

# Fleadh Food & Drink Toolkit

© Comhaltas  
Fleadh Cheoil  
na hÉireann  
Belfast 2026



Belfast  
City Council

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Ards CCE

In partnership with



Department of  
Agriculture, Environment  
and Rural Affairs

Belfast  
**FLAVOURS**  
Food & Drink Collective

## Get ready for the Fleadh Cheoil 2026

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For an accessible version of the toolkit please email [hello@belfastflavours.com](mailto:hello@belfastflavours.com)

## Get ready for the Fleadh Cheoil 2026

At a glance

### What

**Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann – one of the largest cultural festivals in Europe.**

### When

**Sunday 2 to Sunday 9 August 2026.**

### Expected visitor number

**800k + visitors across the week.**

### Who

**Adjudicators, tutors, competitors, musicians, visitors specifically to the Fleadh, some of which are regular Fleadh attendees.**

### Where

**Main venues and spaces include the MAC, Ulster University, ICC Belfast, Assembly Buildings, City Hall, Writers Square, Belfast Cathedral, 2 Royal Avenue.**

### Campsites

**Ormeau Park, Falls Park and Titanic Quarter.**

# Fleadh in numbers Wexford 2025



**800,000**

people visited the event alongside

**7,000+**  
competitors



**900,000**

pints of Guinness and the 2025 Fleadh was the biggest held to date



With road closures in place, the streets of Wexford were jam-packed full of people, live music & cultural activity



Visitors were catered for in cafes, restaurants and bars as well as street food vans in prime locations across the town

## What Wexford did

Establishments increased staffing, put holidays on hold, liaised with suppliers, considered waste management and sustainability challenges to ensure that they were able to cater for the high volume of visitors whilst ensuring a top quality, locally authentic experience.

# Introduction

**Belfast will host Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann from Sunday 2 August to Sunday 9 August 2026 and welcome an anticipated 800,000 visitors.**

This is one of the world's biggest celebration of Irish music and culture taking place in our city for the first time. largest cultural festivals in Europe and is expected to attract 800,000+ visitors across the week, generating significant footfall across the city and surrounding neighbourhoods. Peak footfall will be in the city on **Sunday 2 August** and then from **Thursday 6 to Sunday 9 August 2026**.

Belfast is known for its amazing local food and drink scene, famous hospitality, accommodation, and international visitor attractions. Our city is truly at its best when hosting visitors.

The hospitality sector including cafés, bars, restaurants, hotels, guesthouses and street food

operators will be instrumental in delivering a world-class welcome to both local and international visitors. This toolkit developed in collaboration with the Belfast Flavours Food and Drink Collective provides clear, practical guidance to support food and drink businesses. It recognises that hospitality businesses are experts in their field, and this guide respects that knowledge and talent while aiming to provide information on:

- Understand where the Fleadh programme is taking place across the city centre and beyond
- Understand sheer volume of the event right across the city
- Understand customer demographics across the week

## **Comhaltas Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann Belfast 2026**

- Road closures, transport changes, and pedestrianisation

As well as tips if required on:

- Preparing for increased demand
- Amending menus for large volumes of visitors
- communications with visitors
- Deliver inclusive, accessible and welcoming service
- Working collectively with nearby businesses to extend dwell time
- Trading responsibly and sustainably
- Planning for high footfall and spill-over footfall into surrounding neighbourhoods

# Zone 1

## Key Venues:

- **Craic & Craft Market at ICC Belfast**
- **Lanyon Place (Food and Drink Village, VB and TNI stands)**
- **St George's Market**

## Overview:

**ICC will host competitions Friday – Sunday, including Senior Céilí Band and Dancing Competitions.**

**Comhaltas Fleadh Office operational in ICC all week.**

**Lanyon Place food and visitor hub to be operational throughout the week.**

**St George's Market will have extended opening hours.**



Get ready for the Fleadh Cheoil 2026  
City zones

# Zone 2

Key Venues:

- **St Anne's Square**
- **Hill Street**
- **Belfast Cathedral  
(Food and Drink  
Village)**
- **Writer's Square  
(Main Merchandise Hub)**
- **Discover Ulster-Scots  
Centre (Ulster Scots  
Hub)**

Overview:

**Busy cultural and hospitality zone  
expected to maintain high footfall  
all week.**

**Irish Language Hub, Ulster  
Scots Hub, main Food and Drink  
Village and Merchandise location  
operating Sunday to Sunday.**



# Zone 3

## Key Venues:

- **Ulster University Campus**
- **Belfast Central Library**
- **The MAC (Irish Language Hub)**
- **2 Royal Avenue**

## Overview:

**Academic and cultural core for the week. Ulster University will host Scoil Éigse from Sunday 2 - Friday 7 August, followed by competitions from Friday 7 to Sunday 9 August.**

**Expected strong daily visitor numbers, in part due to Scoil Éigse families and general public staying in Student Accommodation blocks (those operators who have the necessary approvals in place).**



# Zone 4

Key Venues:

- **City Hall**
- **Ulster Hall**
- **Belfast MET**  
(Instrument Makers Centre)
- **Assembly Buildings**
- **Fleadh TV**  
(former Norwich Union House site)

Overview:

**Central civic and entertainment zone.**

**City Hall grounds will host Opening and Closing Ceremonies and Gig Rig, ranging from amateur and grass roots level to evening headliners – free to access.**

