liverpool Irish Festival 2018	Liverpool BID Company (Web)	https://www.liverpoolbidcompany.com/ten-days-to-go-until-liverpool-irish-festival-2018/
09/10/2018	Internet	Liverpool Mental Health Festival takes over city venues this week	Art in Liverpool (Web)	http://www.artinliverpool.com/liverpool-mental-health-festival-takes-over-city-venues-this-week/
11/10/2018	Internet	10 things you won't want to miss at Liverpool Irish Festival 2018	MSN UK (Web)	https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/newsliverpool/10-things-you-wont-want-to-miss-at-liverpool-irish-festival-2018/ar-BB0dWiV?srcref=rss
11/10/2018	Internet	10 things you won't want to miss at Liverpool Irish Festival 2018	Liverpool Echo (Web)	https://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/whats-on/10-things-you-wont-want-15256518
12/10/2018	Podcast	The Anfield Wrap Podcast, weekend edition featuring Kila interview	The Anfield Wrap (Podcast)	https://player.fm/series/the-anfield-wrap-podcast/the-weekender-how-jurgen-klopp-turned-doubters-to-believers
14/10/2018	Print	What's on on Merseyside	Metro	

14/10/2018	UK Key Regionals	7DAYS YOUR SUNDAY ECHO GUIDE TO THE BEST MUSIC, THEATRE, COMEDY MORE IN THE WEEK AHEAD	Liverpool Echo	
15/10/2018	UK Key Regionals	Play turns spotlight on killing of a pacifist	Liverpool Echo	
15/10/2018	Internet	This weekend	The Guide Liverpool (Web)	https://www.theguideliverpool.com/this-week-in-liverpool-15th-21st-october-2018/
16/10/2018	Broadcast	Ciaran Rodgers festival preview	BBC radio 4 Front Row	https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0000qr7
16/10/2018	Broadcast	Liverpool Irish Festival preview	Radio City Talk	
16/10/2018	Internet	Liverpool Irish Festival announces theatre lineup	Broadway World	https://www.broadwayworld.com/uk-regional/article/Liverpool-Irish-Festival-Announces-Lineup-20181016
17/10/2018	Internet	Top 5 at things to see at Liverpool Irish Festival	The Guide Liverpool (Web)	https://www.theguideliverpool.com/top-5-at-things-to-see-at-liverpool-irish-festival/
17/10/2018	UK Key Regionals	YOUR NEXT 48 hours MUSIC, THEATRE, COMEDY AND MORE ... FOUR PAGES OF LISTINGS START HERE	Liverpool Echo	
19/10/2018	Internet	Get Ready for the Weekend in Liverpool	Your Move Magazine (Web)	http://ymliverpool.com/ready-for-the-weekend-liverpool-9/36006
20/10/2018	Internet	The Guilty Feminist - Liverpool Irish Festival special	Wirral Globe (Web)	https://www.wirralglobe.co.uk/events/Liverpool/1302818.The_Guilty_Feminist_-_Liverpool_Irish_Festival_special/
21/10/2018	Internet	Liverpool's Irish traveller women were given cameras to capture their lives - this the wonderful result	Liverpool Echo (Web)	https://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/whats-on/arts-culture-news/gallery/liverpools-irish-traveller-women-were-15289302
21/10/2018	Internet	Baggage - Royal Court, Liverpool	North West End (Web)	http://northwestend.co.uk/index.php/professional-reviews/liverpool/3594-baggage-royal-court-liverpool
22/10/2018	Magazine, Consumer	Rising stars Irish roots	The Big Issue in the North	
22/10/2018	UK Nationals	FOLK ROOTS	i (The paper for today)	
23/10/2018	Internet	Haunting war drama to grace Arts Centre stage	SkemNews	http://skemnews.com/news/haunting-war-drama-to-grace-arts-centre-stage/
24/10/2018	UK Key Regionals	YOUR NEXT 48 HOURS	Liverpool Echo	
25/10/2018	Broadcast	Sean Styles Gerald Kearns Festival preview and To Have to Shoot Irishmen	Sean Styles BBC radio Merseyside	
28/10/2018	Internet	Irish Festival family day	The List (Web)	https://www.list.co.uk/event/1114132-irish-festival-family-day/
27/07/2018	Internet	Production news round-up: Kate O'Flynn and Russell Tovey to perform in Pinter season and Alexandra Burke cast in Chicago	The Stage (Web)	https://www.thestage.co.uk/news/2018/production-news-round-kate-oflynn-russell-tovey-perform-pinter-season-alexandra-burke-cast-chicago/#provider_moreover
28/10/2018	Internet	Theatre Review: To Have to Shoot Irishmen, Everyman, Liverpool	Northern Soul (Web)	https://www.northernsoul.me.uk/theatre-review-to-have-to-shoot-irishmen-everyman-liverpool/
31/10/2018	UK Additional Regionals	Award winning playwrights new play taking centre stage at Arts Centre	Ormskirk Champion	
31/10/2018	UK Additional Regionals	Award winning playwrights new play taking centre stage at Arts Centre	Skelmersdale Champion	
01/11/2018	Magazine, Consumer	Gig Guide	Songlines	



