



**BFI FAN COVID-19 RESILIENCE FUND  
EMERGENCY FUNDING TO HELP INDEPENDENT EXHIBITORS SURVIVE  
ONGOING VENUE SHUTDOWN**

**National Lottery funding through the BFI Film Audience Network supports members of the UK-wide network in critical need and facing closure**

**London, Friday 12 June 2020:** The **BFI Film Audience Network (FAN)** has allocated emergency funding to independent exhibitors across the UK through the **BFI FAN COVID-19 Resilience Fund**. **£1.3m National Lottery funding**, plus a **£150,000** contribution from the **Mayor of London's Culture at Risk Business Support Fund**, has been made available to provide grants to those in critical financial need as they continue to face months of closure and uncertainty. **BFI FAN** – a unique collaboration of eight Film Hubs managed by leading film organisations across the UK – targeted the fund to help small and medium sized audience-facing organisations with a particular focus on venue-based exhibitors.

**Ben Luxford, Head of UK Audiences, BFI**, said: "Redirecting National Lottery and Mayor of London funding to make emergency grants to our independent exhibitors has proved to be a lifeline, enabling our fantastic venues, cinemas and festivals across the UK to remain in business in the immediate term. However, it is clear that these vital and unique organisations, which are crucial to the rich cultural fabric of their local communities, are still in crisis. When allowed to reopen, safely implementing social distancing guidance will not only be logistically impossible for some, but many are also unlikely to cover their costs when operating at reduced capacity. Losing these exhibitors would be a huge cultural loss for UK audiences, so I am pleased FAN has been able to help them keep the lights on while we all face the oncoming challenges."

The Fund has supported 130 FAN Members across the UK with awards ranging from **£415** to **£23,000** each. These include MacRobert Arts Centre in Stirling, Jam Jar Cinema in Whitley Bay, Magic Lantern in Tywyn, and Bounce Cinema in London, supporting exhibitors who often representing the only cultural offer in their local area. Helping to ensure they can survive is crucial, particularly to provide an offer to audiences to support wellbeing after a prolonged period of lockdown and isolation.

The BFI FAN COVID-19 Resilience Fund was administered through each of FAN's regional and national based Film Hubs, working with the BFI, set up to support exhibitors and festivals which have faced unprecedented challenges, with many at risk of making staff redundant and permanent closure. The Independent Cinema Office (ICO) conducted a survey – Reopening Cinemas the Independent Way – to understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the independent exhibition industry. It found only 59% of respondents considered they could reopen with social measures in place, with 63% stating they could survive for only three months. Almost half of the 59% believe they will be able to open in September at the earliest.

The Resilience Fund is part of a package of support the BFI has quickly responded with in order to support individuals, productions, organisations and businesses that have been hardest hit by COVID-19.

The BFI also continues to work closely with industry and Government to develop and implement a robust, sector-wide strategy for recovery. Out of its Screen Sector Task Force, a number of working groups are focused on key areas: inward investment; independent film; distribution and exhibition; and television and broadcasting. The BFI has up-to-date industry advice for the sector at [www.bfi.org.uk/supporting-uk-film/covid-19-answering-questions-screen-sectors](http://www.bfi.org.uk/supporting-uk-film/covid-19-answering-questions-screen-sectors).

The UK Cinema Association and the Film Distributors' Association have been developing guidance to support cinemas reopen. In the first instance it is likely only multiplexes and larger chains and will be able to open once Government guidance allows, with smaller independent venues hoping to follow later in the year.

#### **Comments from some BFI FAN Covid-19 Resilience Fund recipients:**

**Dan Ellis, Managing Director, Jam Jar Cinema**, (FAN Hub North member) said: "Jam Jar Cinema has become a hub for our community, a key attraction for our high street and most importantly something that local people love, and are proud of, in the town. The reality is that without BFI Resilience funding all of the hard work, audience development and local buy-in would be lost as we probably wouldn't survive this crisis. This support gives us a fighting chance to reopen and we're using this time to figure out what we need to do differently, as well as identifying the important bits – the ones that make us who we are - to keep the same in the future. But it's not just enough to survive, it's about coming back and being there for the people who use us, need us and are yet to discover us. It's about cinema for all. It's about local people, finding local solutions to local problems. It's about being the best we can be. With this support we hope we can work together with our audiences so that our organisation, our community and our town can thrive once again."

**Natalie Jode, Executive Director, Creative Arts East** (FAN Hub South East member), said: "BFI FAN COVID-19 Resilience investment for Creative Arts East will make a significant difference to our survival, both this year and next. This year it will allow us to balance the books, maintain employment for our staff and continue to support our network of 64 community cinema groups with remote training and digital programming. Crucially, this investment affords us the time and capacity to move out of a financial firefight for 2020-21 and begin looking to and preparing solutions for the medium and longer-term challenges that we are facing alongside our colleagues in the wider arts and cultural sector."

