SCENE

MANCHESTER LGBTQ+ FILM & TV FESTIVAL

2026 SUMMARY

+

BE PART OF 2027



Pictured: Scott Bryan (left) with cast members at The Traitors opening event at AVIVA Studios

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MANCHESTER'S LGBTQ+ FILM AND TV FESTIVAL

SCENE ran for its third year in August 2026, celebrating queer stories on screen. The festival took over the city, proudly working with programming, accommodation and venue partners from across Manchester.

The festival champions brand new and classic works from narrative to documentary, features to shorts, Mancunian and international. At SCENE we're proud to screen a diverse programme of stories and welcome creatives from all over the world.

Running during Manchester's Pride season (which unusually is in August), SCENE has raised tens of thousands of pounds for local LGBTQ+ charities since 2024. SCENE creates safe spaces for members of the community, allies and fans to explore relevant topics and make connections with LGBTQ+ heritage and culture through film & TV, as well as a place for queer filmmakers and talent to meet and share inspiration.

SCENE is produced by CityCo on behalf of Manchester Accommodation Business Improvement District. Whilst Mancunians love the festival, over a third of our audience comes from outside Manchester with attendees this year from as far as Australia.

SCENE 2027 WILL TAKE PLACE THURSDAY 19TH – SUNDAY 22ND AUGUST 2027

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Pictured: Alice Oseman (right), creator of the Heartstopper series, and host/actor Fisayo Akinade (left)

SCENE 2026

After launching in 2024 with a Queer As Folk UK cast reunion and welcoming stars like Julie Hesmondhalgh and legendary American documentarian David Weissman, our second edition in 2025 doubled our audience, welcoming the cast of What It Feels Like For A Girl and RuPaul's Drag Race creators Randy Barbato and Fenton Bailey.

Our third edition in 2026 was our most ambitious yet with a packed programme and attendance close to doubling again.

Russell T Davies returned to celebrate Tip Toe and mark the fifth anniversary of It's A Sin. Our TV strand also included a behind-the-scenes look at Disney+'s Rivals with cast and producers, an in-conversation with Heartstopper creator Alice Oseman, a celebration of I Kissed A Boy and I Kissed A Girl, and an opening night event with BBC's The Traitors.

Channel 4's First For Funny live comedy night returned with Taskmaster star Chloe Petts headlining alongside special events celebrating Absolutely Fabulous and Caroline Aherne.

Our film programme included previews of Pedro Almodóvar's Bitter Christmas, Jane Schoenbrun's Queer Palme-winning Teenage Sex and Death at Camp Miasma, Gregg Araki's I Want Your Sex and John Early's Maddie's Secret, while our SCENE Documentary strand featured the UK premiere of NOFX: 40 Years of F*ckin' Up with the band in attendance.

The Iris Prize Best British short nominations were announced at the festival whilst our Queer Northern Shorts programme returned alongside guest programming from Dublin's Trans Image Trans Experience Festival, Aks International Minorities Festival, Queer Filmmakers Network and more. We also hosted a free outdoor screen and the "Dragged to the Movies" photography exhibition, extending the festival across the city.

The festival closed with Manchester filmmakers Neil Ely and Lloyd Eyre-Morgan's Chatlines, sponsored by Screen Manchester,activist documentary Hunky Jesus and, of course, a closing party.



Pictured: Connor Jackson, Russell T Davies and Iz Hesketh at the screening of Channel 4's hit TV drama Tip Toe

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Pictured: The sold out UK Premiere screening of NOFX: 40 Years of F*ckin' Up at New Century Hall

SCENE 2026 IN STATS

- 7890 attendees
- 62 screenings and events
- 31 Narrative Features (old and new)
- 6 pre-release preview screenings
- 11 classic film celebrations
- 9 TV Events
- 18 panels/Q&A's
- 7 Documentary Features
- 2 UK Premieres
- 10 venues
- All ticket profits donated to LGBTQ+ charities
- Over £20,000 raised this year



Pictured: Fans meet The Traitors icon Linda Rands at our opening night Traitors party

SCENE 2026 IN STATS

7859

Festival attendees

89%

Attendance increase from 2025

£20,000

Donated to LGBTQ+ charities from ticket sales/profits

99%

Rated the festival “excellent” or “good”

