

Film Hub
South East ↘
Strategy
2018-2022





*Above: Mr Turner, filmed in Kent,
courtesy Entertainment One UK*

From January 2018, the Independent Cinema Office (ICO) is delighted to be managing Film Hub South East. We have put together this document to clearly explain our goals and vision for the region and to let you know how we can help you over the next four years.

We will update this document regularly as our plans develop. We are looking forward to working with you so that everyone can see life-changing cinema across the South East!

What is special about the South East?

When we were researching exhibition in the South East, it became clear that two things make the region unique:

1

It has some of the lowest provision of screens anywhere in the UK

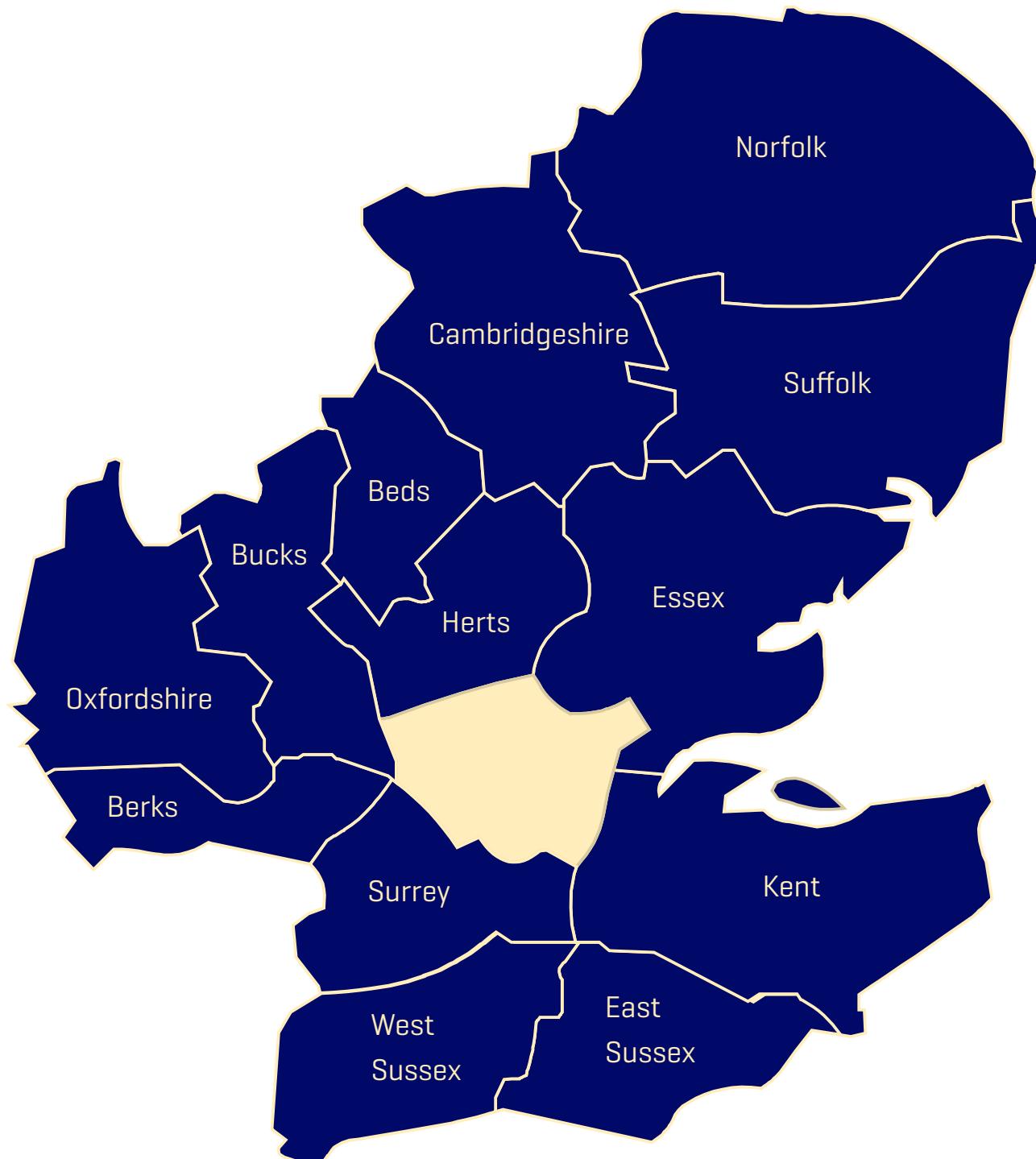
2

Despite this people across the region attend more films than the national average