Mailchimp

From the last day of last year's festival to the last day of this year's we have sent 13 mails, just under the 16 sent in the same period last year, though more than the 10 sent in the previous period. However, this is in part because we have put such a lot of energy in to improving our social media channel work. Over that period the lists have stabilised at about 1,590, down a little on 2017. We understand this to be fairly standard for people's engagement with e-subscriptions. During #LIF2018 we have collected a further 398 emails to clean and process.

List engagement peaks in the run up to the festival, but overall we have a list engagement of 35%, slightly down on 2017, but beyond the industry standard's global trends. During the festival we receive good open rates, making a direct focus on the audience as possible consumers/punters. It's inevitable LIF receives more interest from event announcements as we habitually use the newsletter as a driver for engagement rather than a news service. As stated at the top of this section, our list out-performs industry norms, but we can do better and must integrate the use of the newsletter with additional content on our website to maximise benefits.

Our best performing newsletters have been programme announcements and our launch invitation – predictable in some ways, but perhaps this is something we can monetise in future? We need to continue our learning from 2016: it is becoming harder to engage people in subscribing to newsletters with fewer people willing to provide email addresses. Whilst we seem to have done well since GDPR, it is important we maintain and increase the quality of our mailings and give readers a real chance to benefit for staying with us. This is where we must really push our online content, theme enrichment and storytelling, rich content and links with social media.

Distribution

Both #LIF2018 and #LIF2017 borrowed the successful distribution plan from 2016, which demonstrated a good range and proved it was worth targeting some of our friends 'further afield', i.e., in Ireland, London and other Irish Community centres.

Feedback shows that we need to send more print to Manchester and Wirral, Birkenhead and the North West region and perhaps more to North Liverpool areas, to improve attendance. Although we did increase this marginally, it will always be appreciated.

As promised in previous *Festival Reviews*, we got the brochure out earlier this year, hitting counters w/c 10 Sept as hoped. Getting information out early certainly helps, but getting the whole programme out this early also means it needs to be staggered if it is to last in situ.

Last year we identified that timing is critical. Undertaking one distribution drop off is the most affordable option by far. However, staggering a campaign, peaks interest. Dropping collateral as early as possible gives people both the opportunity to plan, but also to become bored of print, so it is important to get this as close to 'right' as possible. Accordingly, we developed the brochure early and created a newspaper to follow, which caught corrections and had a wider distribution. We dropped 7k brochures and 14k of newspapers and did it for almost the same amount of money as in previous years. This was not easy and if we choose to do this in future years will need to budget for the extra distribution and print costs. This year relied on professional courtesies we may not be able to guarantee in future.

The newspaper seemed to be a real success and allowed us to do much more with our storytelling and theme development than the smaller editions we produced previously. Also, because of the physical space available, this could be a good way of earning funds in future via advertising and sponsorship.

Articles extend the life of the print ahead of and beyond the calendar span of the listings, whilst late dispatch allows for last minute programming. This staggered approach helped us to address this. Now we need to work harder at getting all the messages aligned with our digital channels, too. #LIF2018 shows us we were right in 2017 when we said core programme should be signed off no later than June/July (for positive marketing campaigning and PR trailing) with final programme signed off by late July/early-August for copy sign off, print and dispatch a.s.a.p.