2.4m

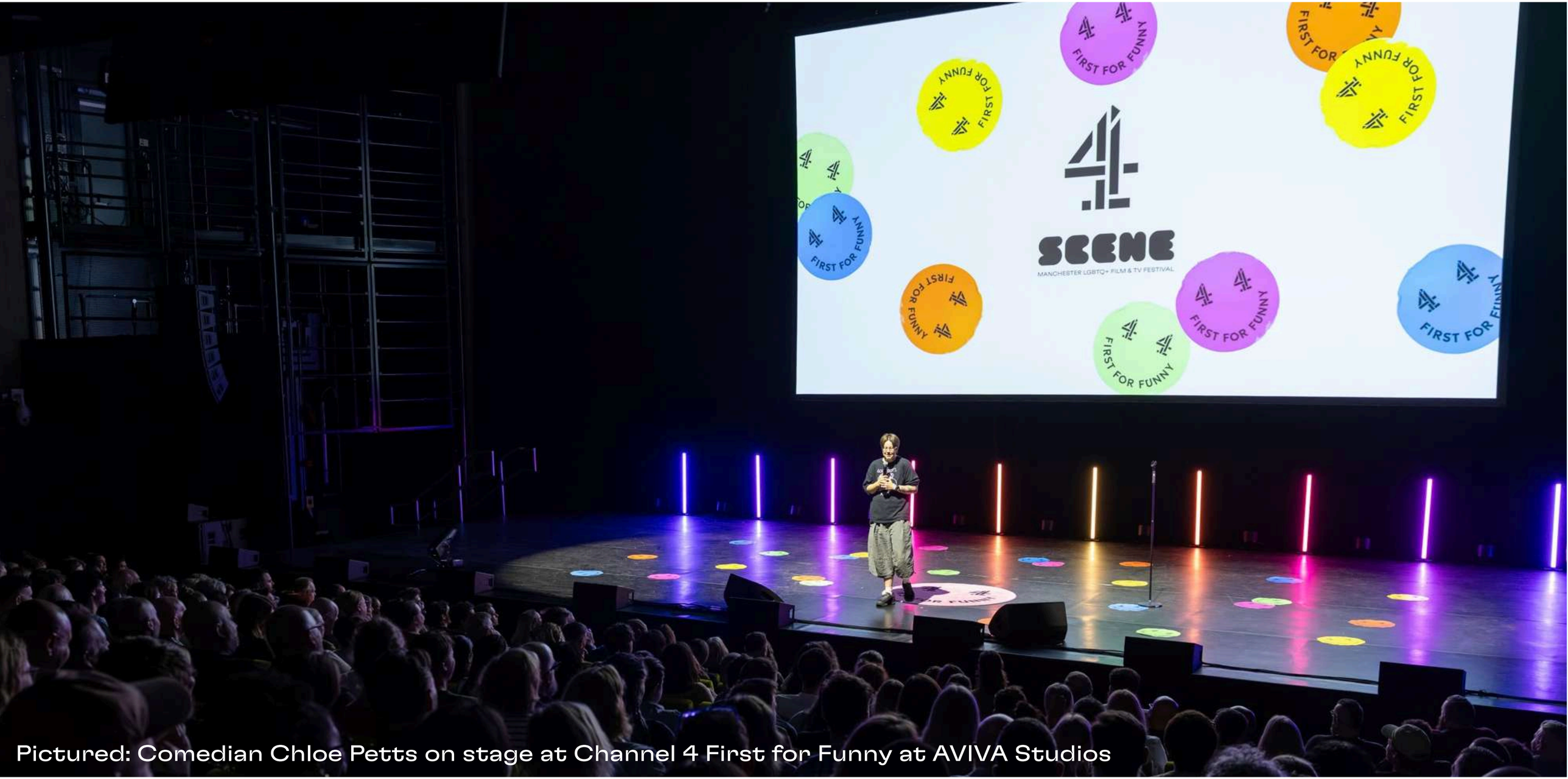
Instagram views

Instagram followers up 47% since 2025

54.5%

of Skiddle tickets sold were to people outside of Manchester (15% up on 2025)

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Pictured: Comedian Chloe Petts on stage at Channel 4 First for Funny at AVIVA Studios

2026 FESTIVAL PARTNERS, SPONSORS AND SUPPORTERS

SCENE has support from major broadcasters, media companies, brands and festivals from across the UK and around the world. Above are a selection of companies who sponsored, partnered on or supported the 2026 festival.

