



**FAN**  
BFI FILM AUDIENCE NETWORK



Film Hub  
**South East** ↘

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**Film  
Exhibition  
Fund:  
over £3k**

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Guidelines  
2026-27

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## Key info at a glance:

<b>Total amount in fund</b>	<b>£203,000</b>
<b>Proposal submission dates</b>	Please submit your proposal no fewer than <b>six weeks</b> before the proposed activity is due to begin.
<b>Acknowledgement of proposal</b>	We will acknowledge receipt of your proposal within <b>one calendar week</b> .
<b>Request for additional information</b>	We may ask for additional information regarding your proposal within <b>two calendar weeks</b> of its submission.
<b>Decision on proposal</b>	We will inform you of the decision regarding your proposal within <b>three weeks</b> of submission or receipt of additional information, if requested.
<b>Deadlines</b>	The Film Exhibition Fund 2026-27 supports activity between April 2026 and March 2027 and is a rolling fund, with no set deadline. Oversubscription is anticipated, which may result in all support being allocated before the end of the funding round.

# Introduction

The [BFI Film Audience Network \(FAN\)](#) reaches out across the UK to ensure people have the maximum possible opportunity to watch and enjoy a broad screen culture, regardless of location or circumstance.

As part of BFI FAN, Film Hub South East (FHSE) has been awarded funding from the BFI to support the region's film exhibitors in their efforts to reach a wide, diverse audience with independent British and international film and deliver against the priorities set out in the [BFI's Screen Culture 2033 strategy](#).

We support organisations that screen film to a public audience, from cinemas, mixed arts venues, film festivals, film societies and community groups to maintain and grow an inclusive sector.

# What is the Film Exhibition Fund?

We are now seeking proposals from Hub members to support activity between **April 2026 and March 2027** that will help us meet BFI FAN's objectives.

The Film Exhibition Fund supports BFI FAN members' cultural programming and the engagement of a broad, diverse audience. It is open to all organisations in Film Hub South East's exhibitor network.

A key priority of the fund is to encourage film exhibitors to embed inclusion and environmental sustainability into their approach to activity.

All proposals should respond to Film Hub South East's key strategic objectives, which are outlined in the following pages. Hub Members must also be able to set out how they will address the [BFI Diversity Standards](#).

Activity supported by the Film Exhibition Fund can vary in length, scale and format – delivery should take place between April 2026 and March 2027. Members can request support for programming, outreach and associated costs.

# What are our strategic objectives?

The following are key priorities for Film Hub South East, and reflect those of the BFI's Screen Culture 2033 strategy. Proposals must be focussed on one or more of these areas:

## **Children and young people**

Opportunities for children, families, and young people (aged 25 and under) to experience a broader screen culture. Stimulating an appetite for a diversity of film and screen content and deepening understanding. Activity focused on young audiences may target a segment of the audience or the group as a whole.

## **Access to a wider choice of film**

To support public access to and enjoyment of the widest range of film and the moving image - including UK and international film, documentaries, TV and screen heritage (especially those heritage collections that reflect the diversity of the South East).

We are committed to ensuring that a range of film and moving image works are made accessible to all communities, including stories that reflect their lives. The big screen, collective experience remains our focus. We can only support online screening activity in exceptional cases where there is a clear rationale for using online screenings to reach audiences that could not otherwise experience in-person screenings. There will need to be a specific plan outlining how these target audiences will be engaged and how the success of reaching these audiences with online screenings is to be measured. Projects exploring the opportunities offered by immersive and interactive technologies are also of interest.

## **Tackling barriers**

Working to tackle social and economic barriers to audiences by addressing the obstructions presented by cost, physical access, sense of risk, and limited onscreen representation. Particular attention will be paid to projects engaging working class audiences and communities facing greater social and economic disadvantage, alongside proposals that address under-representation among disabled people, people of African or Caribbean heritage, people of South, East and South East Asian heritage.

## **Geographic spread of activity**

Ensuring that cultural cinema exhibition is meaningfully embedded across the South East region, with a reach encompassing urban, rural and coastal communities that reflect diversity of place, and extends opportunity into areas that have historically had less provision.

# Our commitment to inclusion

## **BFI Diversity Standards**

In line with the [BFI Diversity Standards](#) we encourage activity aimed at, and/or co-produced with, under-represented groups. The Standards focus on under-representation in relation to age, disability, ethnicity, gender, LGBTQIA+, religion and belief (as they pertain to the [Equality Act 2010](#)), as well as socio-economic background or status and geographical location.

