



Media Release

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SUNDERLAND TO HOST GLOBAL MUSIC CITIES NETWORK SUMMIT

Sunderland will welcome music leaders from across the globe in June as it becomes the first UK city to host the Music Cities Network (MCN) Summer Summit, shaping the future of music ecosystems and city-level cultural policy.

Taking place from 18–20 June 2026, with a week of wraparound events across the city, member cities from the global Music Cities Network are coming together to engage with Sunderland’s cultural highlights.

Recently recognised as a Music City and active member of the global MCN, Sunderland represents a new generation of cities embedding music into long-term urban strategy and development, bringing together international delegates to explore how music can shape thriving, innovative and connected cities.

The Summit will take place during the final week of Sunderland’s Year of Music, serving as a fitting conclusion to twelve months of celebration of the city’s rich musical heritage and current vibrant scene.

It also marks a key moment in MCN’s ongoing work to strengthen music ecosystems across Europe and globally, building on recent international dialogues and advancing collaboration between cities, industry and policymakers.

Sunderland’s deep cultural roots and proud musical legacy make it a natural host for this global gathering. From grassroots venues and emerging artists to new investment in

creative industries, the city demonstrates how music can sit at the heart of civic identity, economic development and community pride.

Across three days of programming, the Music Cities Network Summit will focus on international collaboration and the future of music cities, exploring how music ecosystems can be embedded into urban policy, how cross-sector collaboration can be strengthened, and how technology and innovation can support long-term sustainability.

Discussions will convene global experts, city leaders and industry professionals to exchange knowledge and develop solutions that support sustainable and resilient music ecosystems.

Alongside the MCN Summit programme, the larger 'Summit Week Sunderland' wraparound programme will feature a series of public performances, conferences, artist exchanges and international showcases, creating opportunities for musicians from Sunderland and around the world to collaborate and present their work.

Sunderland Music City CEO Michelle Daurat said, "Hosting the Music Cities Network Summer Summit 2026 is a proud moment for us, as we welcome other Music Cities to experience first-hand the energy, creativity and collaboration that define our city.

As we reach the culmination of our Year of Music, this Summit not only celebrates how far we've come, but also sets the stage for Sunderland's future as a connected, innovative and internationally engaged music city."

With the support of the local creative community and partners across the city, the Summit positions Sunderland as an emerging hub for music, culture, and innovation.

Lena Ingwersen, Managing Director of the Music Cities Network, added:

"We're delighted to bring our bi-annual MCN Summit to Sunderland this summer. The city's energy has stayed with me since my first visit, and it feels especially meaningful to return at this moment, as the city closes its Year of Music.

This summit builds on conversations we've had and will continue to have across Europe - from ESNS to Tallinn Music Week - where cities and industry leaders are rethinking how music can shape more resilient, future-oriented cities. In Sunderland, we bring these ideas into practice: connecting members, sharing real experiences, and working across policy and practice to turn direction into action.

We're proud to contribute to a moment that strengthens both our network and the city's music ecosystem."

The full programme of Summit Week Sunderland and further announcements will follow in the coming weeks and months.

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**Kim McGuinness
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Ends

Captions

Sunderland to host global music leaders in summer summit

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NOTES TO EDITORS

Sunderland Music City

Sunderland Music City was established in June 2024 and aims to establish Sunderland as a globally recognised music hub.

By developing and supporting all who are involved in music and who love music in Sunderland, we will help the city, and the region thrive through job creation, talent development, economic and artistic growth, tourism development, reputation and brand building.

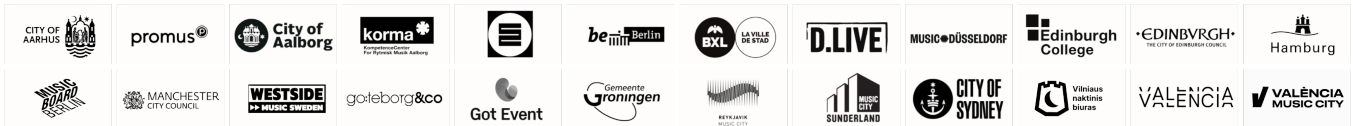
Our focus is to ensure people from a wide range of backgrounds have the opportunity to make, learn, record, rehearse, promote, perform and listen to great music. We aim to further develop Sunderland as a Music City, bringing together musicians, audiences and venues to help change people's cultural experience in the city and the region, drive cultural expectations, aspirations, and ambition and to make it a place where people want to study, live and thrive. And in doing so change Sunderland as a

place, making it more vibrant and creative and (using a Beatles' phrase) recognised for music 'Here, There and Everywhere.'

Sunderland joined the global Music Cities Network in January 2025, as it launched its five-year strategy for music.

Current members of Music Cities Network include Aalborg (DK), Aarhus (DK), Bergen (NO), Berlin (DE), Brussels (BE), Düsseldorf (DE), Edinburgh (UK), Gothenburg (SWE), Groningen (NL), Hamburg (DE),

THE MUSIC CITIES NETWORK IS A TRANSNATIONALLY ACTING NON-PROFIT ASSOCIATION BETWEEN THE CITIES OF:



Manchester (UK), Reykjavik (IS), Sunderland (UK), Sydney (AUS), Valencia (ES), and Vilnius (LT).