Manchester is a thriving hub for creative arts - city institutions like HOME, Manchester's cult cinema CULTPLEX and Factory International (the producers of Manchester International Festival) work with SCENE to co-produce events alongside CityCo and our partners Premier PR.

Venues across the city including traditional cinemas like HOME as well as spaces in hotels, St John's, NOMA and the city's iconic Canal Street all support the festival by hosting our programme of diverse events making the festival truly a citywide takeover.

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2026 PROGRAMME

The festival took place across 10 venues with a varied programme across each day including:

AVIVA STUDIOS

OPENING EVENT:
The Traitors
+ panel and after party

Fatt Butcher's
Congregational

It's A Sin
full series screening
+ panel

Sincerely, Adam

Liberation Pride Pageant

CLOSING EVENT:
Channel 4 First For Funny
Live Comedy Night

NEW CENTURY HALL

NOFX: 40 Years of F*ckin' Up
+ Q&A with lead singer Fat Mike
(UK Premiere)

Tip Toe
+ panel with cast and crew

I Kissed A Girl/Boy
+ panel

The Ab Fab-a-thon

Heartstopper Forever: In
Conversation with Alice Oseman

OUT NOW with Scott Bryan

Celebrating Caroline Aherne

Iris Prize Best British
Announcement

HOME

OPENING FILM:
Bitter Christmas

OPENING NIGHT FILM:
Teenage Sex & Death at
Camp Miasma

Rivals: Behind the Drama
+ panel with cast/producers

Stop! That! Train!
(Party Screening)

25 Years of Hedwig &
the Angry Inch
+ panel

Maddie's Secret
(Northern Premiere)

Blue Film
(Northern Premiere)
+ Q&A with Kieron Moore

Aks Festival presents
South Asian Trans Shorts

Barbara Forever
+ Q&A with filmmaker

PROTEST! presents
Condensation short film
premiere

Bouchra

Low Rider
+ filmmaker intro

Queer As Punk

CLOSING DOCUMENTARY:
Hunky Jesus
Panel with The Sister of
Perpetual Indulgence

CLOSING FILM: Chatlines
+ panel with filmmaker
and cast

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Pictured: The team behind Channel 4's It's A Sin (Russell T Davies, Nicola Shindler, Phil Collinson, Nathaniel Curtis, Peter Hoar, and Lydia West in conversation ahead of the first ever full series screening of the show.

2026 PROGRAMME

The festival took place across 10 venues with a varied programme across each day including:

CULTPLEX

Moonlight
(10th Anniversary Screening)

She's The He

Black Burns Fast

Satisfaction

Drinking and Driving

Tran Image Trans Experience
Festival Takeover including:
TITE Trans Shorts
Puppy Girl
October Crow
Castration Movie Chapter iii - Junior
Ghosts - Premorphic Drift; a fragmentary passage

GASP! presents The Serpent's Skin
+ queer horror shorts

SCENE Northern Shorts Showcase

St Trinian's (Party Screening)

FLIX AT TREEHOUSE HOTEL

The SCRUFF Screening:
Paris 05:59: Theo & Hugo

Mineshaft: The Cruising Murders

Wolf
+ Q&A with director

FIRST STREET OUTDOOR SCREEN

Our free outdoor cinema screened a season of high school movies including the High School Musical trilogy, Clueless, Angus Thongs and Perfect Snogging and Rebel Without A Cause plus special screenings of

Devdas

Wizard of Oz

CRUZ 101

It's Dorothy!
(UK Premiere)

COLONY KING ST

ORIGINS:
The Short Film Night

CAMPFIELD

Queer Filmmakers Network presents Filmmaker Mixer

SCENE Audience Award Winner Announcement

Closing Party

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Pictured: Sitara performing at the Devdas screening at the First Street Outdoor Screen



Pictured: Bonnie Ann Clyde (RuPaul's Drag Race UK) and David Hoyle celebrate Hedwig and the Angry Inch

CREATIVES

SCENE 2026 saw this amazing lineup of filmmakers. actors, directors, journalists, programmers, producers and performers appear at the festival