**High concentration of hospitality venues and opportunities for street sessions and busking.**

**Visitor activity expected to peak from Thursday onwards.**

**City Hall and Ulster Hall will feature key events/performances throughout the week.**



# Zone 5

Key Venues:

- **Titanic Slipways**
- **Titanic Quarter Campsite**

Overview:

**Major tourist and leisure area providing a complementary visitor experience.**

**While lighter in formal Fleadh programming, it will host activities on the Slipways.**

**Remains a strong draw for visitors throughout the week due to its iconic attractions and public-realm appeal.**

**Titanic Quarter Official Fleadh Cheoil Campsite will welcome motorhomes, campervans and caravans.**



# Get ready for the Fleadh Cheoil 2026

## City zones

# MAP

-  Car park closed
-  Car park open as normal
-  Translink Donegall Square West bus alternative pickup point
-  Translink Donegall Square East bus alternative pickup point
-  Translink Wellington Place bus alternative pickup point
-  Full duration road closures
-  Phased-up road closures
-  Core Venue
-  Fringe Venue
-  Campsite



Get ready for the Fleadh Cheoil 2026

City zones

# Fringe Events

While most Fleadh activity will be focused in the five key zones, there will also be an increase in footfall across the city at the City Wide Fringe programme, with events in neighbourhoods and communities.

Fringe listings will be available from June on [www.fleadhcheoil.ie](http://www.fleadhcheoil.ie) and the Belfast Flavours [website](#).

There will also be activity at Custom House Square and Féile an Phobail events in West Belfast.

Ormeau Park will be a core campsite, with further campsites at Falls Park and in Titanic Quarter, so businesses in these areas should plan for increased demand across the week.

# Visitor Profiles

Visitor profile	Core motivations	Stay pattern & accommodation	Food & drink needs	Price points & spend cues	Service, info & logistics tips
<b>Day trippers from across NI</b>	Spontaneous culture fix; social buzz; reconnection with friends.	Same-day visits; no overnights. Value clear signposting to shuttle/parking; interest in drop-in venues and quick seating.	Fast, tasty options; counter service; late-afternoon/evening bites; non-alcohol & low-alcohol choices if driving; coffee & grab-and-go.	Value-conscious; bundle offers (meal + soft drink); happy hour/early-bird.	Prominent “What’s On today” boards; queue management; directions to nearest transport; short wait times.
<b>Domestic visitors from ROI &amp; GB</b>	Trad music, atmosphere, short-break escapes; repeat festival goers.	1–3 night stays; mix of hotels/B&Bs, serviced apartments; appreciate flexible check-in and luggage storage.	Set menus, local provenance, veggie/vegan options; brunch and late kitchens; tasting flights of local options (whiskey/beer).	Mid-to-upper; book ahead for quality; respond to package value (set festival menu)	Clear timetables; printed daily festival programmes; reservation management; guidance on late transport and walkable routes.
<b>International Cultural tourists</b>	Deep Irish cultural immersion; iconic experiences; shareable moments.	3–5+ nights typical; hotels and boutique stays; concierge-style help; multilingual touchpoints; universal chargers.	Showcase NI specialties; tasting menus; gluten-free/vegan clarity; bar snacks for session hopping; premium spirits lists.	Comfortable paying for quality/uniqueness; welcome “signature” experiences and souvenirs/merch.	Multilingual briefs; maps recommendations for daytime heritage + evening sessions.

## Get ready for the Fleadh Cheoil 2026

### Fleadh visitor profile overview

# Visitor Profiles

Visitor profile	Core motivations	Stay pattern & accommodation	Food & drink needs	Price points & spend cues	Service, info & logistics tips
<b>Families</b>	Safe, inclusive fun; kids' engagement with music; easy movement.	Day visits or short breaks; family rooms; space for prams; highchairs; quiet corners; nearby toilets, camping.	Kids' menus; smaller portions; speedy service; free water; allergy transparency; warm food options early in the evening.	Value deals (family meal deals); clear pricing; loyalty stamps; avoid surprise surcharges.	Step-free access; pram-friendly routes; reserved/priority seating windows; clear signage to facilities; baby-change locations.
<b>Musicians &amp; Competitors</b>	Participation; session-hopping; community; practical logistics.	Mix of homestays, budget rooms, house-shares, camping; gear storage; early/late access.	Hearty, affordable meals; late-night snacks; caffeine; hydration; musician-friendly "set break" service.	Budget-aware; appreciate artist discounts, meal deals.	Back-of-house storage where feasible; flexible tab/ordering; info on session venues; quiet prep areas.
<b>Late-night audiences (adult groups)</b>	Social energy; pub sessions; night-time animation.	Short stays or local; proximity to venues; tolerant of lively atmospheres; late transport clarity.	Shareable dishes; street-food style; extended bar service; alcohol variety incl. low/no; food until close.	Mixed budgets; group deals; pitcher/cocktail sharers;	Crowd flow management; door queues; last-train/bus info; taxi ranks; safety/security visibility.

## Get ready for the Fleadh Cheoil 2026

Why is food and drink important for the Fleadh?

# Why is food and drink important for the Fleadh?

**Whilst hospitality is important for all City visitors, the Fleadh brings additional requirements and unique opportunities.**

- There is a need to feed groups of participants including adjudicators, festival organisers and volunteers in the specific locations where they are based across the City
- Fleadh visitors, whether audiences or competitors and their families, all need to be catered for across the day. Depending on their accommodation type this may include breakfast, lunch and dinner.
- This is an important opportunity to showcase our food and drink producers, chefs, restaurants, mixologists, bars and street food traders, encouraging repeat visits and raising profile of our food and drink offering and our status as a world-class culinary destination.



