

National Lottery Cinema Weekend 2021

Information / FAQs (last updated 20 March 2021)

To celebrate the National Lottery's support for film, and to provide support for UK cinemas, National Lottery Cinema Weekend will be returning on Saturday 19th and Sunday 20th June 2021.

What is National Lottery Cinema Weekend (NLCW)?

NLCW is an event from [Camelot](#), the operators of The National Lottery, and the [BFI](#) where players of The National Lottery can claim a pair of free cinema tickets (at participating venues). National Lottery players will be able to book their tickets in advance via a NLCW website run by ShowFilmFirst.

Camelot will then reimburse venues for the free tickets (up to an agreed maximum value).

Who can take part?

Any cinema in the UK can participate. You need to either be a venue that regularly screens films to a paying audience, or an exhibitor that regularly uses a specific venue.

You do not need to have been a recipient of National Lottery funding in any form to take part.

Why should I take part?

2020 has been a challenging time for everyone in film exhibition and we see NLCW 2021 as an opportunity to celebrate the resilience of the sector as well as an exciting offer which will encourage audiences back into cinemas.

As well as being able to offer your audiences free tickets, there will be hundreds of venues taking part all across the UK, supported by a national press and media campaign, and you'll also be supported with a suite of marketing assets to use across your own comms and channels.

How did the day go in 2019?

Nearly 60,000 tickets were subsidised at 250 venues, with NLCW accounting for 40% of box office at participating venues. See the summary for National Lottery Cinema Day in 2019 [here](#).

How will NLCW take Covid into account?

All participating cinemas will be expected to follow Government Covid-19 guidelines and to ensure the safety and wellbeing of their staff is prioritised.

NLCW was originally planned for late 2020, but has been pushed back to the end of June 2021 due to the impact of Covid-19.

We are planning NLCW on the basis that Covid restrictions allow the majority of cinemas to be open. We will be regularly reviewing the feasibility and take into consideration Government guidelines. Camelot will reserve the right to cancel NLCW at short notice based on Government guidelines, and cinemas will also have the right to withdraw prior to tickets being made available to Lottery players (Wednesday 16 June).

We are running the event over two days to allow for social distancing and increase the opportunity for National Lottery players to get involved.

How do I take part?

Click [here](#) to register. You will be asked to fill in venue information and confirm you agree to the terms and conditions for participation. Once you have registered, we will be in touch to confirm your participation.

Registration will be open until the 31st of May. The official website will go live with venue listings around the end of April.

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TICKET SUBSIDY

What is the maximum ticket subsidy?

You will be reimbursed the regular price of your tickets. For example, if your normal adult ticket price is £5 and you have 100 NLCW tickets booked, you will be reimbursed £500.

There will be a maximum cap of £7.50 for the per-ticket subsidy to ensure as many venues as possible can take part. This means even if your ticket prices are above £7.50, you will only be reimbursed the maximum ticket subsidy for each free ticket you issue on the day. For example if your normal ticket price is £9 and you have 100 NLCW tickets booked, you will be reimbursed £750.

Which screens / shows will it apply to?

NLCW should apply to all screens and all shows. This will make the offer at your venue simpler to communicate to your audiences, and prevent any confusion or dissatisfaction from some screenings not being included.

However, the final decision as to any exceptions rests with each venue. Should you wish to exclude any show from NLCW, you will need to make this clear on your website.

Age restrictions

Free cinema tickets can only be claimed by Lottery players, and will specify that the tickets are for 'adults'. This is due to the subsidy funding coming from breakage money which is formed of prize money, and therefore Gambling Commission rules prevent this money going to anyone not of legal playing age.

Until 21st April 2021, this meant being 16 and over. From the 22nd April, players must be 18 or over to play any National Lottery games. This is in line with the government's decision to raise the legal minimum age of play.

To apply for a pair of tickets for National Lottery Cinema Day requires the reference number from any National Lottery ticket or game bought after 1st January 2019. Therefore National Lottery players must be aged 16 or over from 1st January 2019 until 21st April 2021, or over the age of 18 for tickets bought from 22nd April 2021.

Note, this only affects the National Lottery players registering for tickets via www.cinemaweekend.co.uk which is the only way to claim free tickets. As players can not claim free tickets on the day at the box office the change in the age limit for players to claim tickets should not affect venues.

Venues must still abide by film age certification requirements.

How does the ticket process work?

We are asking cinemas to provide booking codes in advance. National Lottery players will be able to register and claim a pair of codes on the NLCW website and use the codes to book a standard seat via your website.

This means you don't have to block book or hold tickets back for NLCW reservations, and you do not need to add special NLCW tickets to your box office.