Adam Ali
Alexander Lamb
Alice Oseman
Amanda Collier
Ayo Adenekhan
Banksie
Bobski
Bonnie Ann Clyde
Carmel Morgan
Black Peppa
Charley Marlowe
Charlotte Cropper
Chibby Lo
Chloe Petts
Chloe Brown
Christian Cargill
Darren Pritchard
David Hoyle
David Scott
David Martin
Fat Mike
Fatt Butcher
Faye McKeever
Fake Trash
Fiona Hughes
Fisayo Akinade
Gary Lamont
Gary James Williams
Gary Cruise
Greg Thorpe
Harry Clayton-Wright
Hubert Burton
Imogen Milnes
Iz Hesketh
Jackson Connor
James Hudson
Jen Brister
John Henshaw
Jordan Gray
Josh Jones
Joshua Val Martin
Kate Redmond
Kieron Moore
Lars Fellows
Liadan Roche
Liliane Hannah
Lill
Linda Rands
Lloyd Eyre-Morgan
Logan Fyn
Luke Oliveira-Davies
Lydia West
Meg Homer
Maddy Smedley
Monopoly Phonic
Nathaniel Curtis
Nathaniel Hall
Neil Ely
Nicola Shindler
Nikita Bharath
Nina Clement
Olivia O'Riada
Paul Mortlock
Peter Hoar
Phil Collinson
Phil Kennedy
Red Redmond
Renee Thomas
Rikki Beadle Blair
Rob Bowden King
Russell T Davies
Sam Buttery
Scott Bryan
Tawseef Khan
Theo Mayne
Thom Docking
Sadat Munir
Terri White
Will Steele
Vin Dicktiv
Zahira Zapanata

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Pictured: Attendees of the Filmmaker Mixer at Campfield

OUR AUDIENCE

Here in Manchester, we're one of the UK's most exciting destinations for brands and media companies looking to connect with a vibrant, diverse, and growing LGBTQ+ community. Today, 65% of companies prioritise Manchester alongside or even ahead of London for media campaigns. For brands aiming to engage both the media industry and a forward thinking LGBTQ+ audience, Manchester offers meaningful opportunities to connect with an influential and passionate community.

SCENE Manchester's LGBTQ+ Film and TV Festival is the perfect platform to tap into this energy. We connect brands with a highly engaged audience eager for inclusive storytelling, cultural connection, and memorable experiences. Manchester is home to one of the UK's oldest queer communities who party and protest side by side and many in our audience seek deeper connections to LGBTQ+ community and history through our festival.

Behind the scenes, Manchester's media industry is thriving. As well as being the new home of the TV Festival, Manchester has world-class production facilities, infrastructure and creative talent, the city is a hub of innovation. The BBC and ITV call MediaCityUK home, Channel 4 recently moved into our city and top film and TV production regularly use us as a backdrop. Loved by both global streaming giants and homegrown producers, Manchester has become a powerhouse of the new creative revolution.

With a proud legacy of LGBTQ+ activism and a warm, northern welcome, Manchester is both a cultural and commercial hub. More than 1 in 10 Mancunians identify as LGBTQ+, contributing to a UK market worth over £6 billion annually. This makes Manchester not only a fantastic place to live and work, but a prime location for brands looking to make authentic connections with an audience that values representation, diversity, and an unmistakable spirit of "everybody welcome."



BE PART OF IT

SCENE 2027 will return
Thursday 19th - Sunday 22nd August 2027

Speak to our Programming Team about featuring your show, film or short at SCENE 2027

Gary James Williams
Programme Lead

gary.williams@cityco.com

SCENE is an official Fringe partner event of Manchester Village Pride, the new community interest company who are hosting the Pride celebrations across the city this year.

SCENE ticket profits will be donated to Manchester Village Pride CIC which will be used to support the 5 LGBTQ+ Charities based in Manchester.



Pictured: Anna Phylactic and Banskie host the Ab Fab-A-Thon

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SPONSORSHIP

SCENE offers brands a powerful way to connect with thousands of engaged, culturally savvy Mancunians in a setting that is fun, authentic, and creative.