## Get ready for the Fleadh Cheoil 2026

Visitor expectations of Belfast food and drink

# Visitor expectations of Belfast food and drink

Expectation	Detail
<b>Authentic local produce</b>	Visitors increasingly seek food and drink that reflects the unique character of Belfast and Northern Ireland. This means showcasing locally sourced ingredients, traditional recipes, and regional specialties. Authenticity creates a sense of place and supports local producers, which resonates strongly with tourists who want a genuine cultural experience.
<b>Quality, value for money, quick service and friendliness</b>	Fleadh visitors will expect high-quality food and drink that delivers good value for money that they can access at speed. It is not just about price it is about feeling that experience matches or exceeds expectations. Friendliness from staff plays a huge role in shaping perceptions of value, as warm, welcoming service can elevate even a simple meal into a memorable experience.
<b>Visually attractive</b>	Presentation matters. Visitors often share their experiences on social media, so dishes and drinks that look appealing can enhance the destination's reputation. Attractive plating, clean and inviting spaces, and thoughtful design elements all contribute to creating a positive impression and encouraging word-of-mouth promotion.
<b>Great customer service</b>	Excellent service is a key differentiator in hospitality. Visitors expect attentive, knowledgeable, and courteous staff who can answer questions and make recommendations. Good service creates trust and comfort, making guests more likely to return and recommend the venue to others.
<b>Clear information and easy ordering</b>	Menus and signage should be clear, easy to read, and available in multiple formats (including digital options). Visitors appreciate transparency about ingredients, allergens, and pricing. Simple ordering processes, whether at the counter, via table service, or through apps reduce stress and improve overall experience.
<b>Importance of inclusive, accessible, and family-friendly offers</b>	Our visitors value inclusivity and accessibility. This means catering to dietary needs (vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free), providing access for all, and creating spaces that are welcoming to families with children. Inclusive practices ensure that everyone can enjoy Belfast's food and drink scene, reinforcing the city's reputation as a progressive and visitor-friendly destination.

## Tips on prep for Fleadh 2026

# 1. Preparing for High Demand

**Managing peak demand during the Fleadh is critical to maintaining service quality and customer satisfaction.**

With hundreds of thousands of visitors expected, venues must plan menus that are streamlined for speed, confirm extended opening hours, and hire additional staff well in advance.

Contingency stock orders help prevent shortages of popular items, while operational planning ensures smooth workflows during busy periods. These steps reduce stress, avoid delays, and maximize revenue opportunities during one of Belfast's busiest cultural events.

# Operational Planning

Item	Benefits	How to plan/Tips
<b>Create peak-time limited or set menus</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensures dishes are streamlined for speed and consistency during high-volume service.</li><li>• Allows suppliers to confirm ingredient availability well in advance.</li><li>• Reduces operational stress by locking in recipes and prep plans early.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Analyse sales data from previous events or busy periods to identify top-performing dishes.</li><li>• Simplify menu items by reducing complexity (fewer components, quicker cooking times) and highlighting local and regional dishes.</li><li>• Confirm ingredient availability early with suppliers and plan batch prep.</li><li>• Train staff on the streamlined menu to ensure speed and consistency.</li></ul>
<b>Consider and communicate extended opening hours</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Aligns with festival schedules and visitor flow, maximizing revenue opportunities.</li><li>• Provides clarity for staffing rosters and compliance with licensing laws.</li><li>• Avoids last-minute confusion for customers and staff.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review festival program and expected peak times.</li><li>• Communicate changes early via social media, signage, and local networks.</li><li>• Coordinate with nearby businesses for consistent messaging.</li><li>• Confirm compliance with licensing and noise regulations.</li></ul>
<b>Hire/roster additional staff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prevents service bottlenecks during peak periods.</li><li>• Allows time for training in cultural awareness, accessibility, and high-volume service.</li><li>• Reduces burnout for existing staff and improves customer experience.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Anticipate extended opening hours.</li><li>• Temporary staffing and local recruitment.</li><li>• Brief staff on the Fleadh, offering a Belfast welcome, and cultural awareness for international visitors.</li></ul>
<b>Consider stock orders</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Protects against supply chain disruptions during the festival.</li><li>• Ensure critical items (e.g., drinks, ice, popular menu items) are available even if demand exceeds forecasts.</li><li>• Avoids reputational damage from stock shortages.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Early engagement with suppliers.</li><li>• Manage increased demand while avoiding over-ordering.</li><li>• Contingency planning for delivery access during road closures.</li></ul>

## Get ready for the Fleadh Cheoil 2026

### Other things to consider

# Other things to consider

- **Takeaway and click-and-collect options**  
Offer quick-service options like takeaway or click-and-collect to reduce queues and cater to visitors who prefer eating on the go.
- **Weather-proofing outdoor or pop-up offers**  
Use shelters, secure fixtures, and heating/cooling solutions to ensure outdoor or pop-up areas remain functional and comfortable in all weather conditions.