We are particularly committed to ensuring disproportionately affected audiences – such as working class people and those experiencing economic challenges currently; disabled, Deaf, and neurodivergent people; people of African or Caribbean heritage and people of South, East, or South East Asian heritage – can experience independent film and be welcomed into cinema spaces.

All Film Exhibition Fund proposals will be asked to demonstrate how their activity promotes inclusivity among audiences, on screen and, where applicable, in the workforce.

We ask that all proposals embrace the Standards, and priority will be given to proposals that do this in a clear and convincing way. Applicants should particularly focus on Standards D (Audience Development) and E (Accessibility) when outlining how their proposal provides inclusive audience development opportunities.

The Hub team is on hand to help applicants engage with the BFI Diversity Standards; please [contact us](#) for more information.

## Additional areas of focus

### **Environmental sustainability**

We are committed to minimising the negative environmental impact of the work we support and ask all funding recipients to contribute to this aim. In your proposal please summarise steps you are taking to minimise the environmental impact of your activity and, where applicable, what you are doing to increase your positive impact.

We have put together a [Green Cinema Toolkit](#) to assist with planning around sustainability, and the [BFI Sustainable Screen Resource Hub](#), delivered by Julie's Bicycle, is dedicated to helping exhibitors apply the principles of sustainability. Julie's Bicycle also programme [events](#) to support organisations in this area. The BFI also has a number of [recommended resources](#), and will provide dedicated expertise to award recipients.

### **Prevention of bullying, harassment and racism**

Bullying, harassment and racism have no place in our industries, and we expect all organisations we support to share our commitment to this principle. The BFI and BAFTA have developed a set of principles and zero-tolerance guidance in consultation with organisations, unions and industry bodies across the film, television and games industry in response to urgent and systemic issues. These documents can be found in the [bullying and harassment prevention hub](#).

We ask all applicants to engage with these principles by, at a minimum, reading these documents and sharing them within your organisation. All our funding agreements include a warranty seeking compliance with all applicable legislation and codes of practice relating to this matter.

### **Safeguarding**

For initiatives involving children, young people or vulnerable adults, applicants are required to put in place safeguarding and child protection policies before any activity takes place. The same applies if a third party is making use of the awarded funds to deliver activity on your behalf. If you do not currently have a policy in place, please get in touch and we can signpost you to additional resources to help you to develop your policy.

Environmental sustainability, safeguarding and bullying and harassment are not formal assessment criteria, but the information you provide will be used to gauge how we may support you further in this area. If a proposed action will incur modest additional costs, you can include these in your budget for consideration.

## Am I eligible?

You must be a Film Hub South East Member to access our funding opportunities. Hub membership includes organisations of various shapes and sizes, from community cinemas to festivals to multi-arts centres.

[Click here to read more and submit a proposal.](#)

Your organisation must be legally constituted and centrally managed in the UK. This includes:

- Limited Liability Company or Partnership registered at Companies House;
- Community Interest Company registered at Companies House;
- Local authority or statutory body;
- Charity or trust registered with the Charity Commission (including UK universities);
- If not registered with the Charity Commission, universities principally regulated by one of the Higher Education Funding Bodies (being the Higher Education Funding Council for England);
- Unincorporated associations and clubs (an organisation set up through an agreement between a group of people who come together for a reason other than to make a profit. The organisation must have 25 or more members, and has rules regulating who can be a member).

Your organisation will be expected to have robust governance and management structures and processes in place.

### **Who is not eligible?**

Individuals cannot submit proposals for consideration.

Film Hub Lead Organisations are not eligible to seek financial support for their own activity even if they meet the above criteria.

## How much can I ask for?

The minimum amount you can request is £3,000. For projects under £3,000 please see our separate **Film Exhibition Fund: under £3k** guidelines and proposal form. There is no maximum amount you can request, but the total amount available in the South East for 2026-27 is £203,000. We expect the majority of awards to be between £3,000-£7,500.

If you are considering asking for more than £7,500 please contact the Hub team first to discuss your plans prior to submitting a proposal.

### Multi-year funding

Multi year funding is available on a limited basis, generally for larger or more strategic projects being delivered by organisations with a strong track record of delivering successful audience development activity.

