

# FLEADH CHEOIL 2026

## Hotelier Crib Sheet

Belfast, 2-9 August 2026

Belfast will host the Comhaltas Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann, the world's biggest celebration of Irish music and culture, from Sunday 2 August 2026 to Sunday 9 August 2026. Qualifying competitors from all over the world will showcase the very best of traditional music, song, dance and language in All-Ireland competitions.

This summary sheet brings together some of the advice from other cities and the various agencies involved in delivering the Belfast event.

### The Opportunity

- 600,000-800,000 visitors expected across the week
- Significant ROI and international audience with extended stays
- Estimated £60m+ economic impact
- High satisfaction, strong repeat intent and return visitation

This is one of the largest tourism opportunities Belfast has seen - demand will be sustained across the full week, not just peak days.

### Demand Profile

- Early week: Families, cultural visitors, Scoil Éigse participants
- Weekend: Festival atmosphere, high footfall, younger audience
- All week: Continuous activity, music from morning to late evening

Visitors are not just attending the Fleadh - they want to explore, dine, and experience the city.

### Commercial Priorities

- Drive length of stay (3-5 nights+)
- Apply dynamic pricing by segment and day
- Create Fleadh-specific packages (rooms + breakfast + local experiences)
- Maximise ancillary spend (F&B, upgrades, late check-out)

Key segment: Parents/families linked to competitions (high volume, multi-night stays)

## Operations - What You Need to Know

- City centre road closures in place (2-10 August)
- Deliveries restricted: 04:00-08:00 (vehicles out by 09:00)
- No access for app-based delivery drivers inside closure zones
- Expect high footfall, congestion, and managed crowd flow

Plan now for staffing, security, stock, and guest access.

## Licensing & Compliance

- Deadline for entertainments licence applications/variations: 30 April 2026
- Pavement café extensions require approval
- Increased enforcement and inspections expected

Ensure full compliance - this will be a highly managed event environment.

## Sales & Distribution

- Ensure your property is:
  - Live and bookable across all channels
  - Listed on FleadhCheoil.ie, Visit Belfast, Discover NI
- Clearly communicate:
  - Availability
  - Access arrangements
  - What's included in the stay

Visibility = bookings. If you're not easy to find, you won't convert.

## Guest Experience

- Provide clear, simple information:
  - Transport, closures, access routes
  - Parking/drop-off points
- Expect first-time visitors
- Create a welcoming, flexible, music-friendly environment
- Develop quick, limited menus to help things run smoothly
- Consider child and family-friendly options

This is about experience as much as accommodation.

## Programming & Positioning

- Avoid over-programming music
- Allow for organic, informal sessions (core Fleadh tradition)
- If hosting activity, ensure it aligns with traditional/folk themes
- Put up "musicians welcome" signage and create spaces within your venue

## Marketing & Positioning

- Leverage the all-island campaign:  
“Feel the Energy of the Fleadh”
- Use #FleadhBelfast2026
- Promote:
  - Location and accessibility
  - Authentic experience
  - Belfast and NI as a wider destination

## Collaboration & Legacy

- Work with neighbouring businesses on joint offers
- Encourage repeat visits post-event
- Capture guest data for future marketing

## Immediate Actions

- Update listings and availability
- Review pricing and minimum stay strategy
- Plan staffing, logistics and deliveries
- Look at reduced menus
- Confirm licensing requirements
- Develop Fleadh packages and offers
- Brief teams on visitor expectations