# Quick Tips: Demand & Flow

Tip	Why?	Actionable Example
<b>Queue management (particularly in narrow streets or historic areas)</b>	Large crowds and busy service periods can lead to long wait times, which frustrate customers and reduce turnover.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use QR codes at entrance for menus &amp; ordering and to speed up decision making.</li><li>• Provide estimated wait times at peak.</li></ul> Consider a “fast lane” for drinks-only orders or pre-booked tables.
<b>Service times</b>	Staff fatigue and bottlenecks occur if breaks clash with peak programming or music sessions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stagger staff breaks outside peak programming or flow times.</li><li>• Use staggered shifts to maintain coverage during busy periods.</li></ul>
<b>Back-up power/water</b>	High demand and summer conditions increase the risk of shortages or equipment failure, which can disrupt service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prepare bottled water and gas backups.</li><li>• Confirm ice supply contracts.</li></ul> • Consider renting additional refrigeration units.

## Tips on prep for Fleadh 2026

# 2. Menu Development: A Belfast Offer

**Menus for the Fleadh should celebrate the rich food heritage of Belfast and Northern Ireland, offering visitors an authentic taste of the region.**

Featuring locally sourced produce and traditional Irish dishes, and seasonal specialties, creates a strong cultural connection and highlights our culinary identity.

Clear, accessible menus are essential for a diverse audience that includes international visitors, families, older adults, and people with disabilities.

Providing allergen and dietary information, along with multiple formats like large print, easy-read, Braille on

request, and screen-reader friendly digital menus, ensures everyone can make confident choices. Digital options such as QR codes add convenience and support those using assistive technology.

By combining local authenticity with inclusivity, venues can deliver a memorable experience that reflects Belfast's warmth and hospitality while meeting the needs of all guests during this high-profile event.



# Showcasing Belfast and NI Produce

What	How	Why
<b>Bread, dairy, meat, seafood, and plant-based producers</b>	Highlight the best of Northern Ireland's food heritage by sourcing from local artisan bakers, dairies, butchers, and seafood suppliers. Include plant-based options from regional producers to ensure inclusiveness for vegetarian and vegan visitors.	This approach supports local businesses and gives guests an authentic taste of Belfast and NI.
<b>Fleadh-inspired or signature dishes</b>	Create dishes that celebrate Irish culture and music, such as modern twists on traditional recipes or plates named after iconic tunes.	Signature dishes using local ingredients can become memorable talking points and reinforce the festival's cultural identity.
<b>Fast, high-quality options for festival audiences</b>	Offer grab-and-go items featuring local produce that showcase regional flavours while meeting the pace of a busy event.	Festivalgoers often want quick service without compromising on quality.
<b>Family-friendly and sharable dishes for friends</b>	Design menus with options that encourage sharing and suit families including child-friendly portions and flavours. For adult friend groups, consider options such as platters of local cheeses, breads, and charcuterie.	Ensures the experience is welcoming for all ages and encompasses the shared experience of the Fleadh and a sense of community.
<b>Non-alcoholic drinks and inclusive beverage options</b>	Provide a wide range of drinks beyond alcohol, such as locally produced juices, craft soft drinks, and alcohol-free wines, beers and spirits.	This caters to families, health-conscious visitors, and those who don't drink, making the offer more inclusive.
<b>Clear allergen information and transparent pricing</b>	Ensure menus clearly display allergens and dietary notes for every dish, along with straightforward pricing.	This builds trust, reduces stress for visitors with dietary needs, and reflects Belfast's reputation for hospitality and care.

# Accessible Formats & Language

Providing menus in accessible formats ensures that all visitors including those with visual, cognitive, or language barriers — can confidently make choices. During the Fleadh, venues will serve a diverse audience, so consider the following best practices:



### Additional Considerations

- Include Braille menus for essential information where possible.
- Provide QR codes to digital menus that are screen reader compatible for guests who prefer listening.
- Train staff to explain menu items clearly and patiently to those who need verbal assistance.

Best Practice	How
<b>Large Print Menus</b> (≥16pt, High Contrast)	Use clear, sans-serif fonts (e.g., Arial), minimum 16pt size, and sharp contrast (black text on white or pale background). Avoid italics or decorative fonts. This supports guests with low vision and older adults.
<b>Easy-Read Menus</b> with Images	Present daily specials and key dishes in plain language with short sentences and supportive images. Avoid jargon or complex culinary terms. This format benefits neurodiverse visitors and those with cognitive disabilities.
<b>Digital Menus with</b> <b>Accessibility Features</b>	Ensure menus are screen-reader friendly with alt text for images, logical heading structure, and simple navigation. Provide QR codes for quick access and allow text resizing. This helps blind or low-vision guests and those using assistive technology
<b>Multilingual</b> <b>Options</b>	Offer menus in English and include specials in Irish to embody the spirit of the Fleadh. Consider adding languages relevant to expected tour groups (e.g., French, Spanish). Use clear icons for allergens and dietary preferences to support universal understanding.

## Tips on prep for Fleadh 2026

# 3. Customer Experience & Cultural Welcome

**The Fleadh is a celebration of Irish music and heritage, and hospitality venues play a key role in creating an authentic, welcoming atmosphere.**

Simple touches like Irish greetings, themed décor, and family-friendly seating enhance the cultural experience for visitors. Providing clear information about nearby sessions and transport options helps guests navigate the festival easily. These efforts foster a sense of belonging, encourage repeat visits, and showcase Belfast's reputation for warm hospitality.