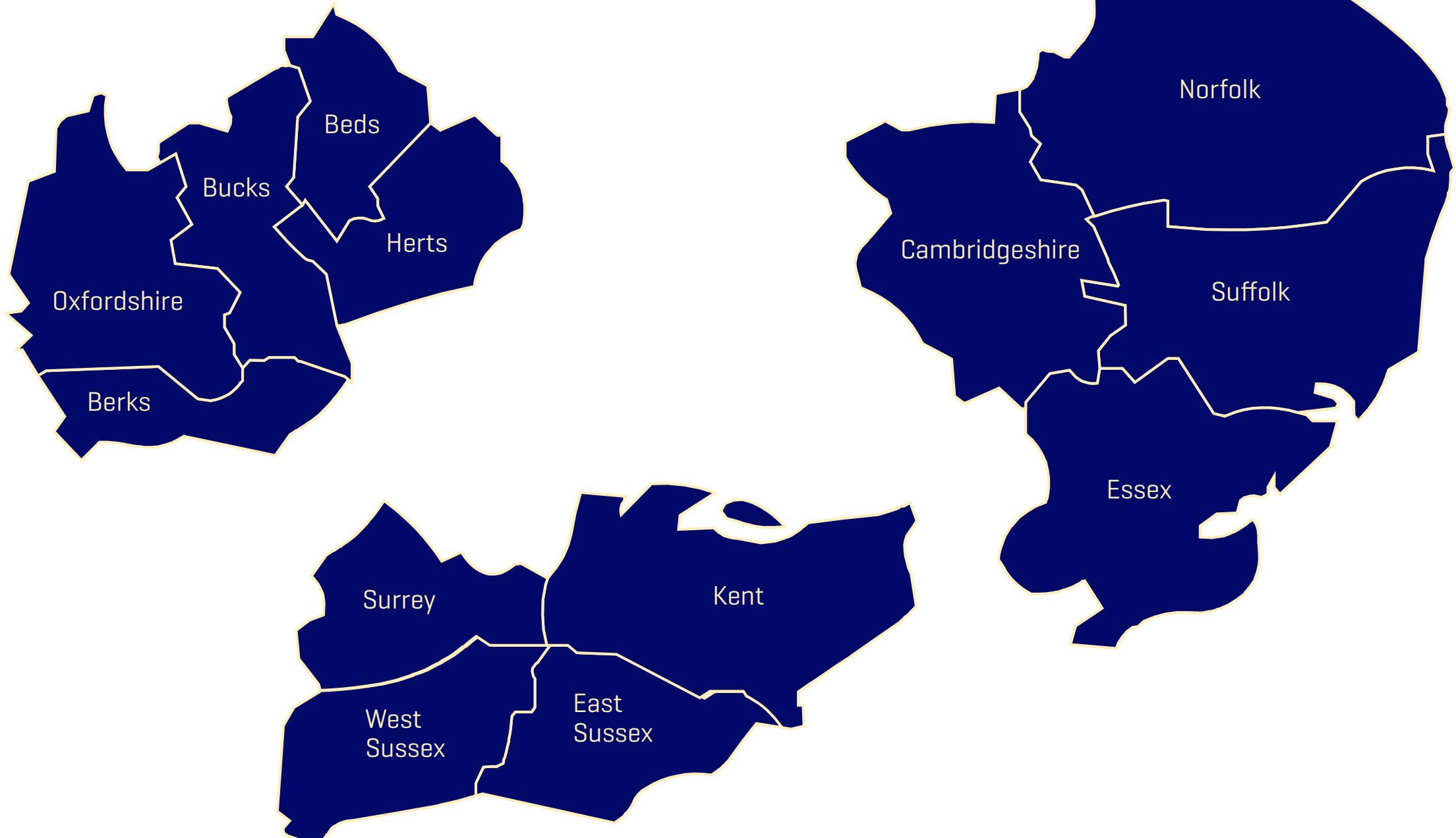
Simply put, people in the South East are willing to travel farther to have life-changing experiences in the cinema, and these experiences are often enjoyed outside of the major circuits and flagship independent venues that other regions can boast.

When we put together this plan, we wanted to harness this natural regional appetite for seeking out cinema and to support the hard work you are doing in tough conditions—making it easier for you to provide innovative, valuable and inspiring film experiences across the counties.

Since January 2018, the area covered by Film Hub South East has expanded to include Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk; as well as retaining Berkshire, Kent, Oxfordshire, Surrey and Sussex from its previous iteration.



The region can be viewed as three smaller subregions:



The challenges of the South East

The region is bigger than before and includes a great breadth of demographics and locales: rural and urban, affluent and less advantaged, with a diversity of audiences to match.

Unlike the other Hub regions, the South East doesn't have a major flagship venue on the scale of HOME in Manchester or Watershed in Bristol.

The provision is very mixed.
There is a lower than average number of screens per capita and screenings of British and independent cinema happen in many different types of venue: including multi-screen, one-screen, mixed-arts venues and standalone; non-profit and privately owned; those located in cities or remote rural areas; and those with cultural ambitions as opposed to those that programme mainly Hollywood product.

So, we have created a plan that is flexible enough to accommodate the breadth of these challenges, while also retaining focus on a core set of aims.

In developing our plans, we also listened closely to what exhibitors wanted, surveying all Hub members.

The two biggest challenges highlighted by the 25% of South East exhibitors who responded were:

50% LACK OF RESOURCES

45% DIFFICULTY BRINGING AUDIENCES TO YOUR PROGRAMME

These aren't problems unique to film exhibitors in the South East; they're faced by people across all the arts.

We know that strategic long-term planning can alleviate these issues and it's our goal to provide you with resources and help you grow in skills and the confidence to bring all kinds of audiences to your venue, however ambitious your programme.

Why the Independent Cinema Office?

It was from looking closely at this context that we felt confident we could create and deliver a clear plan for the region, because it's what we've been doing for the last fifteen years: helping make big changes for film outside London.

**We think great cinema should be
accessible to everyone, everywhere.**

Since the ICO's inception we have been instrumental in developing venues that are not only a home for the films that matter, but act as cultural and community hubs; spaces where great ideas can get started. We have a panorama of the unique challenges faced not only by flagship cinemas, but wherever people are gathering to watch films together.

The ICO is a charity and all of the funding we've sought for our activities has always been aimed at benefiting the whole exhibition industry; whether by creating training that directly responds to exhibitor needs, distributing incredible films for independent cinemas to show, offering free advice and information so anyone can start showing films in their community, or running regional screening events so that people across the UK can see the films that London-based exhibitors regularly have access to.

It's fantastic to have the opportunity to bring our knowledge and expertise to the specific challenges of the South East.



