

Annual report on filming in the Edinburgh city region in 2019

Context:

Film Edinburgh's role is to promote and develop the Edinburgh city region (Edinburgh, East Lothian and the Scottish Borders) as a filming destination, attracting and facilitating film and TV productions that promote the city / region as an inspirational destination throughout the UK and around the world. The amount and value of filming across the UK is on an upwards trajectory thanks to UK Tax Relief for feature films and high-end TV dramas and the weaker pound, with the value of these productions in the UK in 2019 at a record £3.6 billion, an increase of 16% on the 2018. Of this, £3.07 billion came from inward investment film & TV productions (up from £2.4 billion in 2018), with 21 studio-backed films accounting for 71% of the total spend on all production. UK domestic (independent) film and TV production showed a decrease in spend of 28% on 2018. In terms of audiences, one of 2019's top five grossing films at the UK box office was made in the Edinburgh city region: *Avengers: Endgame* (£88.7 million in UK) which filmed on location at St Abbs from its production base in Edinburgh.

2019 filmed productions	Quantity	Value
Feature films/TV dramas	19 (+36%)	£10M
Factual/Light Entertainment	114 (+8%)	£751K
Commercials/Corporates	162 (+18%)	£3.3M
Other (shorts, art)	44 (-27%)	£33K

2019 once again proved to be a huge spike in the value of film and TV production in the Edinburgh city region, with a total of 340 filmed productions choosing to shoot in Edinburgh, East Lothian and the Scottish Borders with an economic impact of £14.4 million: an increase of 153% on 2018. This includes expenditure on local crew and facilities, locations and services, accommodation and transportation. The spike was largely the result of attracting a major Hollywood production which single-handedly created a third of the economic benefit to the city.

The biggest production of the year in Edinburgh was *Fast & Furious 9*, one of the most popular film series of all time, which chose Edinburgh city centre as one of its key locations, putting the city centre stage to hundreds of millions of fans around the world. Filming took place over 19 days in September 2019 with a further 2 months of prep and strike surrounding the filming days. Over 500 film crew came to Edinburgh with the production company, with a resulting boost to accommodation providers and the hospitality sector as well as to the locations and production services that were employed locally. But the production company also gave employment to a further 1440 local people, including 856 'extras' and over 50 local new entrants to the film industry who were given jobs as location marshals. In total, the economic impact of *Fast & Furious 9* to the City of Edinburgh was £5.2 Million.

As well *Fast & Furious 9*, the Edinburgh city region hosted the Will Ferrell comedy *Eurovision* which filmed for 7 days in the capital; Julian Fellowes new series *Belgravia* in which Edinburgh's Old and New Town and stately homes in the region stand in for 19th century London and home counties; *Outlander series 5* which features coastal locations and stately homes in the region; *Vera series 10* which filmed for a week in Burnmouth Harbour; *Elizabeth Is Missing* starring Glenda Jackson which filmed on Portobello Beach, and Netflix drama *Princess Switch 2* which based in Edinburgh for two months over the prep and production period.

Also showcasing the city region to millions of viewers around the UK were 114 factual TV and light entertainment shows including: *Bargain Hunt*, which is regularly watched by over 2 million viewers; *Downfall*, a historical documentary for BBC 4 about Charles I, *How The Victorians Built Britain* focusing on the Forth Bridge; *Scot Squad*, *Strictly Come Dancing* and *Britain's Got Talent*; *Test Drive*, *Landward*, children's shows *All Over The Place* and *The Dengineers*, *Grand Tours of Scotland's Lochs*, *DIY SOS*, *Emeli Sande's Street Symphony*, *Great British Railways* and *Great British Car Journeys*, *Barging Britain*, *The One Show*, and US game show *Wheel of Fortune*. Factual and light entertainment shows, while having a relatively low economic and physical impact, can reach audiences of up to 10 million in the UK (*Strictly Come Dancing / BGT*), while property and antiques shows often devote a full prime time hour to a region.

It is worth noting the increase in value to the city of commercials and corporate videos. These productions are the primary business to a large number of production companies and personnel in the Edinburgh city region, calling for nimble production teams to facilitate rapid turnarounds. Increasingly we are seeing larger-scale commercials attracted to the Edinburgh city region by our range of locations and proximity to coast and countryside as well as a highly regarded production service sector.

At the end of 2018, news came that a film studio will be opening its doors in the old Pelamis warehouse in Leith which bodes well for our future ability to attract high-value film and TV dramas to the city region. The next hurdle will be building up the local crew base, but this will follow naturally from increased amounts of production and employment opportunities and creates the opportunity for links to local schools and colleges.

With the production workforce in mind, Film Edinburgh sponsored the well-regarded workshop for new entrants 'Hit The Ground Running' in order to bring it to Edinburgh in January 2019 and again in November 2019, recruiting 10 trainees from Edinburgh, East Lothian and the Scottish Borders on each occasion. In order to raise awareness among the local crew of the depth and breadth of production personnel and services based in the region, Film Edinburgh hosted two networking events for crew and services listed in Film Edinburgh's Production Guide – our local directory of such services. At the end of the year, and after the annual review of listings, Film Edinburgh's Production Guide contained 312 crew (+11%), 126 production services (-25%) and 65 production companies (+12%) based in the Edinburgh city region.

Until such time as the film studio opens its doors officially, it is the Edinburgh city region's locations which are the primary draw for visiting productions. Film Edinburgh continued to grow its locations library, with a total of 892 active locations in Edinburgh, 176 locations in East Lothian and 298 locations in the Scottish Borders.