Experience Element	Example in Practice	Impact
Cultural greetings	"Fáilte!" and other Irish/English signage	Sets tone and celebrates heritage
Session-friendly seating	Space allocated for musicians at off-peak hours	Encourages community feel
Family-friendly	Highchairs, kids' menu with local dishes	Improves welcome for families in a busy environment
Information hub	Board/QR info with daily Fleadh schedule & transport info	Reduces friction and questions

## Tips on prep for Fleadh 2026

# 4. Sustainability & Responsible Trading

**With large crowds and extended service hours, sustainability becomes even more important during the Fleadh.**

Using compostable packaging, reducing single-use plastics, and implementing food waste reduction strategies help minimize environmental impact. Efficient water and energy use, along with clear recycling systems, demonstrate responsible business practices. These measures not only protect the environment but also appeal to eco-conscious visitors and strengthen your venue's reputation.

Additionally, they align with Belfast's climate and sustainability ambitions, which include reducing carbon emissions, promoting circular economy principles, and supporting a just transition to net zero by 2050. By adopting these practices, venues contribute to the city's vision of being a leading sustainable destination ensuring the Fleadh leaves a positive legacy for Belfast.

**More information:**

**[Tourismni.com/leanergreener](https://www.tourismni.com/leanergreener)**

**Embracing Events Masterclass:  
Delivering Sustainable Events**



# Communicating Your Efforts Matters

Visitors love to know that the places they choose to eat and drink care about the planet and the community. Clear communication whether through signage, menus, social media, or staff helps guests understand the steps you are taking, like sourcing local produce, reducing waste, or using eco-friendly packaging.

When these efforts are visible and easy to understand, they build trust, encourage positive word-of-mouth, and make visitors feel part of something bigger. Sharing your story not only enhances the customer experience but also reinforces Belfast's reputation as a forward-thinking, sustainable destination.

More information:

**Sustainable Tourism Simplified – Northern Ireland Tourism Alliance**

**The Tourism Space Delivers Certified Sustainability Programme for NI**

**MyTNI: Sustainability**

**Sustainable Food Economy – Sustainable Food Places**



# Best Practice for Communicating efforts

Area	Minimum Standard	Best Practice	How to communicate
<b>Choose local</b>	Name local suppliers on menus	Highlight seasonal hero items and supplier stories.	<p><b>Menus:</b> Add “Locally sourced from...” notes or name suppliers e.g. “Ballymaloe Relish” “Young Buck cheese from Mike’s Fancy Cheese”</p> <p><b>Social Media:</b> Share supplier profiles and information.</p> <p><b>In-store:</b> Use signage with maps showing local sourcing.</p>
<b>Plant-forward</b>	At least one veg/vegan main	50% plant-based choice and a range of plant based dairy alternatives.	<p><b>Menus:</b> Use icons or callouts like “Plant-powered”.</p> <p><b>Social Media:</b> Post recipes or benefits of plant-based options.</p> <p><b>In-store:</b> Display sustainability facts near plant-based options.</p>
<b>Waste</b>	Track prep/plate waste weekly	Implement portion control and flexible menu sizing (e.g., offer small/large plate options) to reduce plate waste and give customers choice.	<p><b>Menus:</b> Include a note like “We’re reducing food waste—ask us how!”</p> <p><b>Social Media:</b> Share progress updates and tips.</p> <p><b>In-store:</b> Posters showing waste reduction goals and achievements.</p>
<b>Drinks</b>	Offer tap-water refills	Reusable cup/mug scheme; more on-tap options.	<p><b>Menus:</b> Highlight “Free water refills” and “Bring your own cup.” schemes.</p> <p><b>Social Media:</b> Promote refill stations and reusable schemes.</p> <p><b>In-store:</b> Visible refill points and signage encouraging reuse.</p>

## Tips on prep for Fleadh 2026

# 5. Licensing & Compliance

**Compliance with licensing laws, food hygiene standards, and outdoor seating regulations are essential during the Fleadh.**

Extended hours and increased footfall require careful planning for alcohol service, crowd control, and noise management. Maintaining accurate logs and training staff in responsible service ensures safety and avoids penalties. These steps protect your business and create a secure environment for guests during this high-profile event.



# Licensing & Compliance

Area	Key Checks	Fleadh Considerations	More information (official sources)
<b>Alcohol Licensing</b>	Verify licence category, permitted hours, any additional/further additional permitted hours; staff training; refusals/ incident log; display requirements.	Plan for extended hours and one-hour drinking-up time; queue and dispersal management; confirm outdoor areas coverage and liaise with PSNI and DfC as needed.	Dept. for Communities overview & guide to licensing reforms; explanatory notes on <b>2021 Act</b> (late opening, drinking-up time).  <b>gov.uk</b>
<b>Food Hygiene</b>	Display your latest <b>Food Hygiene Rating Scheme</b> sticker at each entrance (legal requirement in NI); know appeal/ re-rating process.	High volume: increase probe checks and verification; bolster hot/cold holding; keep live allergen matrix for limited “Fleadh Menu”.	FSA NI: <b>Guidance for Food Businesses</b> (HACCP, hygiene, FHRS). Statutory basis: <b>Food Hygiene Regulations (NI) 2006</b> .  <b>Food safety guidance   Belfast City Council.</b>
<b>Allergen Information (incl. PPDS)</b>	Accurate allergen info for non-prepacked catering; PPDS (“Natasha’s Law”) labels where applicable; front-of-house message on how to request info.	Standardise menu legends; brief staff on cross-contact risks; keep up-to-date recipe sheets.	FSA NI allergen guidance hub; Belfast City Council – Allergen advice (food safety hub). (Natasha’s Law).  <b>Allergen guidance for food businesses   Food Standards Agency.</b>