Our access to the South East

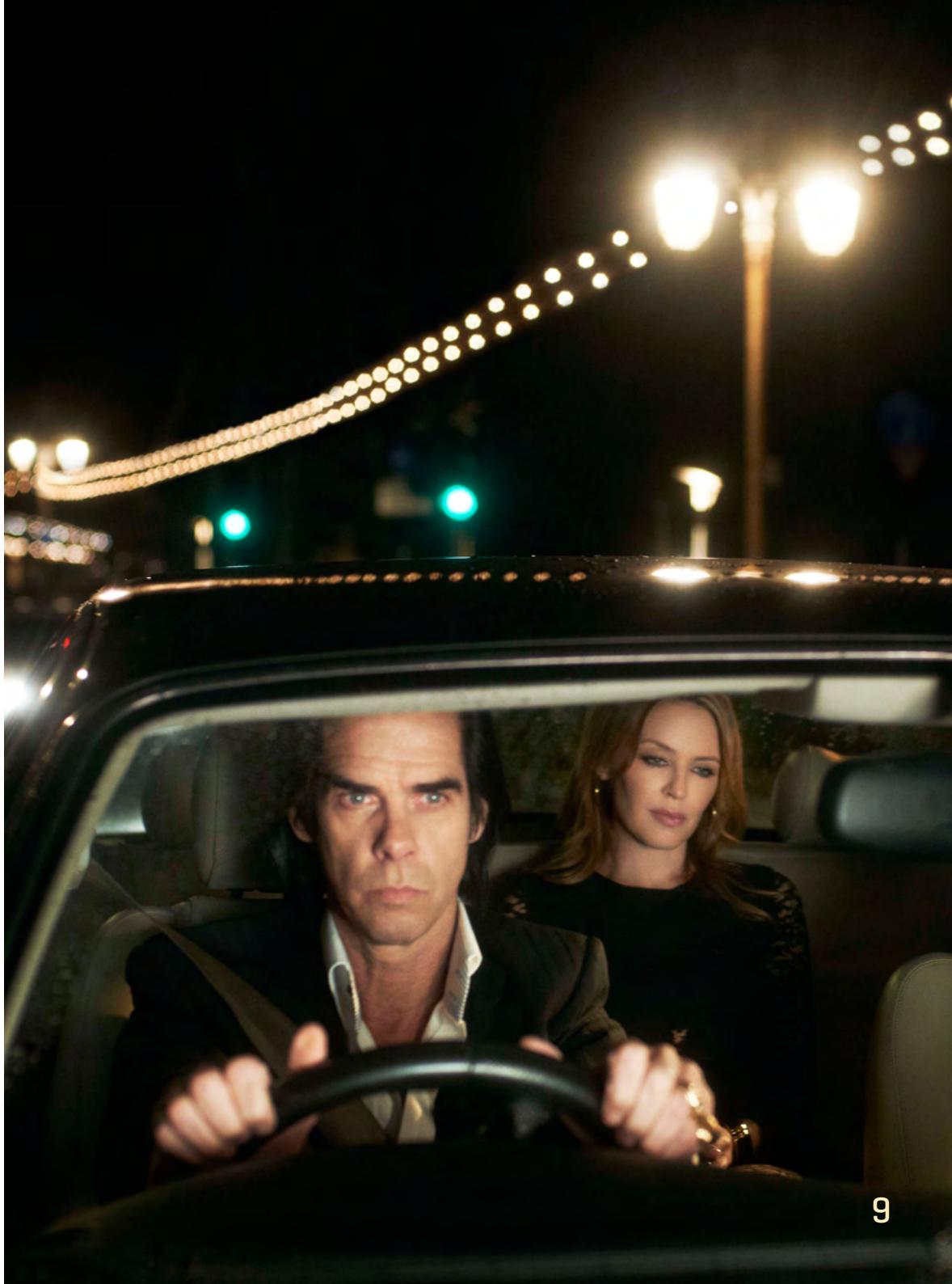
We're conscious that we're a London-based organisation and thought carefully about this when we made our application.

London has a hold over the power in the film industry and that needs to change. The ICO's core focus has always been to increase access to film for audiences outside of the capital and our record speaks for itself. We listen closely to the needs of local audiences, always working in partnership with programmers based within regional venues, and we have years of expertise and insights into what works in different areas of the UK.

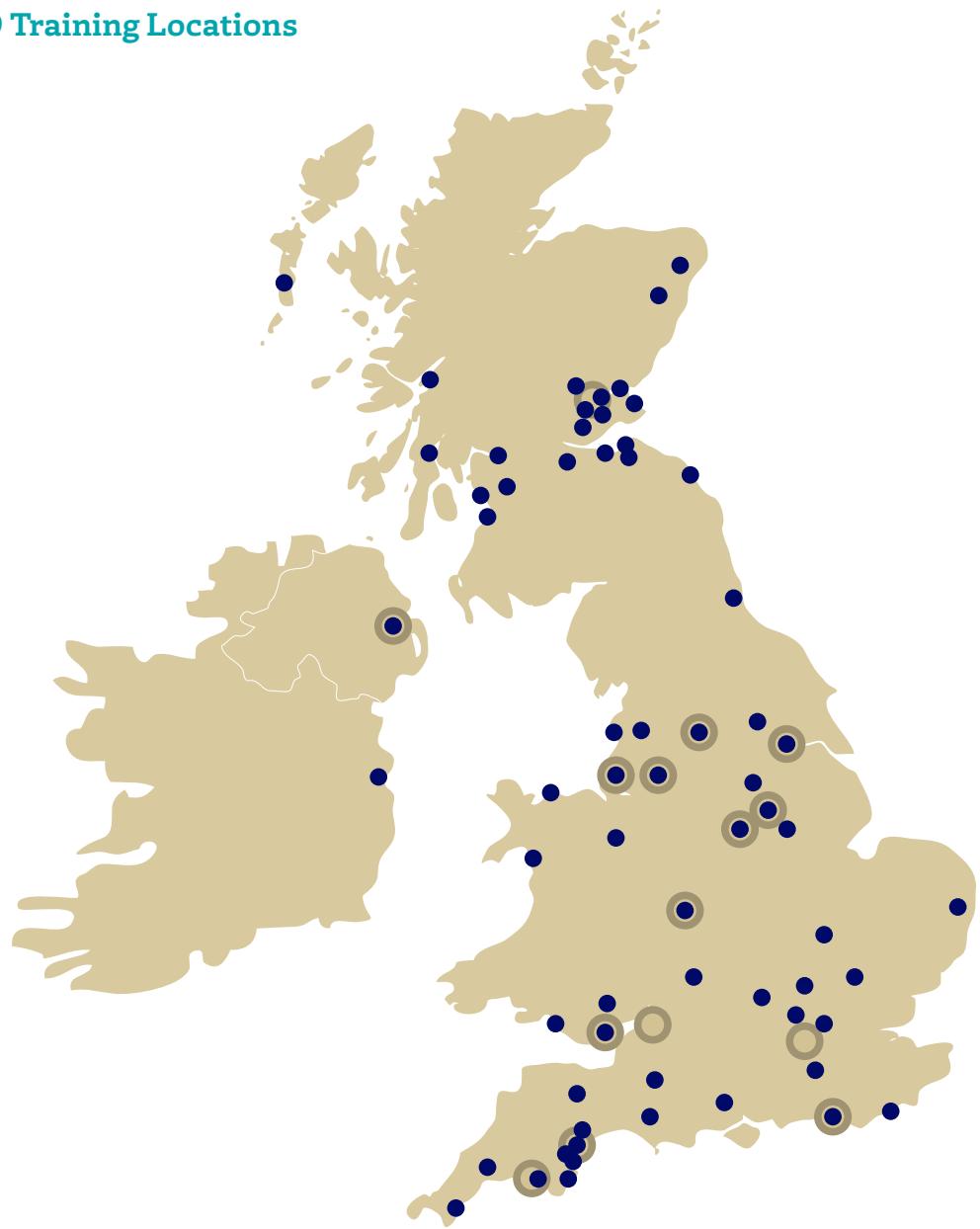
Almost everyone who works at the ICO is from outside London and knows the value of good local cinemas. Many of the staff are either from the South East or live there now.