TESTIMONIALS

Descriptors

All survey respondents were offered the opportunity of describing the festival in three words or 'descriptors'. From 490 feedback forms, 1023 descriptors were used. We are presenting the top 21 based on their regularity.

2017			2018		
All descriptors	934	In total	All descriptors	1023	In total
	Occurrences	% of total use		Occurrences	% of total use
"Fun"	70	7.49	"Fun"	89	8.70
"Interesting"	39	4.18	"Interesting"	40	3.91
"Informative"	28	3	"Good"	33	3.23
"Entertaining"	27	2.89	"Informative"	28	2.74
"Excellent"	25	2.68	"Cult"	27	2.64
"Lively"	17	1.82	"Enjoy..."	26	2.54
"Inspir"	16	1.71	"Entertaining"	26	2.54
"Great"	16	1.71	"Great"	26	2.54
"Music"	15	1.61	"Very..."	23	2.25
"Friendly"	14	1.5	"Inclusive"	22	2.15
"Good"	13	1.39	"Diverse"	18	1.76
"Cultur"	13	1.39	"Friendly"	17	1.66
"Very Good"	12	1.28	"Irish"	17	1.66
"Inclusive"	11	1.18	"Lively"	14	1.37
"Educat"	10	1.07	"Inspir"	14	1.37
"Thought- Provoking"	9	0.96	"Fab"	14	1.37
"Diverse"	9	0.96	"Music"	13	1.27
"Lovely"	7	0.75	"Amazing"	12	1.17
"Engag"	7	0.75	"Brill"	12	1.17
"Amazing"	7	0.75	"Vari..." (i.e., variety, varied)	16	1.56
"Stimul"	7	0.75	"Excellent"	11	1.08
Top 21	372	39.82	Top 21	409	39.98
2016's top 3			2017's top 3		

Notes on the table - where words are incomplete, they have been searched as the start point, e.g., 'inspir' will refer to all instances of 'inspired' and 'inspirational', while 'brill' will search informal entries of 'brill', 'brilliant' and 'brilliance'. The top three words of #LIF2018 have moved slightly from the top 3 in 2016 and 2017, changing from 'fun, interesting, informative' to 'fun, interesting, good'.

Process notes for data gathering

This year we asked people a) whether they had anything they would like to tell us about #LIF2018 and b) if they had any suggestions for #LIF2019 or work they'd like to see. The following two sections are unexpurgated (bar '-', 'No' and 'N/A' entries) contributions under these two questions.

#LIF2018 Feedback

Do you have anything you would like to tell us about #LIF2018?

- Excellent
- Great keep it [up] over the years
- Emotive
- Powerful play
- Brilliant show!
- #Irishmen was great
- Brilliant play. Superbly acted. Congratulation
- I think there should have been on [PHCE] TKTS in the Phil. Music Room
- Fab night thank you
- Very enjoyable
- Great night of Irish poetry and music.
- I am Turkish, born in London married to an Irishman
- Brilliant
- Really enjoyed the [evening]. Connecting with my Irish [roots]
- Very informative!
- A brilliant, informative walk

