Promoting your activity

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Introduction

This guide has been developed to help you gather key information about how to publicise your event and your participation in the UK’s national festival of the humanities! See our ‘Welcome to the Festival’ guide (available via the Being Human website) for a more general overview of participating in the festival.

The fact that we are all part of the UK’s only nationwide festival of the humanities is a huge communications and marketing asset and we can leverage it by all using similar language, links, logos and images. When we all communicate the vibrancy and relevance of the humanities together, in a clear and consistent manner, we can make a bigger impact.

Local, targeted promotion of your event is vital. However, tying events and activities together under the festival banner helps us to cross-promote events and ultimately helps to build the visibility and success of the festival as a whole.

You should start promoting your event when we launch the festival programme at the beginning of October, and no later than 6 weeks before your event.
**Key information**

**Nationwide reach**

Being Human Festival takes place at locations right across the UK. We also have a small programme of international activities. As such, it is very important that audiences at local events are made aware of other activities taking place as part of the festival and alerted to the central website and communication channels.

**Ticketing and booking**

We provide a central platform on our website that lists every event that is part of the festival. This system does not have the capacity to manage bookings. If your event requires bookings, we recommend that you set up a listing on your venue or institution’s own booking system. You will need to include any relevant booking links when you upload your event details in August. If possible, you should keep any booking pages **private or closed** until we launch the festival programme in early October.

Please refrain from promoting your event before the full festival programme is launched. When we all start promoting at the same time it helps to raise the visibility of the festival and create a bigger ‘splash’. We also want to avoid events becoming fully booked by the time that the festival programme is officially launched.

**How can the Being Human team help?**

The Being Human team promotes the festival as a whole in the mainstream media, on social media, and by producing a central online programme. It also produces and makes available materials (like this guide!) to help organisers promote activities locally. Please note however that as a national festival taking place in multiple locations across the UK, we are limited in the amount of central marketing support that we can give to individual organisers and events. To make the most of participating in the festival, it is essential that you think carefully about the specific audience that you are trying to connect with, how best to reach that audience using the resources available, and how to manage time effectively in order to effectively promote your activity. For example, social media is great for some groups, but an old-fashioned flyer run might be much more effective for others.

**Stay in touch**

The Being Human team will send you regular emails in the coming months, with important updates and information. Please keep us in the loop with any updates or changes that need to be made to your event. The easiest way to reach us is via email at [beinghuman@sas.ac.uk](mailto:beinghuman@sas.ac.uk).

**Quick links**

- [Website organiser area](#)
- [Being Human and partner logos](#)
- [Merchandise request form](#)
## Promotional timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Promotional activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>• Tuesday 25 June: <em>Marketing and Promotion Training</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| July   | • Tuesday 25 July: *Working with the Press and Media Training*  
  • Finalise event details including:  
    ○ Date, times and venue  
    ○ Title and description  
    ○ High-res promotional image (minimum 300dpi, with copyright permissions)  
    ○ Accessibility information  
  • Set up booking page for event (set to private) - ensure you add required information to your booking page  
  • Develop promotional strategy (and invite partners and stakeholders to consult)  
  • Set up initial meeting with press and comms colleagues at your institution |
| August | • **Friday 16 August:** *Deadline to submit event copy to the Being Human website* |
| September | • Create promotional materials including digital and print assets  
  • Liaise with partners and other stakeholders about the festival programme launch  
  • Ask partners and stakeholders to prepare to share and promote the event via social media and newsletters (so it can be factored into their schedules) and send them drafted copy  
  • Proof and correct event listings (more information will be supplied via email) |
| October | • **Tuesday 1 October:** *Programme launches* (start taking bookings and promoting your event)  
  • Check booking numbers regularly in the run up to your event - remember to overbook your event (up to 50%)  
  • Send out press release to local media  
  • Prepare materials to dress and brand your event (e.g. merchandise, decorations etc.)  
  • Festival merchandise distributed |
| November | • Send out pitches to local radio (1–2 weeks before)  
  • Highlighting activity online and via social media  
  • Conducting interviews with the media  
  • Send email reminder to booked attendees  
  • **The festival takes place! (7–16 November)**  
  • Circulate follow up email to attendees including any relevant information and link to evaluation survey |
Submitting your event copy

Being Human Festival no longer produces a print programme, but we list all festival events on the Being Human Festival website. The online programme will include a listing for every event and will be launched on Tuesday 1 October.