One benefit of being London-based is that we have excellent transport links to different parts of the region, some of which are very remote. We will be travelling around the Hub frequently for our activities, including hosting events across the region. We'll also be working with Saffron Screen and Depot in Lewes as regional partners, giving us good bases to access the south and north of the region.

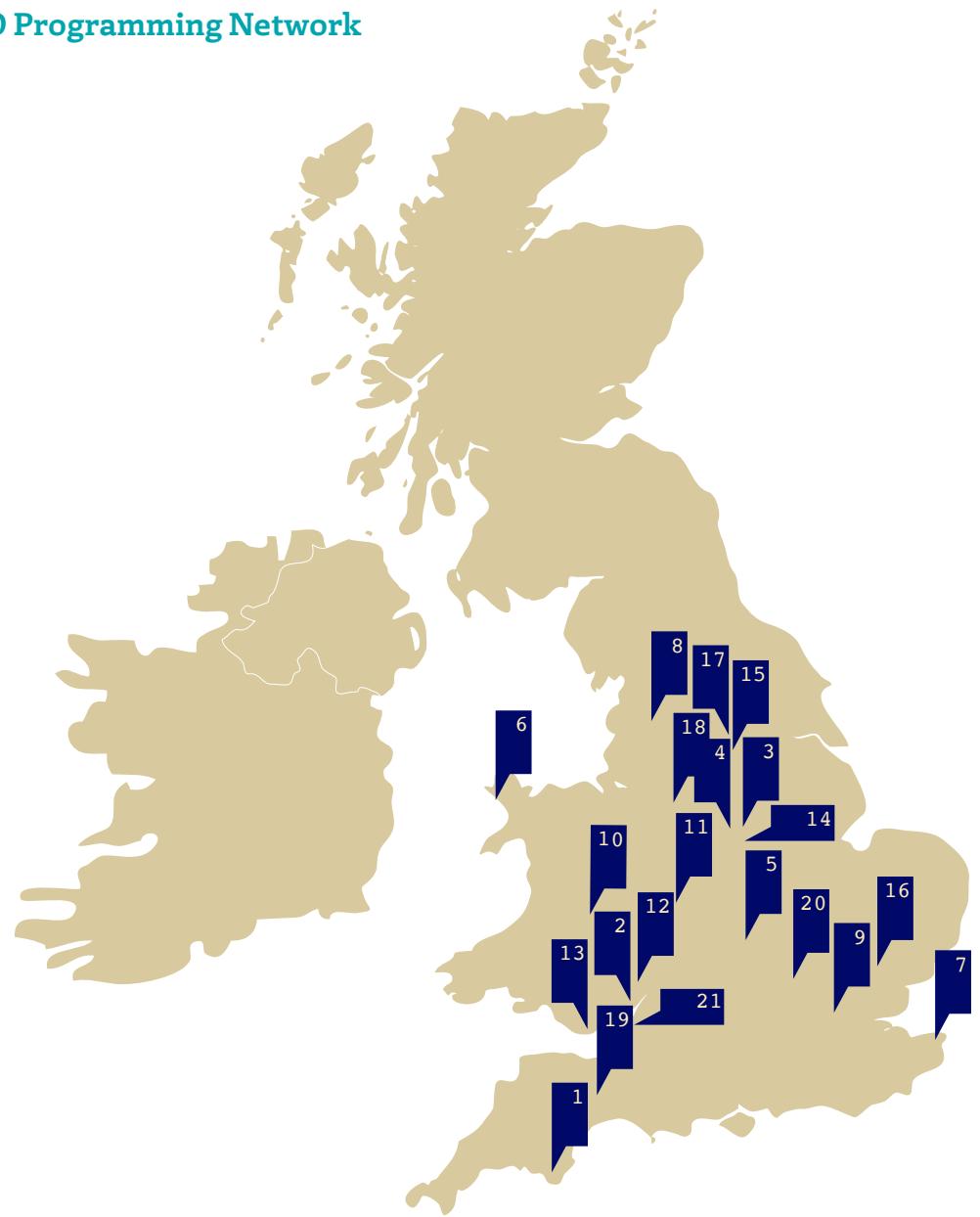
Right: 20,000 Days on Earth, filmed in Brighton, courtesy Trafalgar Releasing



ICO Training Locations



ICO Programming Network



What is FAN?

If you haven't worked with the BFI Film Audience Network (FAN) before, it's worthwhile offering some context about how this major programme from the BFI works.

The BFI Film Audience Network was set up in 2012 by the BFI and is funded by the National Lottery. There are eight Hubs around the UK helping to develop audiences for British and independent world cinema; each focussed on a particular region.