- Bill Booth, Hermitage Green and Kila were excellent :)|
- Heart emoticon
- It's my first time in Liverpool and this kind of festivals make me feel the music at the bottom of my heart
- It's nice your music and your idea
- Always look forward to LIF. One of my favourite events
- Great
- I enjoyed the doc about the Irish migrants very much
- Great festival!
- Brilliant Irish Festival
- Keep it up!
- Enjoyed festival
- A gem of a find on a Thursday PM
- The talk on Countess Markievicz was excellent - lively + informative.
- A very informative talk
- Dublin, Ireland
- All the women in the photo are in skirts but most of us are in trousers so that bit that women would adopt mens clothes was perhaps right; at least we got equality in that.
- I already get emails but do not find website easy to follow and would love a festival booklet to hold.
- Fantastic talk on Countess Markiewicz. Music events were expensive this year.
- Cld have done with bigger room tbf
- I really enjoyed the talk by [Sonje] Tiernan, it was most interesting
- Wonderful talk.
- Husband is VERY Deaf so needed loop system
- Make it long
- Keep it going. Surprise + delight
- Keep up the good work
- A most enjoyable evening
- Enjoyed the event Lancs meets Eire
- Excellent
- Enjoyed it all
- Love Irish music, my favourite genre
- Enjoyed music
- Thank you for the morning after the life before. Thank you.
- Lovely afternoon & venue
- Fantastic "the morning after the life before" informative + entertaining
- Great plays all round
- Alannah enjoyed the music, aged 4.
- Well done LIF. you always provide
- Enjoyed production - thought provoking
- Would it be possible to use more local Irish Trad musicians for the festival?
- Super experience - great play - "day after night before"
- Very enjoyable. Please have more
- Keep up the good work.
- Excellent band tonight. Socks In The Frying Pan & Wet The Tea
- Great night, more music needed at the Irish Festival like this
- Great range
- Enjoyed Socks In The Frying Pan
- Wish we heard it was on sooner
- Socks In The Frying Pan
- The festival was fantastic!
- Keep doing what you're doing
- I only saw 'Baggage' but thought it was brilliant! Just like to know more
- Very moving show - Baggage great acting!
- Socks In The Frying Pan - Great Band!
- Amazing!
- Very interesting and entertaining
- Lovely atmosphere here tonight - thank you
- enjoyed it
- Enjoyed 'Baggage'
- Just how great the Irish Centre is!
- Great festival
- Brilliant play, also please [dola caelae] as part of the festival
- Lovely play, interesting history
- Lacked publicity this year. Needs to last longer than a week
- I really enjoyed the music!
- The sessions set up for the festival were great
- Yes! It was great! Very funny, moving and true.
- It's great to share and celebrate the Irish community
- The session at the library 20/10/18 great!
- Good use of an old well loved building
- Hugely moving film - raised questions of morals
- N/A
- Just saw Socks In The Frying Pan very good
- It was great
- The Rat in the Skull venue was not the right place for it
- [Lovely concert tonight]
- Really enjoyed play
- First time in Liverpool - Great city

- That was fab. I will not forget Kitty Wilkinson!
- The play and Q+A were both very enjoyable and the resonance with current social issues was very poignant
- We enjoyed [???] performance 25/10/18
- Wonderful experience in wonderful venue
- Enjoyed Kitty Wilkinson play
- Excellent venue + play
- Kitty play - fantastic
- My [gradaughter] played Kitty
- I think that more time is needed to really work on the performances. The potential is there to improve the experience
- Really enjoyed 'Kitty' Very informative
- [Janet Jonisa FACE BOOK]
- Excellent perform
- Story great, we need another Kitty today drugs + alcohol killing out [???]
- The Kitty Wilkinson play was an exceptional event - good to keep this story alive.
- Brilliant performance
- I loved the venue I felt I was invited in somebody's cosy living room.
- A fantastic script and performance
- Kitty Wilkinson play was absolutely excellent
- Kitty Wilkinson play excellent
- Great session
- Brilliant talk about the past and the present
- Good presentation[.] Well done
- Great.
- Very interesting and informative session on [Connolly]
- Excellent talk on Connolly
- Saw a band which was part of Irish Festival but then they only played one Irish song! - Disappointing!
- Excellent variety of events - eg Lankum last night brilliant/James Connolly presentation equally so.
- Keep up the good work!
- Keep up the good and important work.
- Went to 2 amazing events. Am away. Would go to more
- Very good
- Enjoyed the film - thank you for sharing with us!
- The movie by Ken Wardop was amazing
- Pleased that such events are put on
- It was really enjoyable
- Great work!
- Beautiful venue + organised set up
- I enjoyed the atmosphere, the space was nice and the animation festival I thought was very well organised
- Enjoyed the work + the atmosphere at the animation festival
- Great fezzyl!
- It was good!
- This is an important & awesome animation event that needs to continue every year!
- Lovely animation event
- Congratulations we are having a ball!
- Should have been more chairs at Lankum gig.
- The Morning After The Life Before was excellent
- Bar is very expensive + Lankum gigs are normally seated
- More seats perhaps for this venue
- Brilliant! Lankum X
- Good call on booking Lankum
- Lankum were fantastic
- Fantastic event
- Didn't know it was happening in L'Pool
- Shame it did not talk about the relevant Irish issues.
- This was a great opportunity to explore the theme of migration through comedy.
- Really enjoyed The Guilty Feminist
- This is great!
- Brilliant!
- Wish i'd known more about it - my [time]
- This is a wonderful event & deserves more publicity
- No plays! More music.
- Lovely afternoon
- Need more advertising. Radio. Echo. Possible workshops. Irish Centre. Music & football Gaelic and dance
- Brilliant
- Nios mo Gailge
- I was born in Belfast
- THIS IS EXCELLENT.
- Great - Fabulous
- Didn't know it was on, untill play
- I am only in Liverpool for 24 hours but would have liked to see more of the festival
- Yes...Needs to be more obvious literature promoting other events in festival
- Frieling the Music was funny, inspiring and a joy