**Jessica Brewster, Director, The Roses Theatre**, (Film Hub South West Member) said: "The BFI Resilience Fund is a game changer for The Roses at an incredibly difficult time. As well as ensuring our survival through the next few months, it will give us the staff capacity to innovate our film programme to better serve our communities while the doors are closed, allowing us to reach new audiences and start new conversations around independent film."

**Rhiannon Wyn Hughes, Festival Director & Cinema Co-Ordinator, Wicked Wales Film Festival and Cinema, Rhyl** (Film Hub Wales member), said: "Having the support and funding from the BFI and Film Hub Wales means a great deal to our team of young volunteers who run the Wicked Pop Up Cinemas at Rhyl Little Theatre in North Wales. With Film Hub Wales support we started our community cinema 3 years ago bringing affordable cinema back to some of the most deprived communities in Wales. This period of lockdown meant losing contact with the audiences we had worked so hard to build up. This funding will enable our volunteers to continue to have a place to work from and an opportunity to reach out to our existing and new audiences ready for when we open the doors again."

**Nerve Centre/ Foyle Film Festival** (Film Hub NI Member) said: "BFI Covid 19 Relief Funding will strengthen our resilience to the impact of COVID-19, by helping us to maintain our connection with our strongest supporters our film audiences and the young people who make the Nerve Centre what it is - a hub for youth culture in Derry-Londonderry. We're a venue that's open for business, building new ways of reaching out and welcoming new audiences, online and in venue."

**Beth Bate, Director of Dundee Contemporary Arts, Dundee** (Film Hub Scotland Member) said: “DCA is delighted to be a recipient of the BFI FAN Resilience Fund: this vital funding will support our cinema team during a time of immense pressure and change to ensure we can reopen our doors to our audiences as soon as possible, with a programme that’s as diverse and exciting as ever.”

**Paul Carr, The Northern Light Cinema, Wirksworth Derbyshire**, (Film Hub Midlands Member) said: “We’re a small rural independent cinema tucked away in Derbyshire and although we have a terrific community around us, it's still easy to feel pretty isolated as far as the cinema is concerned. Independence comes with a price. So the BFI Resilience Fund did more than just throw us a financial lifeline. It connected us back to the big picture, reminded us we weren’t alone and gave us the breathing space, and the confidence, to plan our way back.”

**Watermans** (Film Hub London Member) said: “We are delighted to have been selected to receive this funding from the Mayor of London, BFI and Film London. Watermans is a small independent cinema facing huge challenges at this difficult time - along with so many others - and this grant will help us to weather the storm. But it isn't just about keeping a cinema going during hard times; it's about supporting a place that is at the heart of its community in Hounslow, a place where people meet, make connections, are inspired by talks, festivals and an eclectic selection of film. It's a place where we welcome people whatever their background and put increasing access to the inspiring world of cinema at the heart of our programming. At a time when life may be difficult for so many in the coming years, places that bind communities in all their diversity will be more important than ever, and this grant recognises the role that a cinema like Watermans can play in that.”

**ENDS**

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#### **Notes to Editors**

#### **BFI FAN COVID-19 Resilience Fund Awardees**

##### **Film Hub London**

ARAB BRITISH CENTRE  
ARCHLIGHT CINEMA  
ARTHOUSE CROUCH END  
BARBICAN  
BOUNCE CINEMA  
CASTLE CINEMA  
CATFORD MEWS  
CINE LUMIERE  
CLOSE-UP CINEMA  
DOC'N ROLL

GENESIS CINEMA  
ICA  
KINO KLASSIKA  
LEXI CINEMA  
LITTLE WING  
LONDON INTERNATIONAL ANIMATION FESTIVAL  
LONDON KURDISH FILM FESTIVAL  
PHOENIX CINEMA  
RAINBOW FILM SOCIETY  
REGENT STREET CINEMA  
RICH MIX  
RIO CINEMA  
SCREEN 25  
SOUTH SOCIAL  
TONGUES ON FIRE  
TRISTANA MEDIA  
UK JEWISH FILM  
WATERMANS  
WE ARE PARABLE  
YOUR CINEMA

### **Film Hub Midlands**

BFF  
KINOKULTURE  
LIGHTHOUSE  
LIVE&LOCAL  
LOEWEN  
MAC  
MALVERN  
MEDIA ACTIVE  
MOCKINGBIRD  
REGAL MELTON MOWBRAY  
REGAL TENBURY  
THE HIVE  
THE LOFT  
THE NORTHERN LIGHT  
THE RITZ CINEMA BELPER  
WELLINGTON ORBIT