The ICO is one of eight organisations that put in a successful bid to deliver Hub operations over the next four years until 2022. This is the first time there has ever been a national exhibition strategy, supporting regional development.



Our priorities for change over the next four years

For this period of FAN from 2018 to 2022, the BFI have laid out some key priorities. Our plan for Film Hub South East directly responds to these priorities and they underpin all of our schemes. Any support we can offer over the next four years will need to bear these priorities in mind, because we can only deliver strategically if we work towards these aims.

1

Increase access to a wide range of independent British and international film for audiences—especially those outside central London.

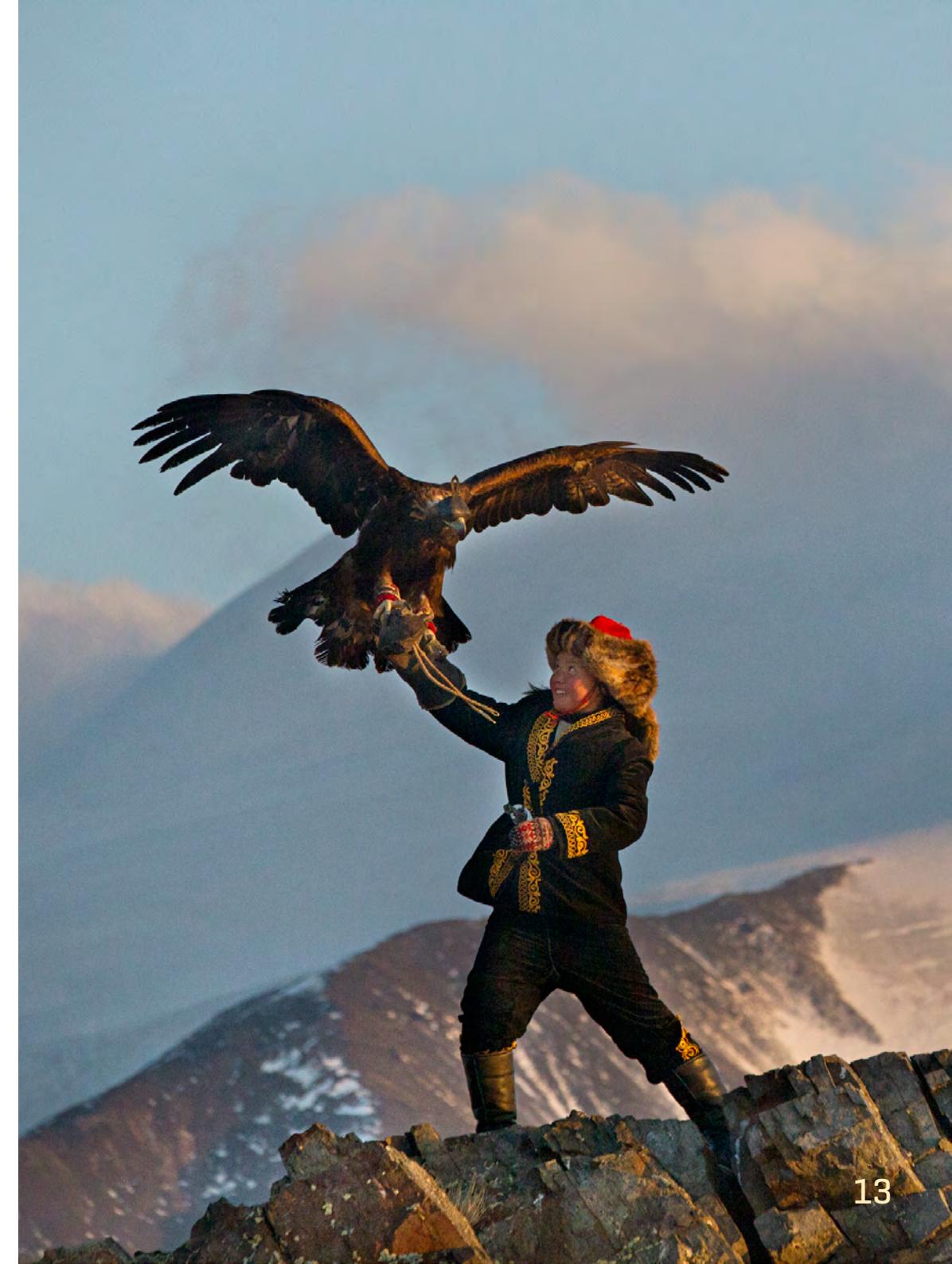
We are on a mission to use the power of cinema to enhance lives, grow empathy, offer empowerment and change thinking. But the types of films we want to support require long-term commitment.

We want these film experiences to be available everywhere, not just in major cities, but as they lack the marketing budget of Hollywood blockbusters, they need the enthusiastic, strategic work of exhibitors to support them.

2

Enhance the quality of audience facing activity, deepen knowledge and build capability in membership

The best cinemas know that the films they screen are only part of the experience. Simply put, we want exhibitors to have the skills to deliver the best events and to feel empowered to do ambitious things. We want to help create film experiences that meaningfully engage with global issues and are magical, inspiring, educative and transformative.



3

Extend engagement with BFI supported activities across the UK and enhance the quality and cultural depth of audience experience

The BFI is a champion of the wider industry, whether through funding films in production, creating cultural programmes like Black Star and Gothic, or supporting film releases via the Audience Fund or via FAN's New Release Strategy.

Our goal is to make sure that this support for film continues into exhibition, so that audiences everywhere can experience these incredible films in the best possible context.

4

Increase access to the UK's screen heritage especially via the BFI's National Film & TV Archive and those of the regions and nations

The UK is one of the world's leaders in film, with a rich history that is a major part of our national identity. The last ten years have completely changed our ability to connect with that past, allowing us to tell an even deeper story of who we are as a country via new access to our film and media history. The success of projects like Britain on Film on Tour shows that audiences are hungry to connect with these stories and explore the past as a way of making sense of the present. Film is at its most powerful when it truly reflects local stories, so we want to make the work of the regional archives more easily accessible to you and your audiences.



