



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

News Release

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Noise level policy puts dampener on city music scene, study finds

Edinburgh's live music scene is being hindered by the city council's stance on noise levels, the UK's first census of live music events reveals.

The Edinburgh Live Music Census found that nearly half - 44 per cent - of the capital's musicians who were interviewed said noise restrictions had affected their gigs.

Experts are calling for a change to the requirement that all amplified music has to be inaudible in neighbouring buildings. Instead they are recommending a policy that ensures live music shows meet certain decibel levels or do not prove a nuisance.

The survey by researchers at the University of Edinburgh took place on 6 June. Academics and volunteers provided a snapshot of how many gigs had taken place, in which venues, and the economic impact of the performances. They also surveyed musicians, venue managers and concert goers.

They found that live music is worth at least £40 million a year to the capital, with the average Edinburgh music fan spending £1120 a year.

Nearly three million people - 2.7 million - attend music events in Edinburgh annually, across 23,000 performances.

The survey found that the city has a minimum of 267 venues in the city offering live music, including music played by DJs. Pubs and bars are the most common type.

On the night of the census, approximately £170,000 was spent at venues, with £90,000 on ticket sales alone.

Most of the city's musicians – 73 per cent – said that the number of gigs they had played was either static or decreasing in the previous 12 months. Most venues reported increased attendances across the year, with only two per cent experiencing a decrease. Four out of five - 81 per cent - of musicians said that Edinburgh's live music scene was either shrinking or static.

Dr Matt Brennan from the Reid School of Music at Edinburgh College of Art, said: "While not an acute crisis, there are certain restrictions on live music in Edinburgh that has put a handbrake on the scene. Changing the inaudibility clause would be a practical way of helping what is an economically and culturally important part of the city to thrive."

Project researcher Dr Adam Behr, now based at Newcastle University, stated: "Our research shows high levels of engagement from the city's audiences and a driven community of musicians. Nevertheless, the inaudibility clause appears to have a chilling effect on provision."

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Dialogue between the different parts of the Council, venues and musicians is a crucial factor in unlocking the further potential of Edinburgh's year round music scene.”

The Music Is Audible working group has begun a process of consulting informally with Council officers, the Licensing Forum and Community Councils to test the possibility of enhancing the wording of Edinburgh's current licensing policy. The Edinburgh Licensing Board requires to publish its new Statement of Licensing Policy by 301 November 2016.

The full report will be published on Monday 19 October.

For further information please contact:

Kathryn Dunlop, Press and PR Office, tel 0131 651 5587; email kathryn.dunlop@ed.ac.uk