# Licensing & Compliance

Area	Key Checks	Fleadh Considerations	More information (official sources)
<b>Outdoor Service (Pavement Cafés)</b>	Pavement Café Licence required to place furniture on public area; check layout, capacity, hours, insurance; public notice & consultations.	Maintain pedestrian and emergency access; Variation applications can be made.	<b>Licensing of Pavement Cafés Act (NI) 2014</b> ; Dept. for Communities guidance; Belfast City Council applicant guidance. [ <a href="http://legislation.gov.uk">legislation.gov.uk</a> ], [ <a href="http://nibusinessinfo.co.uk">nibusinessinfo.co.uk</a> ] <b>Pavement cafe licence   Belfast City Council licences and permits</b>
<b>Entertainment (live music/sessions)</b>	Confirm if indoor/outdoor entertainment licence is required; adhere to licence conditions (capacity, safety).	Set times around neighbourhood sensitivities; ensure fire safety, sanitary provision, and crowd management.	GOV.UK: <b>Entertainment licence (NI)</b> ; Belfast City Council licence guidance & application. <b>Entertainment licence   Belfast City Council licences and permits</b>
<b>Noise Control</b>	Comply with statutory nuisance rules (Clean Neighbourhoods & Environment Act (NI) 2011) and <b>Noise Act 1996</b> (night hours 11pm–7am); neighbour liaison plan.	Monitor SPLs; curfews; doors/windows management; provide a resident contact line during Fleadh.	NI Direct: <b>Noise nuisance &amp; neighbours</b> ; council enforcement & model conditions (example training deck). <b>Noise control   Belfast City Council</b>

## Tips on prep for Fleadh 2026

# 6. Marketing & Promotion

**Effective marketing during the Fleadh helps venues stand out in a competitive environment.**

Sharing menus, special offers, and accessibility features on social media and websites keeps customers informed and engaged. Coordinating promotions with festival schedules and using inclusive messaging ensures your venue appeals to a wide audience. Strong marketing not only drives footfall but also builds brand visibility during Belfast's biggest cultural celebration.



## Get ready for the Fleadh Cheoil 2026

Tips on prep for Fleadh 2026

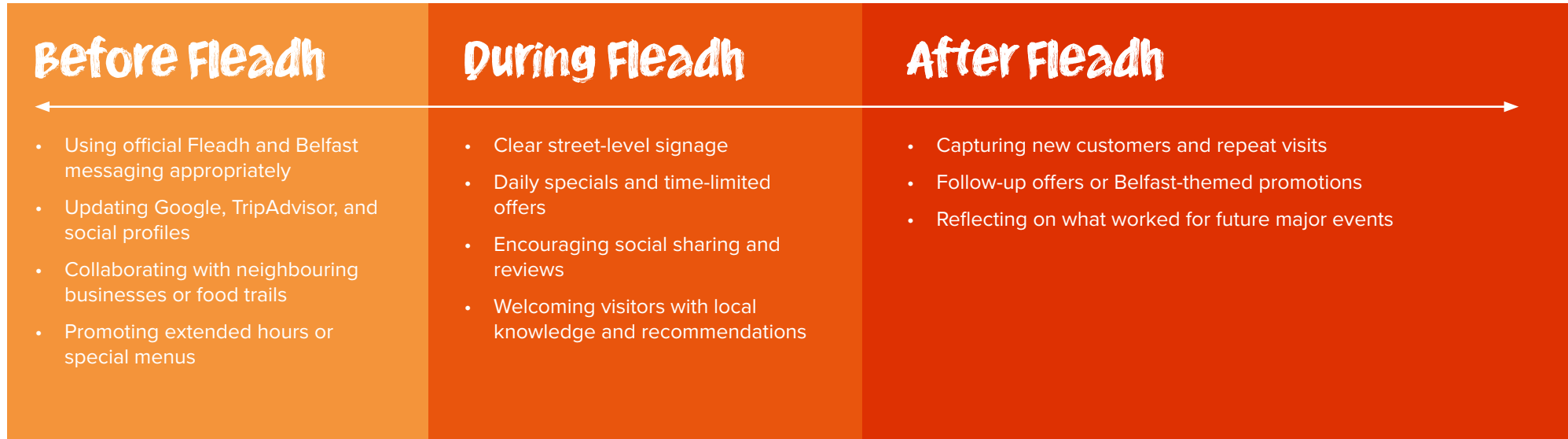
# Example marketing plan for the Fleadh

Channel	Content	Notes & Best Practice
Instagram / Facebook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fleadh menu highlights (traditional dishes, specials)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Live session times/Opening times</li></ul></li><li>• Accessibility features (quiet zones, allergen info)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use high-quality images of dishes and musicians</li><li>• Add alt text for images and captions for videos<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Include hashtags</li></ul></li></ul>
Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Full menus with allergen icons</li><li>• Booking links &amp; peak time guidance</li><li>• Accessibility and Sustainability statement</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide downloadable large-print PDFs</li><li>• Ensure WCAG 2.2 compliance for screen readers</li></ul>
In-Venue Signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Wayfinding (toilets, quiet zones)</li><li>• Allergen icons &amp; menu boards</li><li>• Fleadh specials prominently displayed</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use high-contrast colours and pictograms<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Include Irish &amp; English text</li></ul></li><li>• Position signs at eye level for visibility</li></ul>
Email Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fleadh special deals</li><li>• Booking reminders &amp; special offers</li><li>• Post-event thank-you with feedback link</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Segment lists (locals vs visitors)</li><li>• Include clear calls-to-action</li><li>• Ensure mobile-friendly design</li></ul>
Google Business Profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Update Fleadh opening hours</li><li>• Add photos of dishes &amp; venue setup</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Respond promptly to reviews</li></ul>
Local Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cross-promotions with nearby cultural venues</li><li>• Joint social posts &amp; Fleadh-themed offers</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tag partners in posts</li></ul> Share Fleadh schedule links to boost reach