There are multiple ways to get involved. Opportunities include co-produced special events, on-street brand activations, and in-screen or programme advertising. Brand messaging can also be amplified through our national PR and digital campaigns, as well as citywide out-of-home placements delivered in partnership with Bay Media, Transport for Greater Manchester, and Manchester City Council. In addition, sponsors can collaborate on content with our media and influencer partners, creating even more ways to reach audiences.

We offer bespoke packages tailored to your goals, with options starting from £2,500+VAT to sponsor a screening and scaling up to headline sponsorship opportunities at £30,000+VAT.

Speak to our Team about featuring
your show, film or short at SCENE 2027

Laura Dyson
Marketing and Sponsorship Lead

laura.dyson@cityco.com

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MARKETING 2026

SCENE 2026 was supported by a wide-reaching local and regional marketing campaign, enhanced by Marketing Manchester's national and international promotion.

SCENE 2026 CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDED:

- Instagram followers increased by 47% in 60 days, with 2.4m total views
- Paid social campaign reaching 329,827 people, generating 1.1m impressions and 14,404 link clicks
- Media partnerships with Gaydio, The Manc (100k views), Manchester Finest and Creative Tourist
- Partnership with SCRUFF, with in-app festival and screening alerts reaching over 25,000 users
- 24 pieces of press and social coverage, including two exclusives with Deadline and the Manchester Evening News
- TfGM campaign across 99 Metrolink stops
- Inclusion in the Visit Manchester / ABID Summer '26 campaign (213,881 landing page impressions)
- 20 partner hotels offers to encourage overnight stays
- Partnership with Manchester Village Pride as part of the first official citywide Pride Fringe



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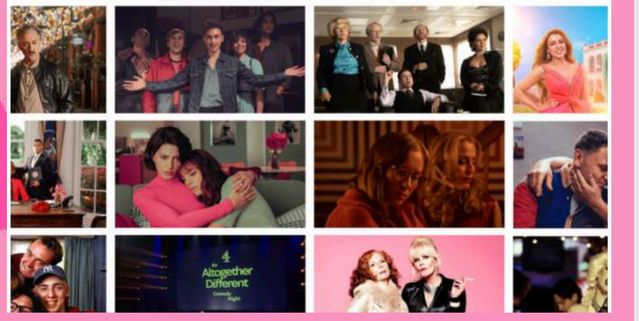
DEADLINE

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HOME / INTERNATIONAL / FESTIVALS

Manchester's Scene Festival To Feature Russell T. Davies, 'Heartstopper' Creator Alice Oseman & 'Bitter Christmas' Screening

By Jesse Whittock
July 9, 2026 3:13am



GAYDIO

ON AIR Gaydio Breakfast with Dave Cooper now playing Freeloaders - So Much Love To Give

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LGBTQ+ FILM FESTIVAL SCENE RETURNS TO MANCHESTER THIS AUGUST

News Home More from GAYDIO NEWS

Thursday, 9 July 2026 17:00

By Nex Asanté @nexwiththenews

Manchester's LGBTQIA+ Film and TV Festival returns from 20–27 August 2026 with its biggest programme yet.

SCENE Festival has unveiled its 2026 programme, bringing eight days of LGBTQIA+ film, TV, comedy, culture, parties and premieres to Manchester.

Now in its third year, the festival returns from Thursday 20 to Thursday 27 August as an official



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What's On > What's On News > Festivals

Big Manchester festival returns with The Traitors bash, Russell T Davies and Caroline Aherne tribute

There will also be an Absolutely Fabulous drag night and a celebration of Disney+ show Rivals

Comments 3

WHAT'S ON By Adam Maidment What's On and LGBTQ+ Writer

08:38, 28 Jul 2026



Prolific North

Channel 4 announces comedy partnership with Manchester's SCENE Festival



TV, Film & Streaming

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Pictured: Kieron Moore (right), lead actor of Blue Film, and moderator Gary James Williams (left)

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Pictured: Charley Marlowe and cast members from BBC Three's I Kissed A Boy/Girl



Pictured: Opening night sold out screening of Teenage Sex and Death at Camp Miasma