*Right: 'The Village Pet' (1931),
filmed in Wareham, Norfolk*

5

To do this all of this work with a particular emphasis on increasing the diversity of audiences and boosting the number of 16–30 year olds engaging with this activity

BFI FAN has audiences at its core. Film is the most inclusive art form, but there are lots of people who currently don't connect with British and independent world cinema at independent venues.

We want to help engage those people and for them to feel that these spaces and films are open to them, so that our cinema audiences become more reflective of national demographics—especially appealing to people of colour, people with disabilities and LGBT+ people; who research shows are currently underrepresented in British cinema audiences.

Similarly, research shows that young people do visit the cinema (42% of the cinema going public is under 24) but don't engage with a very wide range of films. So we must act now to change this to develop a sustainable future audience and ensure our industry will still exist in twenty years.



Our vision for the Hub

Our plan takes these five priorities and looks closely at how we can most effectively deliver on them given the unique challenges of the South East. With that in mind, we developed a vision for the Hub with two main markers of success.

1

To enable a wider section of people to watch a wider range of films in a greater number of locations.

We want to make sure that we're expanding audiences for life-changing cinema, and that this is happening in new locations.

What will it look like if we have achieved our goal after four years?

- The number of venues offering ambitious and diverse programming will have increased
- The number of opportunities for audiences to engage in dialogue and discussion around film will have increased
- The size of the audiences for British and independent film in all areas of the South East will have increased

2

To create a more integrated, better connected exhibition community in and for the region. To be a true network.

Over the last fifteen years since the ICO's inception we've seen big benefits from formerly isolated organisations having the chance to work together. We know that this is a hard region to network, but there are areas of activity that should be connected and we will do more to facilitate that.

What will it look like if we have achieved our goal after four years?

- More collaborations between exhibitors
- More peer to peer learning
- More resource sharing
- Stronger sense of a network between members



Our opportunities

All of the ways we've approached developing film in the South East require participation from a wide variety of partners and incredible ideas to make them possible.

We've tried to make these schemes as transparent and easy to apply to as possible. We've got clear overall criteria on what we're looking to support, but each scheme takes a different approach to achieving it.

Our schemes are split into strategic initiatives (p19), which we will require partnership on but where our approach is already developed; and open projects (p26), where we're looking for partners across the region to make proposals.



Strategic Initiatives

Programming Group

From working with cinemas across the country, we know that audience development requires long-term commitment and ambition.

Our Programming Group will support cinemas in screening key British and international cinema so it can be seen by audiences in areas where there is currently no such provision, enabling them to deepen their experience of film and the wider world.

We want to create a space in which cinemas can take more risks and become better known for their cultural ambitions; whilst also proving internally that these types of films can be commercially successful.

ICO CLIENT VENUES
PLAYED OVER
949
DIFFERENT FILMS FROM
119
DIFFERENT COUNTRIES IN
2016/2017 TO AUDIENCES OF
1M

55%
FILM HUB SOUTH EAST
MEMBERS ASKED FOR SUPPORT
WITH 'SUBSIDISED MINIMUM
GUARANTEES'



What we'll do

- In the first year, recruit twelve cinemas to our Programming Group who are currently not showing, or showing a limited selection of British and international films
- Subsidise minimum guarantees on British and international films to help with the financial cost of developing new audiences
- Hold bi-monthly meetings to share knowledge between Programming Group members; these will then be opened up to form networking opportunities for all Hub members in which they can learn from experts (e.g. distributors, audience development specialists) and watch screenings of films included in the scheme
- Provide marketing materials for films within the scheme, primarily for programming group members but available to all Hub members
- Circulate a monthly programming newsletter for all Hub members highlighting upcoming releases and giving insight on their potential audiences



Heritage Touring programmes

Released Summer 2018

One of the key ways we aim to engage more regional audiences in film is by creating work that speaks to the social history and sense of identity of the South East.

With that in mind, we will create a new project highlighting the history of the New Towns movement that left a major mark on the region. It's now nearly seventy years since the founding of the South East's New Towns – including Stevenage, Crawley, Hemel Hempstead, Harlow, Hatfield, Basildon, Bracknell, Peterborough, Welwyn Garden City and Milton Keynes – and there is a wealth of film material showing how they were conceived and developed, as well as how people really experienced them.

This is a great opportunity to look at an overlooked chapter in the UK's social history and especially pertinent as we face a new housing crisis. The ICO has great experience bringing these kinds of shared cultural moments to life, as can be seen by our Britain on Film on Tour and Mediatheque on Tour projects.

With these programmes, we've demonstrated the huge scale of public interest in these kinds of stories, and how they can be used to engage groups that don't regularly connect with film.

OUR ARCHIVE PROGRAMMES
HAVE SCREENED TO OVER

45,000

PEOPLE AND PLAYED AT OVER

800

LOCATIONS ACROSS THE UK

53%

OF FILM HUB SOUTH EAST
MEMBERS ASKED FOR 'INCREASED
ACCESS OR FUNDING FOR
CURATORS AND EXPERTS TO ADD
VALUE TO SCREENINGS' AND

47%

FOR 'MAKING CURATED PACKAGES
OF ARCHIVE FILM AVAILABLE AT
SUBSIDISED RATES'



What we'll do

- Work with local archives to produce a new feature-length heritage touring programme for cinemas, film clubs and community spaces covering the history of the New Towns Movement
- Work with local authorities to create site-specific installations showing archive material in unconventional locations to engage a wider audience in local history on film
- Engage a wide variety of cinema groups, community groups, museum, libraries, film groups and more
- Provide marketing support, speaker visits, programme notes and other resources to make these programmes as accessible as possible, and to encourage audiences to engage in a deeper conversation about local history



Young Audiences initiative

Launching April 2018

We will be working with Depot in Lewes and Saffron Screen as the bases for our Young Audiences initiative. Dedicated staff in these venues will be working to help develop more Young Programmers groups across the region.