We encourage you to use the event listing on the Being Human website in your own publicity. If all event organisers promote their event using the listing on the Being Human website, it helps to generate more visibility for the festival and in turn helps to cross-promote events in the programme.

You will need to upload your finalised event details via a form on our website. You will be sent further details about this via email. Find out what you need to prepare for submission below.

Preparing your submission

The deadline for submitting your finalised event details via our website is 5pm, Friday 16 August. We will send you more information about this closer to the time via email.

Keep in mind that we may edit your title and event details (as lightly as possible) to match the festival’s house style. As our goal is to make humanities research accessible to everyone, we want to present all activities using simple, jargon-free language that will capture the public’s imagination. Here’s an example of an event listing on the festival website.

Below are a few guidelines that we encourage you to follow when finalising the details for your event submission.

You can get more tips on writing great event copy at our Marketing and Promotion training session taking place on 25 June.

Event title

Event titles need to be engaging and accessible for a public audience. We may therefore work with you to amend your title. Please follow these guidelines when finalising the title for your event:

- Keep your event title under 60 characters (the shorter the better!)
- Remove all unnecessary punctuation (colons, semicolons, hyphens etc.) so the title forms one short bite size chunk
- Remove all names e.g. of speakers and academics, and focus on the content
- Make them fun and appealing to non-specialist audiences

An example of an unsuitable title would be: ‘Discoveries and Secrets: Dr Jane Smith’s exploration of consumables in Dickens’ literature – global interpretations’, with a more suitable title being: ‘Come dine with Dickens’.

Event description

We reserve the right to edit your event descriptions for length, accessibility and to match our house style. Please follow these guidelines when putting together the promotional description of your event:

- Ensure your description is no longer than 160 words
- Write your description in the second or third person, rather than the first person
• Indicate who your event is for (e.g. ‘come along if you’re interested in X or Y’, or, ‘this event is suitable for families and children aged 8+’)
• Say what the event is (e.g. craft workshop, screening, walking tour) and outline what attendees will be expected to do (e.g. ‘create your own zine’)
• Remove all academic and specialist language
• Remove long bios/profiles of academics/speakers/artists involved in the event
• Sell your event to your audience – make it sound interesting, relatable and a good use of someone’s free time

If your event is made up of lots of different activities (e.g. a museum late), please include a breakdown of activity with as much detail as possible in the description.

Photographs/promotional images

We require one high-resolution landscape image with copyright credit to help us advertise your festival activities in the online programme. Images that we do not have a credit for will not be used. Try to find high-quality images that might help to tell the story of what will happen at your event, or of what your event is about.

Promotional images must:
• Not contain text or logos
• Be landscape
• Be less than 2MB in size
• Be high resolution (at least 300 dpi)
• Have appropriate copyright permissions (you will be required to include copyright information when you upload your image).

We would prefer to use images related specifically to your project or event. We do not include logos as a substitute for images. Your organisation’s communications team might also be able to help you source a suitable image or photograph to use. We reserve the right to use alternative images should those supplied not be of sufficient quality or fit house guidelines. Please use the same image to promote your event across different platforms.

Accessibility information

You will be asked to list which accessibility features are in place or available at your venue. You will be able to select the following features:

☐ Accessible parking  ☐ Hearing loop  ☐ Sensory friendly
☐ Accessible toilets  ☐ Live/closed  ☐ Step-free access
☐ Assistance dogs  ☐ captioning  ☐ Subtitles
  ☐ welcome
☐ Audio description  ☐ Printed materials  ☐ Tactile signage
☐ Baby changing  ☐ Pushchair/pram  ☐ Wheelchair accessible
  ☐ facilities
☐ BSL interpretation  ☐ Quiet space  ☐ Wheelchairs available

There is also a space to list any additional accessibility information (100 words max) and you should include guidance about where to direct any accessibility enquiries to. Types of additional information you may want to detail include:

• Measurements of main doorways and corridors
• Food and drink access and dietary information (for any events featuring food)
• Route type and terrain information (for walking tours and outdoor events)

Where possible this should be accompanied with a link to find out more (e.g., venue’s access page or link to a venue page on ‘Accessible’).