## Get ready for the Fleadh Cheoil 2026

Tips on prep for Fleadh 2026

# Timeline



## Tips on prep for Fleadh 2026

# 7. Staff Training

**Well-trained staff are the backbone of a successful Fleadh experience.**

Training should cover high-volume service techniques, inclusive communication, cultural awareness, and responsible alcohol service.

These skills enable staff to manage crowds confidently, assist guests with diverse needs, and deliver exceptional hospitality. Investing in training reduces stress, improves customer satisfaction, and ensures your venue reflects the spirit of the festival.



# Staff Training

Module	Learning Outcomes	Why is it important for customer satisfaction?
High-volume service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Understand ticket-time targets and how to meet them</li><li>• Understanding roles clearly</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reduces wait times during peak periods, keeping customers happy and improving table turnover.</li><li>• Creates smooth service flow, avoiding bottlenecks and stress for guests.</li></ul>
Inclusive communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use plain, clear language when explaining menus or specials</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensures all guests—including those with disabilities or language barriers—feel welcome and understood.</li><li>• Builds trust and confidence, reducing frustration and improving overall experience.</li></ul>
Responsible service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Apply ID checks consistently and professionally</li><li>• Handle refusals tactfully and record incidents</li><li>• Understand safe cuts for alcohol service</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maintains compliance with NI licensing laws, protecting your business and customers.</li><li>• Prevents unsafe situations and promotes a secure, enjoyable environment for all.</li></ul>
Fleadh culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Have consistent welcome and greetings</li><li>• Understand festival schedules and peak times</li><li>• Practice etiquette for interacting with visitors</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Creates an authentic, welcoming atmosphere that reflects the spirit of the Fleadh.</li><li>• Enhances visitor experience by showing cultural respect and knowledge.</li></ul>

## Tips on prep for Fleadh 2026

# 8. ACTION PLANNING & CHECKLIST

Use this checklist and traffic-light (R/A/G) to track readiness across core areas.

Area	Current status (R/A/G)	Improvements Needed	Responsible	Deadline
Menu readiness				
Staff training				
Accessibility & Communication				
Sustainability & waste				
Licensing & Compliance				
Marketing & signage				
Information hub				

## Get ready for the Fleadh Cheoil 2026

Tips on prep for Fleadh 2026

# Plan deliveries and access

Access to parts of the city centre will be restricted at times. During road closures, a delivery window of 04:00 - 08:00 daily will be open for deliveries (vehicles must be removed by 09:00) with passes for access collected in advance or on the day from Accreditation & Logistics Hub located at Duncrue Street which will be open 24/7. Extra refrigeration space will be available at this Hub if needed.

It is important that you register for your Fleadh delivery passes immediately by contacting [fleadhcheoil26@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:fleadhcheoil26@belfastcity.gov.uk)

Please continue to check

[www.visitbelfastpartners.com](http://www.visitbelfastpartners.com)

for any further updates on access and delivery arrangements.

To minimise disruption:

- **Plan deliveries outside peak periods where possible**
- **Plan additional deliveries of non-perishables before 2 August, where possible**
- **Speak to suppliers in advance about access arrangements**
- **Allow extra time for deliveries and collections**
- **Ensure staff understand any access restrictions that may affect**