If you've not heard of this model before, it involves working with young people (especially if they've never connected with a venue) and facilitating them to run events within your venue; from programme selection and event concepts to marketing to delivery.

Young Programmers groups give young people a stake in your venue and have been shown to grow young audiences who are may otherwise be generally disengaged from non-mainstream cinema.

We want to hear from you if you'd like to run a group, or if you currently do.

What we'll do

- Build a network of Young Programmers groups across the South East
- Encourage new groups to form, led by dedicated staff at Depot and Saffron Screen
- Conduct research into ticketing and pricing initiatives targeting young people across the UK, in order to assess which approaches to support in coming years



Right: We Shall Overcome

Support for Film Festivals and Touring Networks

Film festivals and touring networks are a key way for people in the South East to connect with film, helping deliver and grow audiences for cinema where there is a lack of formal year round provision.

We see the established festivals and touring organisations in this region as strong partners in realising our shared ambitions to engage more young people and grow the diversity of audiences.

Previously, festival support was delivered by the BFI at the top level, but this has now been passed to the Hubs. We are looking to work with established festivals and will be asking them to go further in working towards our shared audience priorities and ambitions.

What we'll do

- In the first year, continue to support festivals and touring networks previously supported by BFI's festivals fund, encouraging them to develop their activity towards the Hub priorities
- Encourage festivals outside this group to apply for support via our Open Project Proposal scheme
- Over the coming years, develop a unified strategy for festivals in the region

*Dive in Movies presented by CINECITY for Brighton & Hove's White Night Festival (2009)
Photo credit: Dominic Alves*



Open Projects

Outdoor Screenings scheme

Open now

One of the major advantages of the revolution in digital projection is the ability to put on a screening more or less anywhere.

Outdoor screenings are a unique opportunity to reach people with the power of the film and are very popular across the South East. People who haven't visited the cinema for years come to outdoor screenings, as do some who otherwise feel excluded from the cinema by cost.

These experiences are especially important in a region with big gaps in provision, and can offer a springboard for community groups to develop audiences and jump start interest in regular screenings.

What we'll do

- Offer £10,000 to support outdoor screenings across the South East, especially in areas of current low provision
- Encourage applications that engage with the programming of British and independent cinema, as well as archive programmes
- Partner with local authorities who want to add outdoor screenings to their current cultural provision



Diversity Support

The UK's film audience should reflect a true picture of modern Britain. But there are many groups not represented in current audience demographics; especially people of colour, people with disabilities, audiences aged between 16-30 and LGBT+ people.

We've developed an approach in two directions to change this.

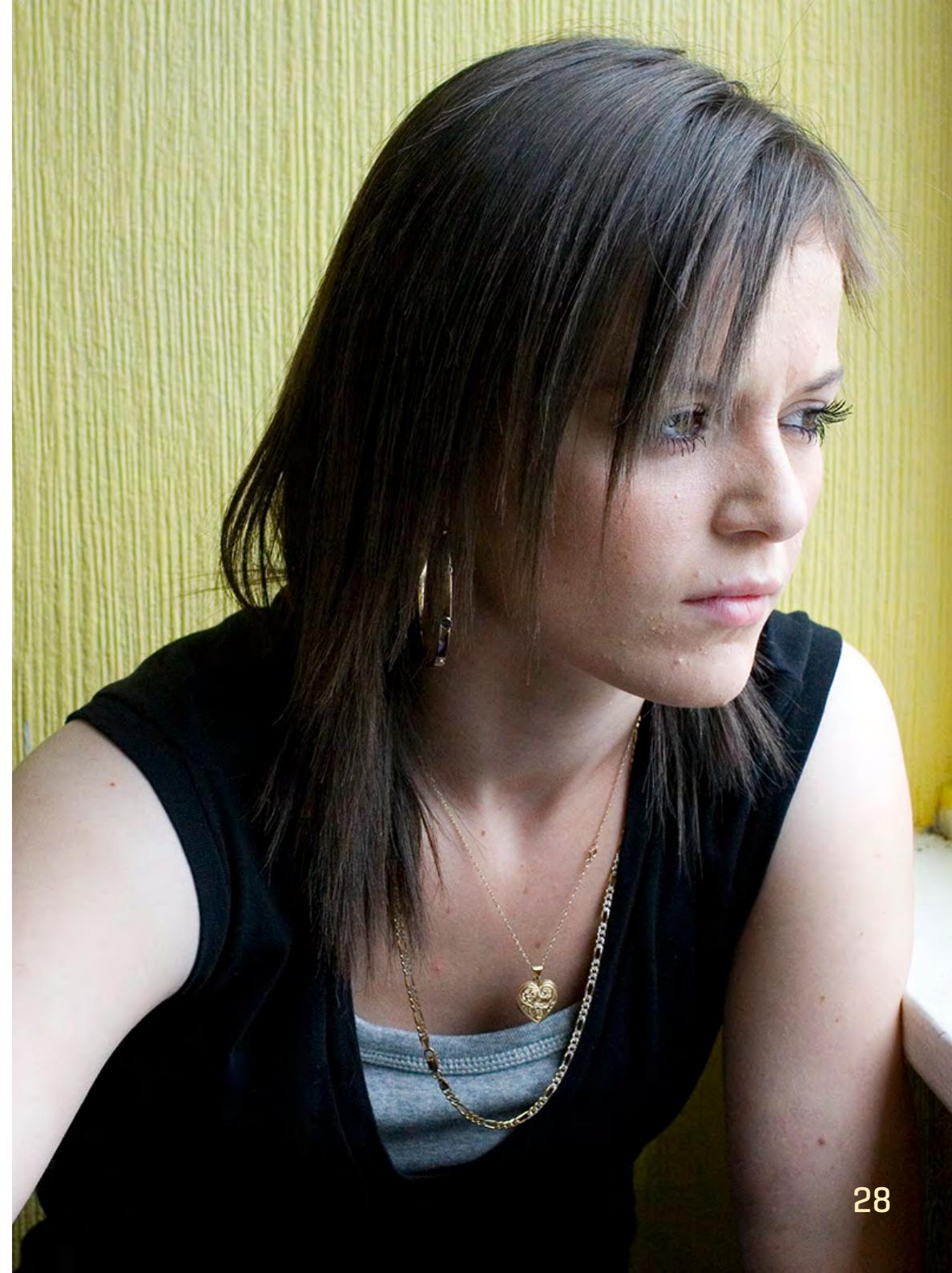
What we'll do for organisations with an existing strong connection to diverse audiences