- to watch. Can't wait to see it develop more!
- Loved 'Frieling the Music' and would like to see the next stage
 - Frieling the Music was awesome.
 - Excellent show - in parts reminiscent of Sean O'Casey!!
 - More please!
 - Frieling the Peace
 - Enjoyed the session today
 - I just called into the museum by chance at the end of a marvellous display
 - The music and the dancing are very good
 - I thought the Irish dancing was fab!!
 - Great to see crowd at Irish dance
 - [Fatastic]
 - Enjoyable session today
 - Born in England but all grandparents in Glasgow. Always feel Scottish! Even distant Irish connections from Ayreshire. NOT ENGLISH EVEN NOW.
 - Lovely dancing - bring it to a wider audience
 - I love the idea of the festival because I hav a connection wuth Irish culture and I'm planning to move there soon!
 - Well done! A brilliant programme and the most inspiring Irish festival!
 - I'm usually one of your volunteers
 - Had a great time
 - Had a great time, lovely stuff, fantastic atmosphere
 - Good variety of acts. Great taster
 - Excellent festival with a variety of activities
 - Enjoyable and entertaining
 - Fantastic launch event all the performers are excellent
 - It was amazing and a great way to start the festival
 - I'm in an Irish band local to Liverpool and would love to be involved in future festivals.
 - He did it - I have proof
 - Really great!
 - Amazing already!
 - Thanks for the free [Guinness]
 - I've enjoyed my evening thanks!
 - Excellent launch
 - Good focus on community!
 - Nice to have travelled from London to support your launch - everybody so welcoming
 - No, great venue
 - Excellent programme. Very welcoming
 - really strong festival. Makes me proud to be Irish in Liverpool.
 - Drama with musicians + singers add much to experiences.
 - Kate and Nora were very good actresses
 - Most enjoyable and great to bring drama performances to the pub.
 - 2 excellent shows. Thanks
 - Enjoyed plays in smaller venues
 - West Bromwich, England
 - Events sometimes clash with events in Manchester which is a pity
 - Just like to say thanks to everyone involved in making it possible.
 - Really enjoyed it, very well produced
 - Brilliant all inclusive show
 - Unaware of Irish Festival. Just attended David O'Doherty
 - Yes, but ths box is too small
 - Great entertainment and great value for money
 - Very enjoyable
 - David O'Doherty is the best!
 - David was funny. Thanks
 - Events seem less well attended this year perhaps in competition with other festivals
 - Sometimes disappointed at small audiences
 - No just that the Irish festival wae very very good
 - Thoroughly enjoyed the music
 - Very interesting. I work with travellers - good to see them represented
 - This is much needed, bringing the community closer
 - Thanks for keeping the connections and history
 - brilliant Festival. Great work
 - Fab evening. Top marks for Emma Smith
 - Fantastic night!
 - Great music
 - I really enjoyed the music and have Irish heritage
 - Great variety
 - More publicity needed as only became aware of festival today
 - Lovely treat to experience live music in this venue
 - Both artists were great
 - Cool. Charlie was boss
 - Love it.
 - Another great talk
 - Really enjoyed Feile Voices presentation
 - Great event Feile @ 30