How will the codes mechanism work?

Following the registration period we will ask cinemas to provide an agreed number of one-off codes, viable only for the NLCW days and to cover the price of a standard full-price ticket. The Lotto player can then use these codes on your website when booking a ticket.

What if we can't issue / accept codes?

You will still be able to participate in NLCW, but you will need to reserve a certain number of tickets for each show on NLCW days. These tickets will be available for Lotto players to reserve via the NLCW website.

We will follow up with further details following registration.

Can National Lottery players claim a free ticket at our box office in advance or on the day?

No, NLCW tickets can only be booked in advance online via the NLCW website.

How do we claim the subsidy?

Following the NLCW on Saturday 19th and Sunday 20th June 2021, venues should send their full box office returns to the NLCW project team (at cinemaweekend@independentcinemaoffice.org.uk). These will be checked and confirmed, then you will be asked to invoice for the agreed ticket subsidy total.

Venues should submit their distributor returns and pay distribution licenses as normal.

Will we have to check if the proof of National Lottery purchase is for the most recent draw?

No. Players can use any National Lottery ticket, including scratchcards bought online, in app or instore as well as Instant Win Games to claim their free pair of cinema tickets on the Cinema Weekend website.

Can people claim their free ticket for a different day?

No, the free tickets will only be available on Saturday 19th and Sunday 20th June 2021. In the event of NLCW being cancelled or postponed we will work with you to consider whether tickets can be used at a later date.

If an audience member doesn't play The National Lottery, can they pay for a cinema ticket as normal? And can they book that ticket in advance?

Yes, anyone should be able to book a ticket as normal subject to availability. It is suggested that if the venue allows advance booking of paid-for tickets, it should be made very clear to buyers that free tickets will also be available as part of NLCW.

Are tickets still subject to VAT? Yes, VAT applies to tickets as normal, so the ticket subsidy price claimed from Camelot will be inclusive of VAT. However, Gift Aid can not be claimed for tickets.

Can I charge extra for premium seats?

Participating venues must make a standard ticket available to National Lottery players for free. National Lottery players should not have to pay any surcharges or booking fee for their free standard ticket. You may charge an upgrade fee if the National Lottery player wishes to upgrade from their standard seat.

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FILMS / DISTRIBUTORS

What films can I show?

There is no menu of films to select, and no restrictions on what you can programme. There is no requirement for the NLCW to apply to just new releases, or second run or repertory screenings - what you show is entirely up to you.

Note, you are still responsible for your own bookings, including ensuring you have a valid license for any film you screen and negotiating returns with the distributor. If your regular ticket price is above £7.50, you must ensure you discuss this with the distributor when agreeing rental terms with them.

Are all distributors taking part?

Distributors have been aware of the development of NLCW and many are keen to take part. You must discuss bookings for NLCW with the distributor in advance, and, if the maximum ticket subsidy is below your regular adult ticket price, you must ensure you discuss this with the distributor when booking.

Will any films be promoted on the day?

There won't be any particular titles being promoted on the day. The wider campaign illustrates all the fun things that are made possible with National Lottery funding and celebrates the support that National Lottery players provide the British film industry.

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PARTNERS

Who is behind NLCW? The event is funded by The National Lottery. It is being produced by Camelot, the operators of The National Lottery in partnership with the BFI and the [Film Audience Network](#).

Is it part of Arthouse Cinema Day in the US, or any of the European Arthouse Day? It has been developed separately, but there may be some partnerships with international days.

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MARKETING

What will the press campaign look like?

There will be a joint press release from Camelot & BFI announcing the day, which is expected to be at the end of April. We'll also be supplying a suggested press release for you to tailor to your own programme for the day - more details to follow in due course.

What marketing materials will be available?

A range of point of sale materials and trailers will be made available to participating exhibitors. Further details will be confirmed in due course.

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DATA

What data do we have to collect? Venues will need to submit normal box office returns with the breakdown of tickets for each screening. We will require a breakdown of all tickets (both NLCW tickets and paid / comped tickets) for each screening.

Do we have to carry-out audience surveys? We would suggest that NLCW would be a good opportunity to learn more about your audiences, however there is no requirement to collect any information. If you do choose to collect audience data on the day, it would be great if you could share any top-line data in line with GDPR regulations, particularly around the number of first-time audience members.

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CONTACT

The [Independent Cinema Office](#) in its capacity as [Film Hub South East](#) will be the co-ordinating body on behalf of the Film Audience Network and the central contact point for cinemas. All enquiries should be addressed to the dedicated email cinemaweekend@independentcinemaoffice.org.uk

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