Organisations that have previously received multi year funding are welcome to request this again. Organisations without previous multi year support may also be considered, provided they can demonstrate successful delivery of audience development projects and make a clear case for the value and impact of this type of funding. If this applies to you, please arrange a meeting with us to discuss your project before submitting a proposal. Contact us at [filmhubse@independentcinemaoffice.org.uk](mailto:filmhubse@independentcinemaoffice.org.uk)

### Use of National Lottery funds

As this fund is supported by the National Lottery, we can only support proposals that demonstrate clear public benefit. We are not able to cover 100% of project costs. While there is no fixed match-funding percentage, we expect to see box office income and other partnership contributions – whether cash, volunteer time, or in-kind support – included in the budget.

### Budgeting and subsidy per head

To ensure public benefit, audience targets form part of the assessment criteria, with subsidy per head taken into consideration.

The following ranges provide an indication of the audience levels typically expected for different funding amounts. Please bear in mind that audience numbers are not the sole deciding factor, and proposals are assessed on an individual basis. This is a guide rather than a calculator, designed to help applicants shape projects and budgets at an appropriate scale for available funding.

**£0–£500** / 0–200 admissions

**£500–£2,000** / 201–500 admissions

**£2,000–£4,000** / 501–1,000 admissions

**£4,000–£6,000** / 1,001–2,000 admissions

**£6,000–£7,500** / 2,001–3,000 admissions

**£7,500–£10,000** / 3,001–5,000 admissions

We do support a few projects with awards over £10,000, but this is limited due to the size of the fund and the scale of activity required at this level. Projects receiving more than £10,000 typically reach between 5,000 and 20,000 admissions. If you're considering requesting more than £7,500 and haven't received funding support from the Hub before, please contact our team to discuss your plans before submitting a proposal.

Projects that focus on the fund's priority groups (listed below) may receive a higher overall level of support or greater subsidy per head.

- children, families, and young audiences aged 25 and under
- working-class audiences
- audiences experiencing social or economic disadvantage
- disabled audiences
- audiences of African or Caribbean heritage
- audiences of South, East and South East Asian heritage
- audiences living in areas with limited access to cultural cinema

We place particular value on proposals showing targeted, intentional approaches to audience development, such as partnerships with local charities, social services, schools or libraries, direct community outreach, co-programming, and community-led events.

## Use of funding

Each organisation will have its individual needs – however, broadly speaking, the Film Exhibition Fund can support the following costs.

### Eligible expenses:

- Film rights and print transport
- Activity-specific staffing costs – e.g. curation, marketing, audience development or project management expenses
- Venue hire and activity-specific equipment costs
- Marketing, advertising and PR campaigns
- Event costs for enhanced screenings – e.g. speaker, talent or artists fees
- Volunteer and evaluation expenses
- Accessibility costs – e.g. creating accessible supporting materials, subtitling fees
- Outreach and community inclusion costs – e.g. providing transport for isolated audiences
- Audience development expenses – e.g. young programmers workshops
- Rights clearances and curation fees for screen heritage materials

This list is not exhaustive and other items may be considered.

### Ineligible expenses:

All proposed spend should contribute to the activity proposed. Beyond this, there are some areas not suitable for support from the Film Exhibition Fund. These include:

- Filmmaking costs (including workshops), support for filmmakers to develop or distribute their own work, or for programmes that exclusively engage filmmaker audiences
- Capital costs covering building repairs, or equipment such as projectors
- General running costs of organisations not specifically related to the activity
- Activity that should be covered by statutory education, including events taking place on school grounds/in school hours
- Events not primarily focused on film exhibition
- Activity covered by existing funding arrangements
- Programmes that duplicate provision in the same area
- Activity taking place in a venue not open to the public – e.g. members only venues
- The set-up of new film clubs and opening of new cinema venues
- Fundraising activities, including screenings to raise money for a cause or charity

# How to submit a proposal

Instructions are provided in the following pages. If you have particular access requirements (e.g. easy read documents), would like to submit your proposal in another way or have any queries about the process, get in touch with our team who will be happy to discuss this.

If you have access requirements that mean you need assistance with composing and submitting a proposal, you may be able to find support through the BFI Access Support Scheme. [Find out more.](#)

To submit a proposal you will need to complete:

- a proposal form, and
- a budget

[Download copies of these documents on our website.](#)

The proposal form will give you the opportunity to describe your activity and how it contributes to Film Hub South East's priorities.

If you have any questions about the fund, the submission process or would like to discuss your proposal please get in touch at [filmhubse@independentcinemaoffice.org.uk](mailto:filmhubse@independentcinemaoffice.org.uk).