Suggestions for #LIF2019 or work ideas

- More music more history
- Irish poetry please
- More music
- No - fantastic
- Worth exploring Trish mythology, legends, folk tales. Traditional Arts/Crafts.
- Love to see David O'Doherty again - he was brilliant
- Bring Stephen James Smith back and the whole show
- No, was great
- More women singers/musicians
- Always enjoy the festival
- Use of microphone. Great sense of humour!
- More in depth discussion about Liverpool irish public figures
- More promo. Show film first, I'm also going to David O'Doherty, which I didn't know was in the festival
- Cheaper beer. :)
- More Kila and longer set. Show film first
- Same again please
- Publicize more
- [MA1DG] cheaper festival shows for unemployed people
- Just carry on
- Irish writers - contemporary or Anglo-Irish writers
- Irish festival
- Sheffield
- Yes, a talk on James Connolly
- Reduced cot theatre and music events for students and the unwaged.
- More Irish music events - maybe something on the Wirral
- James Connolly. Recent hunger strikers eg Bobby Sands. Bernadette Devlin etc
- Further talks on signatories to the proclamation
- Something on Connolly please?
- A good cross section to celebrate and challenge
- Requests for tunes
- Sorry can't think of any.
- Programme generally goes more of the same!
- More of the same
- Set Dance
- More sessions please
- More advertisement outside of Liverpool! We happened to be here by accident.
- More promo across England if poss - I'm from Leeds
- More workshops, music, Irish history to involve children. Understand their Irish roots
- Keep up the good work
- More music - appreciate it's an arts festival but Lpool is full of talented Irish musicians
- More publicity
- Want Socks In The Frying Pan back
- More advertising for other fest. shows
- Music live
- Just keep this good work up
- Would love to see more Irish Dancing
- Perfect
- Same again!
- more of the same
- Need a Ceilidh
- More events through the year and here too
- More of the same!!!
- I always enjoy the writers session in the Victoria Building. Bring back Socks In The Frying Pan!!
- Maybe more advertising for small venues such as the Irish Centre
- Needs music during the play, maybe better venue?
- Extend over 2 weeks. Involve local community schools, churches, go cross community i.e. reach out to Orange Tradition
- No-carry on with your good work.
- More advance publicity
- Utilise more local musicians
- More like this!
- A festival card
- Keep moving forward. Stay contemporary.
- Repeat! Give a voice to women.
- Refreshments would be nice
- Get Van Morrison
- N/A
- Always like the music. The Fiess was great this year too
- Don't clash with football
- Can we have more of this!
- Why not arrange for the Med rooms [Liverpool Medical Institute] open as well as the play/Kitty's Q+A.
- Irish Sea Sessions at the Phil
- More of the same particularly local historic characters brought to life through Drama
- More promotion of the festival
- Find another Kitty