Multiple events

If you are organising multiple events, you will need to prepare separate submissions and submit each event individually using the form. If your event is ongoing (e.g. an exhibition over multiple days), you should complete one entry and choose the appropriate start and end date. If your event is taking place on separate days in different locations, you should submit the form for each individual event.

After submitting your event

After you’ve submitted your event details using our online form, your submission(s) will be reviewed by a member of the Being Human Festival team, who may edit your event title, description or image.

You will then have a chance to review your event listing(s) in September and to make any corrections. You will be sent more information about this via email.

If something in your event changes (e.g. venue, times, dates), please wait until reviewing your listing in September to notify us of any changes. The listings will all go live when we launch the programme on Tuesday 1 October.

Ticketing and booking

As mentioned above, you should keep any booking pages private or closed until we launch the festival programme in early October. Please refrain from opening booking for your event before the full festival programme is launched and remember that all events must be free to attend.

Overbooking

We strongly recommend that you overbook by at least 30%, rising to 50% if your event is in London. This is based on feedback from organisers over the years of running Being Human Festival, who have reported high drop-off rates for free activities. Drop-off for online events is a little more difficult to predict. We still recommend that you overbook by at least 30%.

It is unlikely that too many people will turn up. However, if you are holding an in-person event we recommend incorporating similar wording to the below into your booking or reminder emails: ‘As Being Human Festival events are free, not everyone who asks for tickets comes to our events. To make sure we have a full house we allocate more tickets than there are seats/places. Admission is on a first come, first served basis, so please arrive in good time for the start of the event.’

For online events, make sure you check the capacity limit for your chosen platform and account and plan accordingly. We recommend opening the online ‘waiting room’ early and asking people to make sure they join in good time.

Communicating with ticket bookers

We recommend emailing attendees 48 hours before the event to remind them of their booking and remind them to release tickets if they are no longer able to attend. Spare tickets can then be re-allocated.
For in-person events, see what comes up when you search for your venue on Google maps and try to anticipate any potential issues with people finding you. We also strongly recommend that you think carefully about signage for your event to make sure that people can find your venue. Preferably do a dry run with someone who is unfamiliar with the location/venue. Are there any obstacles? Is it 100% clear which entrance is the right one to use on larger buildings, for example? Have reception staff been briefed? A common complaint from potential attendees has been that they simply couldn’t find the right room, and people will not search exhaustively for a free event!

If you are holding your event online make sure you send very clear instructions about how to access your online platform. Not everybody will be familiar with platforms like Zoom.

**Branding your event**

We will be in touch with further information about festival branding towards the end of the summer.

You should clearly label your event as part of ‘Being Human Festival’ in any communications. You must include a credit to the festival in any promotional materials, including on your booking page.

**Crediting the festival**

Please make sure you include the following information in any external comms, including press releases and event pages e.g. your event booking page. It is important that the three funding partners are represented.

This event is part of Being Human Festival, the UK’s national festival of the humanities, taking place 7–16 November 2024. Being Human is led by the School of Advanced Study, University of London, with generous support from Research England, in partnership with the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the British Academy. For further information please see beinghumanfestival.org.

**Key messaging and promotional copy**

Below is some key messaging about the festival that may help you when promoting your activity and your participation in the festival.

- Being Human Festival is the UK’s national festival of the humanities.
- Being Human Festival is a free, nationwide festival showcasing the brilliant humanities research happening across the UK.
- We think research and ideas revealed in the study of the humanities – from archaeology to languages, literature to history – help us understand what it means to be human and the world around us.
- The humanities inspire and enrich our everyday lives; they help us understand ourselves, our relationships with others and the challenges we face in a changing world.
- The humanities form an essential cornerstone of human knowledge and culture around the world.