AUDIENCE FEEDBACK & RATINGS

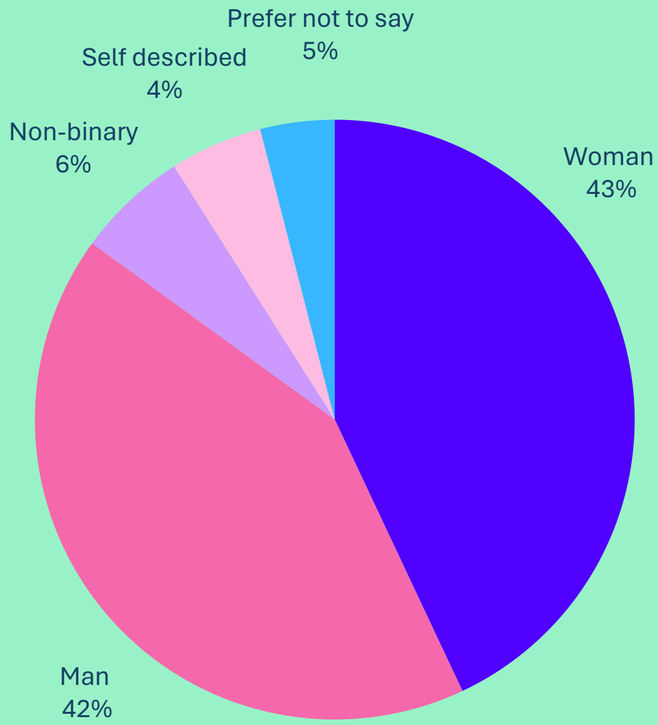
Our audience love SCENE. In only three years we're thrilled to see the festival be taken to heart by attendees from Manchester and increasingly around the UK and the world.

99% of those surveyed rated the festival event they attended as Excellent or Good.