## Get ready for the Fleadh Cheoil 2026

Tips on prep for Fleadh 2026

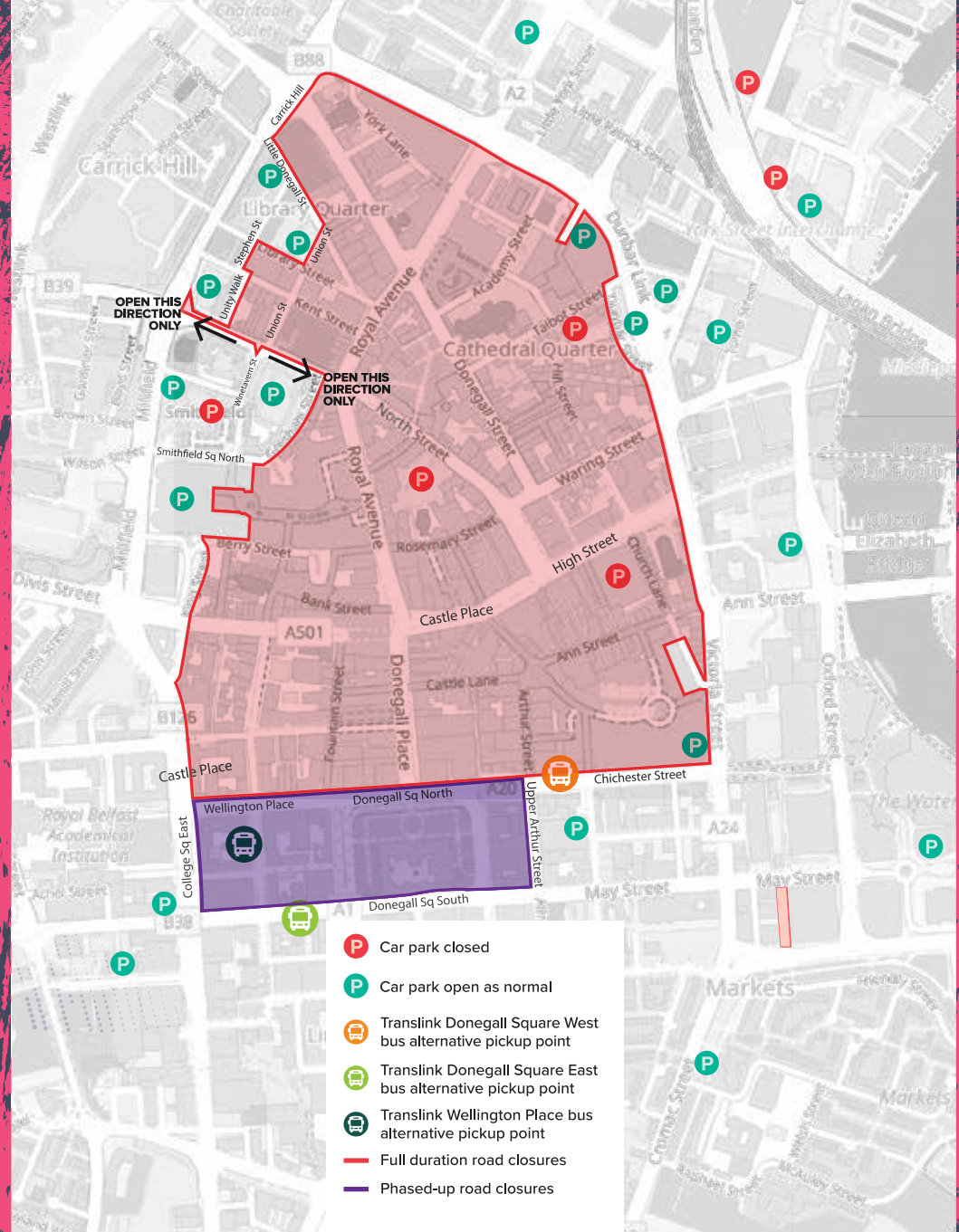
# Road Closures & City Centre Access

Road closures will be in operation from 06:00 on Sunday 2 August until 05:00 on Monday 10 August 2026, with flexibility planned where possible during the early part of the week.

With significant crowds anticipated from Thursday onwards, closures will phase-up in line with operational planning and to ensure visitor safety.

On the city centre map opposite, full duration closures are shown in red and phased-up closures are shown in purple.

Vehicle traffic in the city centre will be guided by directional signage.



## Get ready for the Fleadh Cheoil 2026

Tips on prep for Fleadh 2026

# General enquiries

If you require any further information please use the details opposite to get in touch.

	Email
<b>General queries &amp; deliveries</b>	<a href="mailto:fleadhcheoil26@belfastcity.gov.uk">fleadhcheoil26@belfastcity.gov.uk</a>
<b>Licensing</b>	<a href="mailto:buildingcontrollicensing@belfastcity.gov.uk">buildingcontrollicensing@belfastcity.gov.uk</a>
<b>Marketing</b>	<a href="mailto:fleadhmarketing@belfastcity.gov.uk">fleadhmarketing@belfastcity.gov.uk</a>
<b>Business support</b>	<a href="mailto:economicdevelopment@belfastcity.gov.uk">economicdevelopment@belfastcity.gov.uk</a>
<b>Partnerships &amp; Sponsorships</b>	<a href="mailto:cps@belfastcity.gov.uk">cps@belfastcity.gov.uk</a>
<b>Tourism enquiries</b>	<a href="mailto:welcomecentre@visitbelfast.com">welcomecentre@visitbelfast.com</a> <a href="mailto:fleadh@visitbelfast.com">fleadh@visitbelfast.com</a>

# Contacts, resources and support

## Belfast City Council business support teams.

<b>Licensing, environmental health, and street trading guidance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Food safety guidance   Belfast City Council</li><li>• Street trading licence   Belfast City Council licences and permits</li><li>• Licences and permits</li><li>• Health and safety   Belfast City Council</li></ul>
<b>Tourism NI and Visit Belfast resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Food &amp; Drink - Build your Business   Tourism NI</li><li>• Inclusive Tourism Resources - Corporate Visit Belfast</li></ul>
<b>Local producer directories and food support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2024-2025 Food NI producer guide</li><li>• Belfast Flavours</li></ul>
<b>Training and business support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Business Support</li></ul>
<b>Logistic Arrangements in your area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Homepage - Belfast One</li><li>• Linen Quarter BID</li><li>• Destination CQ</li><li>• Visit East Belfast</li><li>• Visit West Belfast – Fáilte Feirste Thiar</li></ul>
<b>Fleadh Brand Graphics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To request visual elements and graphics to create your own designs please email: <a href="mailto:DonnellyPaula@belfastcity.gov.uk">DonnellyPaula@belfastcity.gov.uk</a></li></ul>

# Belfast FLAVOURS

Food & Drink Collective



Department of  
Agriculture, Environment  
and Rural Affairs