**Promotional materials**

We will create a range of branded materials and templates for you to use to promote your event, or you can design your own (be sure to include the festival logo). Being Human Festival materials will be made available for download from the organiser area of the website later in the summer.
(organisers will be notified via email). Please make your own local arrangements for any necessary printing and delivery of these materials.

Please be mindful of the environment when creating materials. Single-use vinyl pop-up banners might not always be the most efficient way to promote your event, and they aren’t environmentally friendly. If your event is taking place online or digitally you might be better focussing your resources on digital materials.

Our templates will include things like:

- Posters
- Flyers
- Graphics for video titles and credits
- PowerPoint

If you choose to create your own, we encourage you to contact your colleagues in your institution’s design and marketing team to help you create effective materials.

We also remind you to keep your target audience in mind when developing your promotional materials. For instance, a series of Instagram Reels/videos might engage younger audiences, whereas a door-to-door flyer run or posters on community noticeboards might engage those who are less likely to be online.

Please contact us at beinghuman@sas.ac.uk if you have any questions about creating materials or sourcing images for your event, or if you require help using the templates.

**Merchandise**

Please complete the online form to request merchandise for this year’s festival. Please note, we are limited in the numbers of promotional materials that we can distribute. Packs will vary depending on the event(s) you are organising but will include things like bunting, posters, stickers, postcards and tote bags. Please note we are unable to take requests for bespoke packs of merchandise.

**Promoting your event**

For more information on marketing and promoting your event, please attend our Marketing and Promotion training session on 25 June, or make time to catch up with the recording (you can request this from us at beinghuman@sas.ac.uk). There are lots of ways you can promote your Being Human event or activity. These include:

- Print (posters, flyers)
- Social media (e.g. Instagram, Facebook, Twitter/X, TikTok, Threads)
- Email marketing
- Press and media (local and regional newspapers, online platforms, local TV and local radio)
- Paid advertising
- Local ‘what’s on’ and calendar listing platforms
- Word of mouth

According to the audience survey in 2023, the top ways audiences found out about the Being Human event they attended were word of mouth (33%) and email marketing (24%), so please do consider this when planning your promotional activity.
Focus on your audience

Please remember that Being Human Festival is all about engaging with audiences that do not have an existing relationship to a university/research organisation, so you should factor this into your promotional strategy.

All your promotional efforts should be shaped around your target audience. Who are they? Where do they get information (offline and online)? This is the key thing underpinning successful promotion of your event.

Go to where your audience already are. Where are they likely to be found? In libraries? Cafés? At specific clubs? This could mean anything from putting posters or flyers up at a venue or in the local area, or engaging with particular Facebook or community groups online.

Find your purpose

All your promotional content should convey the value and purpose of your event. Why will people find it interesting? Why is it relevant? What will people get out of attending? Why should they make time to come along? What will people get to do at it? (e.g. learn more about local history, go behind the scenes, gain a new skill etc.)

Partnerships and stakeholders

Your partners and stakeholders are key when it comes to promoting your event, as they already have relationships with communities. Promoting your event will be easier if you can use already existing networks. As well as your event partners and venue, think creatively about who you can ask to help you spread the word and empower them to do so by providing them with adaptable materials such as template email invites, a short blurb about your event for their newsletters, images they can use online and flyers they can distribute easily.

Consider who you could reach out to. Once you have a list of groups or networks, contact them with a friendly email letting them know about the event and providing them with materials they can use to alert their communities.

Template email invite

Subject: Being Human event invitation – [insert date]

Dear [insert name if possible to personalise],

[Insert leading institution] are delighted to invite you to [title of event] on [insert date]. We thought you would be interested in the event because [insert brief description of the event].

The event is free, but spaces are limited so please reserve your spot by registering online [insert link].

Additional information is below. We hope you [and your friends/colleagues] will join us.

[Insert when, where and any other necessary details]

Support

Other researchers or colleagues from your organisation may have already worked with the audiences you are trying to reach, and perhaps they will already have a list of contacts and will be
able to support you in developing these relationships. A lot of universities and organisations will have departments supporting public engagement, community outreach and widening participation, as well as events management, marketing and press and media relations. Ask for their expertise and support!