2026

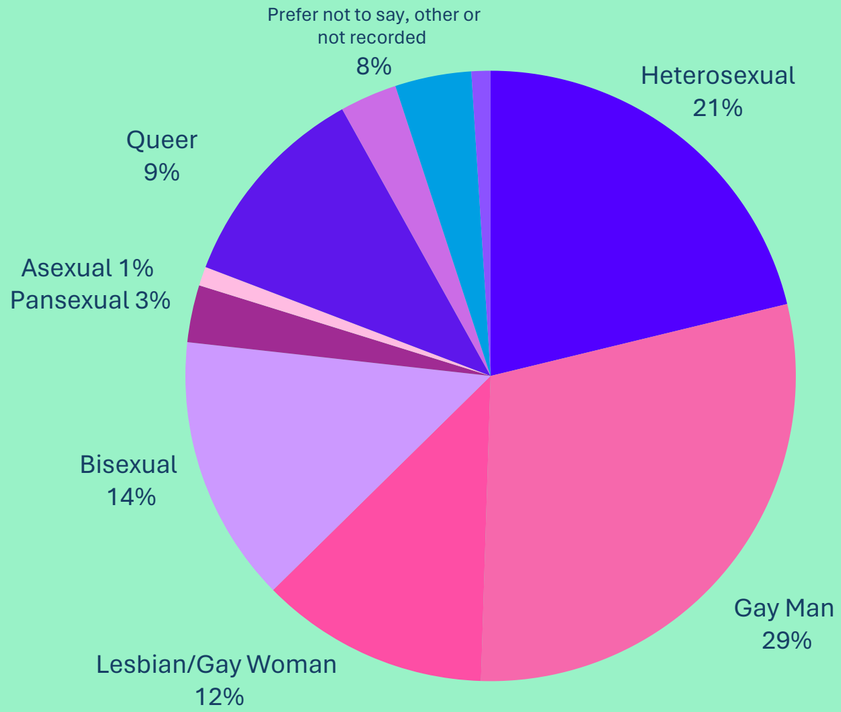
EXCELLENT	89%
GOOD	10%
OK	1%
POOR	0%

SURVEY RESPONSES 2026

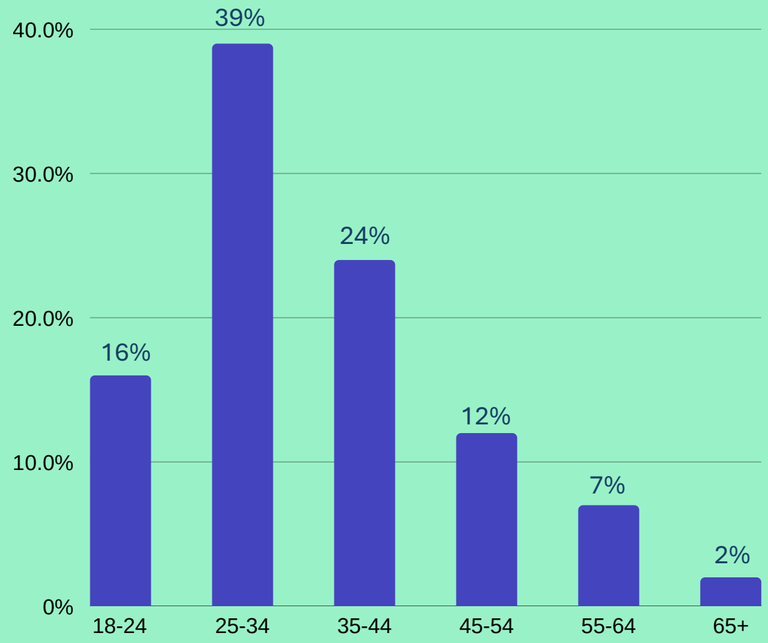


Gender

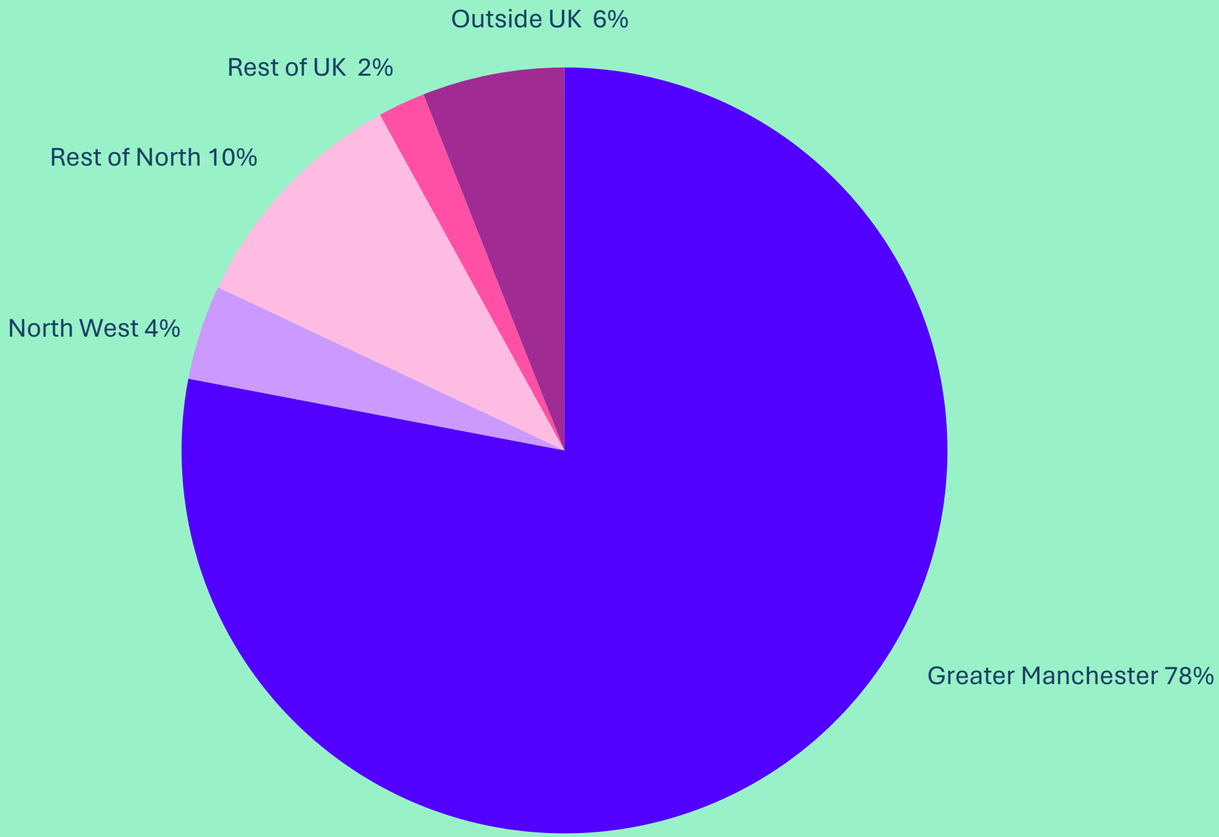
Note: Woman includes Trans Women and Man includes Trans Men