## Assessment criteria

Your proposal will be assessed by a panel comprising no fewer than three members of senior Film Hub South East staff. We will specifically look at:

- Activity eligibility: does the proposed activity clearly meet the priorities of the fund?
- Audience reach: what are the audience targets, how have these been calculated, and is the planned activity likely to achieve them? Subsidy per head will be a consideration, as will your goals relating to diversity and inclusion, and whether you have partnerships in place to effectively engage your target audiences.
- Impact: what is the cultural ambition of the proposed programme?
- Organisational experience: is the organisation able to carry out the proposed activity, including project management, delivering marketing, audience development and evaluation plans?
- Past performance: if previously supported, the historical achievement of an organisation will be taken into account. How closely have delivered projects aligned with proposals? Have audience targets been met? Is there evidence that continued support has contributed to organisational growth and an improved offer for audiences?
- Budget: are all reasonable costs considered? Does the budget balance and are all costs eligible? Have access costs been included?
- Legacy: what are the longer-term plans to continue to reach audiences?
- BFI Diversity Standards: does the proposal clearly address the BFI Diversity Standards?
- Environmental sustainability: what steps are being taken to address the environmental impact of the planned activity?
- Geographic spread: will the project help to provide access to screen culture for communities across the South East?

Please note that this fund will be oversubscribed, and even proposals meeting all assessment criteria may not be awarded the entirety of the support requested.

With numerous eligible proposals we must take into consideration how closely projects align with the priorities of the fund, the geographic spread of support across the South East region, the types of projects being supported and the audiences they are trying to engage.

We hope this doesn't deter you from submitting a proposal, but rather provides wider context if you are not successful or receive an offer for less support.

# Decisions and feedback

## **Unsuccessful proposals**

If you are unsuccessful in your proposal, you will be contacted by email. Being unsuccessful does not prevent you from submitting a new and different proposal or accessing future Hub opportunities, including other open funds and bursaries.

## **Successful proposals**

If your proposal is successful, the assessment panel may discuss any required amendments and wish to see a revised plan before confirming funding. This process can take additional time. Activity timelines will need to accommodate this.

If there are no recommendations or amendments to be made you will be sent an email approving your proposal and an agreement setting out the terms and conditions attached to the funding. These will cover payment information, crediting guidelines, and monitoring and reporting requirements. Audiences will need to be surveyed using our standard template for all funded activity – please bear this in mind when planning your evaluation strategies.

Please note that final confirmation of support will be subject to the availability of National Lottery funding.

# Complaints and appeals

The ICO is the lead organisation for Film Hub South East, which is part of the BFI Film Audience Network, supported by National Lottery funding.

In relation to our funds, decisions made are final. Whilst we would like to support a range of proposals, the total funding available is limited. Inevitably, this means some proposals will be turned down and applicants may be disappointed by this result. Formal appeals against the final decision will not be considered unless you have good cause to believe that the procedures for processing the proposal were not adhered to, or applied in such a way as to prejudice the outcome.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us on [filmhubse@independentcinemaoffice.org.uk](mailto:filmhubse@independentcinemaoffice.org.uk)

If this is not appropriate for any reason, please refer to the ICO [Complaints Policy and Procedure](#).

If you have a specific concern or issue with the ICO as a British Film Institute (BFI) awardee and feel unable to contact us directly, or if you're unhappy with the response we provided, please refer to [this guidance](#) on the BFI website.

## Contact us

If you have any questions about the guidelines or submitting a proposal please get in contact with us. We're happy to discuss your proposal before you submit it.

### **Email**

[filmhubse@independentcinemaoffice.org.uk](mailto:filmhubse@independentcinemaoffice.org.uk)

### **Telephone**

0207 6367120

Film Hub South East is a sector development organisation supporting film culture in the South East region. The Hub works with a range of organisations and individuals to help great films get made, screened and seen in the region. The Hub is supported by National Lottery funding as part of the BFI Film Audience Network (FAN) and BFI NETWORK.

Supported by National Lottery funding, the BFI Film Audience Network (FAN) is central to the BFI's aim to ensure the greatest choice of film is available for everyone. Established in 2012 to build wider and more diverse UK cinema audiences for British and international film, FAN is a unique, UK-wide collaboration made up of eight Hubs managed by leading film organisations. BFI FAN also supports talent development with BFI NETWORK Talent Executives in each of the English Hubs, with a mission to discover and support talented writers, directors and producers at the start of their careers.