Social media

Where to connect with us:

- Newsletter: beinghumanfestival.org/e-news-sign-up/
- Twitter: @BeingHumanFest
- Facebook: @BeingHumanFest
- Instagram: @beinghumanfest
- YouTube: bitly.com/beinghumanfest

The 2024 hashtag for digital promotion is #BeingHuman2024. Use of the hashtag is important as it allows us to draw together content into an overarching narrative for the festival. The tone of Being Human social media is positive, welcoming and informative. We recommend making social media posts as visual as possible, using humour, engaging in conversation, including videos and photos and asking questions of your audiences.

Where possible, we encourage you to make use of your organisation or institution’s social media platforms, and crucially your partner organisation and venue’s platforms, as these will be more likely to reach your target audience.

Social media tips

- Remember that some platforms (e.g., Instagram and Facebook) are more widely used by the general population in the UK. Think about what platforms your target audience use.
- When asking other organisations to post for you, make sure you give them plenty of notice. Save them time and draft up a tweet or some messaging for them, along with an image and a link – it will make it easier and quicker for them to share.
- When posting always remember to mention other profiles such as your organisation, your partners and your venue by tagging them – this will encourage them to retweet and will extend your reach.
- Does your research (and your event) link to something topical or something happening in the news? Being Human is all about showcasing how humanities research is relevant to people’s everyday lives.
- Creating a Twitter/X thread or an Instagram story telling a story can be a fun and engaging way to share stories from your research and in turn promote your event.
- Always include a call to action. What do you want people to do? Visit your website? Read a blog? Book on to your event? Comment with their thoughts and questions? Support your call to action with a link e.g. blog, event page, survey.
- Consider approaching “influencers” with large followings relevant to your target audience and ask them to share your event via their platform.

Twitter/X

The festival has a Twitter/X profile at @BeingHumanFest. Please post before, during and immediately after your event using the hashtag #BeingHuman2024 and encourage others to do so too. Please feel free to send us content to share via the central festival account. Remember you must tag us @BeingHumanFest in your post in order for us to see it.
Below is some drafted Twitter/X copy you can use:

- [I’m/ We’re] excited to be taking part in Being Human 2024, the UK’s national festival of the humanities (7–16 November). Now more than ever we need to celebrate the importance and relevance of the humanities. [https://beinghumanfestival.org/](https://beinghumanfestival.org/)

- Excited to be organising an event as part of this year’s Being Human Festival taking place 7–16 November. @BeingHumanFest is the UK’s national festival of the humanities, led by @sasnews with @ahrcpress and @BritishAcademy. #BeingHuman2024. Find out more: [https://beinghumanfestival.org/](https://beinghumanfestival.org/)

- [I am/ We are] organising a free event on [insert event topic] on [insert date] as part of this year’s @BeingHumanFest! A free nationwide festival showcasing the brilliant humanities research happening across the country. #BeingHuman2024 [https://beinghumanfestival.org/](https://beinghumanfestival.org/)

- This year [I’m/ We’re] taking part in the national Being Human Festival @BeingHumanFest – a festival all about showcasing how the humanities help us understand what it means to be human. There are hundreds of free events taking place across the UK this November: [https://beinghumanfestival.org/](https://beinghumanfestival.org/)

Setting up an account

Many previous event organisers have chosen to set up their own Twitter/X or Instagram accounts to promote festival projects and activities. However, if you are using social media as a main way of promoting your event, you will be better off using accounts that already have a wide following and a dedicated audience. For example, central university accounts often have large followings and can be great for raising visibility of what you are doing, and channels provided by your event partners, venues and stakeholders will be best for reaching your target audience. Think about who will be following the various accounts - university accounts are often good for students, whereas a local ‘what’s on’ listings account will be better for a community audience, perhaps without existing relationships to universities/research.

**Facebook**

The festival has a Facebook page @BeingHumanFest. Please promote this page on your Facebook news feeds, either by sharing posts from the page or by adding your own message to original posts, encouraging your friends and followers to like the page. You could also set up your own Facebook event pages and add Being Human as a co-host, as this can be a good promotional tool – depending on who you are trying to reach.