Sexuality

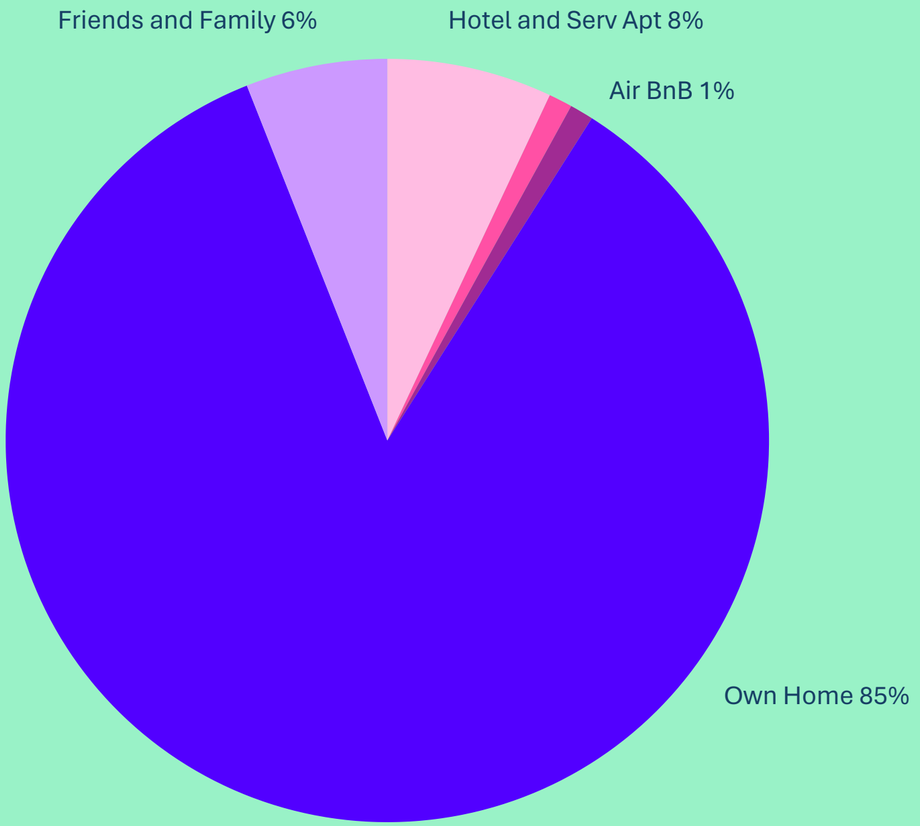


Age



Travelled From

An increase of 6% of those attending the festival from outside of the Greater Manchester vs 2025 with those outside of the UK increasing 3%



Stayed

Of those surveyed 8% stayed in Hotel or Serviced Apartment, an increase of 1% on 2025



Pictured: SCRUFF sponsored screening of Paris 05:59: Theo & Hugo at Treehouse Hotel FLIX Cinema

ACCOMMODATION

SCENE is funded by Manchester Accommodation Business Improvement District a ground-breaking initiative led by the city's hotel and serviced apartment providers to help create new events and additional activities that will attract more people to visit and stay in Manchester and Salford.

As well as delivering international marketing campaigns and attracting business tourism, Manchester ABID creates new festivals like SCENE and funds bids to bring major events to the city including The BRITs, MOBOs, Country 2 Country, MTV EMAs and in-season NBA games.

SCENE is part of a suite of events funded or co-funded by the ABID including newly announced urban sports and culture festival MCR Drop that work alongside existing events like Manchester Village Pride and Live from Wythenshawe Park that all aim to make August a vibrant month in the city's calendar that's unmissable for residents and visitors alike and drives overnight stays.



SEE MORE

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GALLERIES



Pictured: Rivals: Behind the Drama discussing the Disney+ Dame Jilly Cooper adaptation with cast and producers

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Pictured: Berwyn Rowlands announces the Iris Prize Best British Shorts nonimees at SCENE

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