- More plays about women (famous + also unknown) whose work contributed to this great city
 - Just make more events like this
 - More walks - more times, more options[,] Irish Sea Sessions again
 - More films.
 - More on Irish history
 - Will think about that when this one is over! Think link with Literary Fest is good
 - An Irish rugby team
 - I'm always up for any out new to me.
 - Animation - good stuff - singer/songwriter in street cafe
 - I would like to see more at various times of the year and possibly in shopping areas to give general public opportunity to enjoy.
 - Nope. There was a good range
 - Maybe hand out awards after each section, like the Tonys or Olivier awards.
 - More marketing for event, it deserves to be more well known
 - More sessions/music
 - Perhaps possibly advertise more?
 - Keep it up!
 - Seats for the gigs
 - Would like to see the above again. More event in evening not just PM afternoon during week.
 - Lankum again
 - [Cheresty] Moore!
 - Yes
 - Book Lankum again
 - More publicity
 - Shame Deborah is not here!
 - Seems like a missed opportunity, certainly when
- I completed this at the [internal]. Show didn't seem thought out. Missing Deborah Frances-White.
- Guilty Feminist podcast back again
 - Will email....
 - Cherish the Ladies
 - Make it longer - Get involved with St Patrick's Day Parade
 - More dancngand family fun
 - Include the young ones. More children
 - More in Irish Centre
 - Love the bands esp Whistlin Donkeys
 - More Irish dancing
 - Do you link with other UK Irish communities?
 - All good
 - Advertise/make people aware of it more - who don't have friends who are [included]
 - More Irish dancing
 - As above.If not enough in budget for lots of brochures, Diary of events + links on single sheet
 - More small venue, independent theatre supportd by the festival.
 - One of the best show ever seen. More of Corey Harbinson work
 - More of the same events in parishes in L'pool
 - More ceilis
 - Irish family history research session
 - More dancing! - Bit of history on the Irish dancing.
 - Keep it going thru the year!
 - Make it long
 - More activites and events that do not take place during working hours
- More visual arts please!
 - More acts :)
 - More acts?
 - Just keep it going.
 - No it was fantastic
 - It's perfect
 - Get me to play at the launch
 - Keep doing what you're doing - fabulously inclusive programme.
 - More free [Guinness]
 - Love the LIF but would like to see it more broadly advertised schools, hospitals, workplaces etc
 - Bit more broadly advertised as only heard from my mum who receives emails. I've loads of Irish friends who would come but don't know.
 - Keep it brief
 - This is my first time coming to the launch and liked it was very relaxed and enjoyed the music
 - Keep it going! More of the same
 - Film about first generation kids going back to Ireland for their summer holidays
 - Irish films in iconic places relating to the Irish
 - Would like to have seen some of Bernard's work at today's event
 - Moe work by local [playwrights]
 - I haven't seen a sufficient range of events to make informed, constructive suggestions
 - Meeting of Lady Gregory, W.B.Yeats etc: the movement they inaugurated. Play 'SPOKESONG' by p/wright Steven ? Prizewinning play approx 30+ years ago

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More of the same • Liverpool • Classic Irish films and plays Da Big Maggie • Accessible Gaelic sessions • Liverpool • As much Irish theatre as possible. Musically would love 2 see the [genius] that is Emmett Tinley and Prayer Boat • Following through to persons actual life story wth past relations • Improve information on venues and attractions • That film where Astaire plays a Leprachaun • Chris O'Dowd | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No - more of the above please. • More funny • More comedy. Better [publising] of events • Later showing • Poetry. An Irish language event • Revisit marketing and publicity • More artists • Possible p/ship with Ruth McHugh • Continue to [spread] the festival • Do it again • More music with banjo • Maybe have an extra launch on Lord Street so | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • more people are aware of the festival • As there is no publicity available on the Wirral, please make this available next year • Preston, UK • Events out of 9-5. Usually at work • Better decor • Advertside more! • More talks, debates, political discourse - as well as the lighter stuff! • Please, please, please bring Lankum back. Anything involving Irish author Lora O'Brien. |
|---|---|---|

Direct feedback

Additionally, some email feedback has come through, again unexpurgated:

Pat and Tony O'Neill: "Thank you Emma and all of the Irish Festival team, performers etc... Everything we saw was fantastic, really enjoyed the variety of venues... Here's looking at next year..."

Liam McGuire: "Well done to you. We could tell that an immense amount of hard work went in to this festival. Congratulations".

Flora Small: "Keep on with the good work. I suppose because we take our Irish backgrounds for granted we don't realise how it makes Liverpool the unique great city it is, or helps to make it, don't want to forget the Vikings".

Andy Connally: "The festival is something the Liverpool Irish are and should be very proud of. I was very proud to be part of it. In [a lot] of ways, the festival mirrors the very reason I'm here. Both sets of my grandparents would also be very proud [...] You must, and should be very proud".

Win Lawlor, *Irish Community Care*: "Thank you for the hard work you put in to make sure our communities had the opportunity to be centre stage –literally!"

Gabrielle De La Puente, *OUTPUT Gallery*: "In terms of audience development, we had a lot of new people through the door which was great for us - especially because it was the first show of our Autumn programme. I really enjoyed the experience of working with both the artist and yourself, we had great support and I think it was a successful show. We didn't have any writers review it, which is a shame, though I don't think that's the fault of the piece or LIF but the lack of writing in Liverpool and people's resistance to review something with such sensitive subject matter".