**Instagram**

You can follow the festival on Instagram @beinghumanfest. If you have an Instagram account and are uploading images related to your event, please also include #BeingHuman2024 and tag our Instagram handle @beinghumanfest.

As a visual platform, on Instagram you will want to share photographs and videos that are high quality and visually appealing. Some possible ideas for content relating to your festival activity include:
• Behind the scenes snapshots of events and activities (e.g., backstage at a performance, delving into the archives or collections at a museum or library, speakers, artists or contributors preparing for an event etc.)
• Interesting visual material that relates to your research (e.g., archive snippets, pieces of artwork, interesting objects and items, historical buildings, unique venues, fun facts you might not know about researchers and experts)
• Documentation of any preparation or lead-in work (e.g., workshops, preparing materials, site visits etc.)

YouTube
The festival has a YouTube channel at http://bitly.com/beinghumanfest. This is where we will be uploading videos from your events during and after the festival. We would love to share videos from across the country, so if you get some good footage or event recordings, please send it on to us!

At your event

Please ensure the festival is visible at your event.

• Ensure you introduce the festival (guidance on this will be supplied closer to the festival)
• Decorate your venue (or your background for an online event) to make it feel festive and fun. Make use of our free merchandise and materials, e.g. bunting, postcards etc.
• Share what’s happening on social media using the hashtag #BeingHuman2024 and ask audience members to do the same.

Photography and filming

In the run up to, during, and at the end of your events, please send any relevant photos and videos (and be sure to include details about required credits and captions) via email to beinghuman@sas.ac.uk so that we can upload them to our social media channels and share them.

Please ensure any photography and filming is done in line with UK-GDPR policies and with the correct signage displayed. If you are planning to share photographs or films with Being Human you must display the sign available to download from the ‘Organiser area’ of the festival website, in addition to your own signage. Audiences will need to be told how photographs and filming will be used and how to opt out of being photographed or filmed. If you are photographing or filming anyone under the age of 18 you must have written consent from their parent or guardian.
Promotional checklist

Have you…

☐ Reviewed details about the festival timeline, deadlines, background info on the festival, branding, and required text and credits?

Finalised programme details?

☐ Date and time
☐ Location
☐ Title
☐ Description
☐ Image
☐ Accessibility
☐ Booking page and link

Uploaded your event to the Being Human website? (August)

☐ Checked instructions prior to uploading event
☐ Finalised booking plans for your event
☐ Uploaded event information (including booking link)

Engaged with stakeholders to aid in promotion?

☐ Community and cultural partner organisations
☐ Speakers, performers and others involved in the event programme
☐ Community groups with links to your target audience
☐ Internal colleagues (your institution’s events team, press office, public engagement team, publications team, etc.)

Worked with local and regional press and media to gain publicity for the event?

☐ Contacted and liaised with the marketing, press and media colleagues at your organisation
☐ Added the event to local press listings
☐ Written and distributed a press release
☐ Sent personalised pitch emails to relevant journalists, editors and producers (including local radio)
☐ Sent personalised invites to press to attend the event
☐ Considered having one of your spokespeople write a piece about the event for submission to local media outlets
☐ Considered approaching relevant podcast hosts or producers

Promoted the event via social media and email marketing?

☐ Incorporated into relevant existing campaigns
☐ Used the #BeingHuman2024 hashtag and tagged @BeingHumanFest where relevant
☐ Asked venues, partners and key stakeholders to share on social media
☐ Encouraged others in your organisation or network to promote via social media
☐ Included the event in relevant newsletters and mail outs

Highlighted the event on relevant websites?

☐ Your institution/department websites and blogs
☐ Other blogs relevant to your research or event (e.g., local town/city/culture blogs)
☐ Your venue’s website
☐ Your community and cultural partners’ websites
☐ Online calendar listings (e.g., town/city ‘what’s on’ sites)
☐ Online neighbourhood noticeboards or community groups

**Created materials to promote the event?**
☐ Poster/flyer
☐ Email invite
☐ Email signature
☐ Web banner/spotlight banner
☐ Social media graphics and images (optimised for different platforms)
☐ Requested Being Human Festival merchandise