### **Film Hub NI**

CINEMAGIC  
MOVIE HOUSE  
NERVE CENTRE  
SECOND CHANCE CINEMA

### **Film Hub North**

ALNWICK PLAYHOUSE  
ARC  
BREWERY ARTS CENTRE  
CHORLEY THEATRE

DAY FOR NIGHT FILM & VISUAL ARTS LTD  
FORUM CINEMA HEXHAM  
GRIMMFEST  
HEBDEN BRIDGE PICTURE HOUSE  
HYDE PARK PICTURE HOUSE  
JAM JAR CINEMA  
KESWICK ALHAMBRA  
LEIGH FILM SOCIETY  
LUCEM HOUSE  
SAVOY CINEMA – HEATON MOOR  
SHEFFIELD ADVENTURE FILM FESTIVAL  
STAR & SHADOW  
STORYHOUSE  
THE DUKES  
THE REX WILMSLOW

### **Film Hub Scotland**

BIRKS CINEMA, ABERFELDY  
CAMPBELTOWN PICTUREHOUSE  
CROMARTY COMMUNITY CINEMA  
DCA (DUNDEE CONTEMPORARY ARTS)  
EASTGATE ARTS  
GLASGOW SHORT FILM FESTIVAL  
MACROBERT ARTS CENTRE  
PAVILION CINEMA, GALASHIELS

### **Film Hub South East**

ADEC (ARTS DEVELOPMENT IN EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE)  
BROADWAY CINEMA - LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY HERITAGE FUND  
CAMBRIDGE FILM TRUST  
CORN EXCHANGE WALLINGFORD LTD  
CREATIVE ARTS EAST  
KINO TEATR LTD  
NORDEN FARM CENTRE TRUST LTD  
NORWICH FILM FESTIVAL  
THE DISS CORN HALL TRUST  
THE FILM PLACE  
THE PICTURE HOUSE UCKFIELD  
THE RIVERSIDE RESTAURANT & THEATRE LIMITED  
THE ULTIMATE PICTURE PALACE LTD  
TOWNER ENTERPRISE  
TRINITY THEATRE & ARTS CENTRE  
VISION BOX CINEMA LTD (PALACE CINEMA - BROADSTAIRS)

### **Film Hub South West**

AFRIKA EYE  
BARN CINEMA  
COMPASS PRESENTS  
CORNWALL FF  
CREATIVE KERNOW - C FYLM

CURZON CLEVEDON  
EXETER PHOENIX  
FILM BATH  
LIGHTHOUSE POOLE  
MERLIN CINEMAS  
PLYMOUTH ARTS CINEMA  
PORTSMOUTH FILM SOC  
SLAPSTICK  
SOUTH WEST SILENTS  
STRODE THEATRE  
THE CUBE CINEMA  
THE POLY  
THE POUND  
THE REX CINEMA - PURBECK FILM FESTIVAL  
THE ROSES THEATRE  
THE WATERMARK  
WESTLANDS

### **Film Hub Wales**

CELLB (GWALLGOFAID)  
73 DEGREE COMMUNITY LTD  
CARDIFF ANIMATION FESTIVAL  
COMMODORE CINEMA  
DRAGON THEATRE, BARMOUTH  
KOTATSU JAPANESE ANIMATION FESTIVAL  
MAGIC LANTERN / TYWYN CINEMA  
MEMO ARTS CENTRE, BARRY  
NEUADD OGWEN (TABERNAEL, BETHESDA CYF)  
PHOENIX TON PENTRE (RHONDDA COMMUNITY BUSINESS INITIATIVES)  
SAVOY THEATRE AND CINEMA, MONMOUTH  
SNOWCAT CINEMA  
THEATR GWAUN  
TORCH THEATRE  
WICKED WALES FILM FESTIVAL AND CINEMA  
WOW WALES ONE WORLD FILM FESTIVAL

### **About the BFI Film Audience 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 and venues strategically placed around the country. 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.

BFI FAN Film Hubs are:

- Film Hub Midlands is led by Broadway, Nottingham working in partnership with the Birmingham-based Flatpack
- Film Hub North is led collectively by Showroom Workstation, Sheffield, HOME Manchester and Tyneside Cinema, Newcastle

- Film Hub South East is led by the Independent Cinema Office
- Film Hub South West is led by Watershed in Bristol
- Film Hub Scotland is led by Glasgow Film Theatre
- Film Hub NI is led by Queen's University Belfast
- Film Hub Wales is led by Chapter in Cardiff
- Film Hub London is led by Film London

### **About the BFI**

The BFI is the UK's lead organisation for film, television and the moving image. It is a distributor of National Lottery funding and a cultural charity that:

- Curates and presents the greatest international public programme of world cinema for audiences; in cinemas, at festivals and online
- Cares for the BFI National Archive – the most significant film and television archive in the world
- Actively seeks out and supports the next generation of filmmakers
- Works with Government and industry to make the UK the most creatively exciting and prosperous place to make film internationally

Founded in 1933, the BFI is a registered charity governed by Royal Charter. The BFI Board of Governors is chaired by Josh Berger CBE.