Responses

As we can see from all this, the feedback and suggestions are –in the main- general points, ordinarily indicating positivity and occasionally thoughts related to very specific events. Primarily, people want more of the same, with a few indicators of other acts that might be of interest, including Chris O'Dowd, Lora O'Brien, certain local writer/directors and the return of *Lankum*.

As every festival ever is told people want more publicity and in more places. This is an expected part of our appraisal and is dictated primarily by budget. However, what it also tells us is just how much people want to see information about this.

There is no significant request for a festival club, thus this will be dropped from previous year recommendations. The festival suspects that, were there a natural late-night central hub for this (such as the former Irish Centre), it may be possible to start a club with a membership. However, having events in so many locations (not always central) means there is not a suitable space and as such attempts to create the feelings of a hub have failed.

It is heartening to hear that people want to see festival growth, though difficult to surmise from the comments what growth is wanted, i.e., programme size, audience numbers or wealth? None of the comments suggest they dislike the direction we are taking and only one comment refers to a lack of theme tying, which was taken at the interval of *The Guilty Feminist* before the large panel discussion detailing the political and physical movement of the #YesTogether campaign, thus strongly connected to Migration and *In:Visible Women*.

Amidst the array of feedback, we believe the overwhelming response is positive.

It is interesting that we have had the usual calls for certain music, but nothing to suggest it should become a music festival. This suggests we are communicating the multidisciplinary of the festival well and it is being accepted. This unique selling point seems to be playing to our advantage, with more people passing comments on how it made them feel and appreciating the diversity.

Image: Family Day at the Museum of Liverpool, #LIF2018, complete with digital slide show, staging and PA, the latter purchased in Sept 2018 with sponsorship from TG 4. Credit © E Smith, 2018.



Focus for the future

Based on feedback and our findings, the recommendation of this evaluation is to follow these five points:

1 Create a headline show and streamline wider programme
'Tent pole' events form stories from which to hang the festival and provide an easy 'in' for press, gaining greater media noise. This may be a large name or concept that helps us generate something on par with - or excelling - the *Irish Sea Sessions*. A headline is critical. Streamline the remaining programme.

2 Make partner buy-in critical
When partners join in with promotional support, featuring *LIF* in their day-to-day messages and using the same information we each become more than the sum of our parts. Gaining programme reciprocity across 30+ venues would soon surpass 2018's 26m press reach. The work we did with *Almanac Arts* and *To Have to Shoot Irishmen* is testimony to this.

3 Get early programme sign off and broadcast
Get initial programme sign off by Jun/Jul and press releases out. Doing so permits greater media circulation and offers more time to plan press attendance. Importantly, it allows you to put emphasis on areas of the programme that need buy-in early, which helps if additional large scale cultural events enter the calendar and absorb press attention.

4 Get a public realm commission and work in communities
These projects must further core festival values and provide a legacy. It should be a multi-year project that brings audiences with it over time. It must galvanise festival interest during creation and when shown. Its outcome must leave a lasting impression taking the festival's name beyond the festival period.

5 Use evidence and long-term strategy to develop capacity and double core support
The festival team, skill set and delivery ability must grow. There is substantial work to do to underpin the festival, promote it, support its artists, reach its capacity and sustain its evidence development. We must strategically build funding, income streams, expertise and capacity to develop, sustain and futureproof the festival.

These points span the development of an artistic core of events and exhibits through which we will deliver the strategic plan and futureproofing objectives. Arts and culture is always the delivery mechanism for achieving our ambitions and securing our future. It is hoped that by undertaking these distilled aims, we will make the *Liverpool Irish Festival* strong and robust, setting us on a strong footing for the future.

THANKS

Although we attempted to list all of the artists, partners and venues in this year's printed materials, it is not possible to list all the names of those involved in *Liverpool Irish Festival 2017*. We extend our thanks to all our partners and their staff; our venue hosts and their teams and volunteers; our own volunteers and Board members, artists and collaborators. They are found in our networks and our supporters, sponsors and friends. In addition, they are those who came before today's team and many that we have met during and since this year's festival. We thank them – and you – all.

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@LivIrishFest

/LivIrishFest

+44 (0)151 291 6739

+44(0)7804 286 145

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Cover image: *Kila* touch the audience, *Arts Club*, #LIF2018.
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