- Identify and reach out to organisations with an established connection to people of colour, disabled people, audiences aged between 16-30 and LGBT+ people
- Help them develop a programme that includes film as part of their cultural offer, potentially connecting them with established film venues

What we'll do for existing cinemas and film festivals

- Work with three cinemas or film festivals in the first year of the scheme to help them develop an audience not currently engaging with their cinema, but which is present in their local community
- Match these organisations with a specialist in developing their target audience
- Support them over a year to make significant progress in all areas that need be addressed to build a more inclusive organisation e.g. operations, programming, marketing and outreach
- Help them become regional advocates for other organisations keen to develop these audiences

*Right: Fish Tank, filmed in Essex,
courtesy Curzon Artificial Eye*



Training and Professional Development Support

Open now

The best organisations are built on the skills and knowledge of their staff, but it's often hard to prioritise professional development when budgets are tight.

Our training and travel bursary scheme is designed to alleviate this. Apply if there is an opportunity you would like to take up, either national or international, that will clearly benefit your organisation's ability to deliver on the strategic priorities of the Hub.

If there's benefit to your organisation's capacity in attending a training scheme, a networking opportunity or a conference, we're here to help.

What we'll do

- Offer up to £750 per organisation, per year for training and professional opportunities
- Cover costs including course fees, travel costs, accommodation and child care



Open Project Proposals

Open now

We know you will have exciting ideas that don't fit distinctly within our other strategic initiatives or projects, and that's why we created the Open Project Proposals scheme.

This is the broadest of our schemes, open to ambitious plans for improving film in the South East.

50%

OF MEMBERS SAID THAT
LACK OF RESOURCES WAS
A MAJOR CHALLENGE



What we'll do

Support the following activities

(this is not an exhaustive list!)

- Film screenings: including new provision, site specific screenings and building new opportunities at existing locations
- Audience development activity, especially outreach to new audiences
- Marketing costs, including print or online spend
- Screen heritage projects, especially where there is good potential to reach new audiences working with local archives

And cover the following costs within those activities:

- Research and curatorial fees
- Staff (costs of existing staff can be no more than 20% of their time)
- Office overheads such as rent, stationery and telephone (no more than 15% of total costs)
- Marketing, publicity materials, advertising and/or promotional costs
- Venue and/or equipment hire
- Programme production
- Payments to rights holders, distributors and sales agents
- Transportation costs of prints and/or equipment
- Volunteer expenses
- Hospitality or travel for industry guests
- Consultancy fees e.g. for a PR specialist
- Composers and performers of live music accompaniment
- Insurances and/or licences
- Monitoring and evaluation



NETWORK

One of the new responsibilities that the Hub will now be taking on is BFI NETWORK, the BFI's scheme to help support new and emerging filmmakers.

The South East has given us some of the world's great filmmakers; from Michael Powell to Joy Batchelor, from Paul Greengrass to David Yates to Andrea Arnold. We want to find more of that talent and bring it to the world's screens.

We are employing a Talent Executive to find and develop local filmmakers and support their first productions, especially as they make applications to BFI production funds. The Talent Executive will look for filmmakers from established sources but also beyond, to identify talent where it may previously have been ignored.

There's no monopoly on where great filmmaking talent comes from, but currently the vast majority of talent is sourced and developed in London. This must change, and reducing the centralisation of the film industry to London is part of NETWORK's goal.

Our aim with NETWORK is to better connect production and exhibition. It makes sense to connect fresh talent with cinemas and film festivals. No filmmaker makes their work in a vacuum: they need a passionate, connected experience with audiences, and cinemas and film festivals are where that happens. At the same time, cinemas and film festivals are where aspiring filmmakers fall in love with film; these events are hubs for talent.

We want more genuinely local filmmaking to be shown across the network and for cinemas and festivals to be key places of discovery for this talent, so we'll be working hard to make it easier to access this work.

In summary, our goals for NETWORK are to:

- **Encourage new voices**
- **Build a community of filmmaking talent**
- **Build a networking space, using film festivals**
- **Encourage greater filmmaker interaction with audiences**



Overview of the Hub

As a Hub, the ICO is drawing on a wide range of expertise. Here are the staff who'll be helping you with your projects over the next four years. Email us at filmhubse@independentcinemaoffice.org.uk or give us a call on 0207 636 7120 and we can direct your enquiry to the appropriate member of staff.



Daniel Horseman
Administration Co-Ordinator
First point of contact



Catharine Des Forges
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Film Festivals and Touring Networks, Outdoor Screenings and Open Project Proposals



David Sin
Head of Cinemas
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Diversity Scheme and Training and Professional Bursary scheme



Jemma Buckley
Partnerships Manager
Young Programmers initiative and Heritage Touring project



Duncan Carson
Marketing and Communications Manager
BFI NETWORK Talent Executive

Marketing your events and Film Hub South East schemes

We are happy to talk to you about our plans and ideas. One of the advantages of the Hub's work being delivered by us at the ICO is that we already have a very wide network and knowledge base.

The ICO is funded by the BFI to help you with any queries and challenges you are facing in developing your cinema.

As part of our Programming Group initiative, we'll be producing a programming newsletter giving you insights into the films set for release in the coming months and what audiences they are aimed at. This will be distributed to the whole Hub mailing list.

We're also producing a weekly newsletter about exciting film events that we'll be encouraging the general public to sign up to; and can share your events through our social media channels.



Timeline at a glance



We are looking forward to working with you!

Get in touch with us on

filmhubse@independentcinemaoffice.org.uk

or 0207 636 7120

**Film Hub
South East ↘**