

FILM EXHIBITION FUND

Funding to screen independent UK and international film
and moving image for audiences across Greater London
GUIDELINES 2026/27



Film Hub
London



AT A GLANCE

Total amount available: Circa £75,000

Funding: up to £5,000 per project

Fund opens: 2 February 2026

Fund closes: 5pm, Monday 2 March 2026 (Round 1) and
5pm, Monday 28 September 2026 (Round 2)

Activity window: 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027 (Round 1),
1 November 2026 to 31 March 2027 (Round 2)

Aim: To develop inclusive audiences for a broad range of independent UK and international film, screen heritage and the wider moving image.

Priorities: We are especially interested in proposals aimed at working-class audiences and will also prioritise activity in areas of deprivation, especially projects that aim to reduce economic barriers for audiences. £10,000 of the total £75,000 available has been ringfenced to support such activity with maximum awards of £5,000. We are also keen to support projects focused on Black and Global Majority audiences, young people aged 25 and under, disabled audiences and LGBTQIA+ audiences.

Please contact us if you need additional advice.



INTRODUCTION

FILM HUB LONDON

Film Hub London works to make cinema more accessible and better reflect London's diverse communities, particularly in areas outside central London. From independent cinemas and multiplexes through to pop-ups and local film clubs, we bring together film exhibitors from across the city to learn from and support each other.

This fund aims to bring the best independent UK and international film to audiences across Greater London, delivering against the priorities set out in the [BFI'S SCREEN CULTURE 2033 STRATEGY](#).

Film Hub London is part of the BFI Film Audience Network (FAN), and has been awarded BFI National Lottery funding with the aim of reaching audiences across the UK, giving them the opportunity to enjoy a broad range of films, regardless of geography or circumstance.

WHAT IS THE FILM EXHIBITION FUND?

The Film Exhibition Fund (FEF) supports Film Hub London members to develop audiences for independent UK and international film and the wider moving image.

OUR PRIORITIES

We can offer funding towards projects that meet one or more of the following priorities, which reflect the [BFI'S SCREEN CULTURE 2033 STRATEGY](#):

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT: Access for people across Greater London to a wider choice of film and the moving image including independent UK and international film, documentaries, TV and screen heritage:

- The primary focus of the FEF is in-person events that bring audiences together for a communal viewing experience. Projects involving online and hybrid events will be considered where this represents a valuable opportunity for audience development, to reach priority audiences that would not otherwise experience the film/s.
- We are open to exploring immersive and interactive technologies such as gaming, VR/AR and wider screen based technologies that interact with cinema experiences.
- Added value such as post film discussions, Q&As and informal learning activities are encouraged.

TACKLING SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND GEOGRAPHIC BARRIERS: We want to improve access to screen culture for people across London, by lowering barriers such as prohibitive costs, lack of cultural provision, lack of accessible screenings and threshold anxiety. We are particularly interested in supporting proposals focussed on working class audiences, Black and Global Majority audiences, young audiences, disabled audiences and LGBTQIA+ audiences.

YOUNG AUDIENCES: Opportunities for children, young people aged 25 and under, and families to develop a relationship with screen culture. This might include young curation schemes, clubs or partnership projects with film education specialists. Organisations will need to demonstrate that they have safeguarding policies in place.

SCREEN HERITAGE: Greater access to national and regional archive collections, that reflect the diversity of London and increase appreciation for heritage film across all ages.

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

All supported activities will also need to address these fundamental principles:

EQUITY AND INCLUSION: FAN champions everyday inclusion. We would like to see how your project diversifies audiences for a wide range of cinema, breaking down social, economic and geographical barriers for audiences including.

- Programmes led by and for communities that prioritise and represent lived experiences, broadening representation on-screen and where relevant, in the exhibition workforce. We are particularly interested in supporting proposals focused on working class audiences, Black and Global Majority audiences, young audiences aged 25 and under, disabled audiences and LGBTQIA+ audiences;
- Programmes that prioritise outreach with community engagement at their heart.

Additional advice and support may be available to projects with strong inclusion aims, that specifically address:

- Economic barriers and / or engagement of working-class audiences;
- Engaging children, families and young audiences aged 25 and under;
- Inclusion of Black and Global Majority Audiences;
- Access for Deaf and Disabled Audiences;

Proposals that focus on one or more of these areas may be shared with specialist freelancers, who may be in touch to discuss what, if any, support might be of use.

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY: We are committed to minimising the negative environmental impact of the work we support and ask all recipients to contribute to this aim. In your proposal, you will be asked to set out the steps you are taking both to minimise the environmental impact of your activity and to improve audience awareness of the climate and biodiversity crises.

Inspiring examples of exhibitors working in this area include: [Curzon](#), [Lewes Depot](#), [HOME Manchester](#) and [Scott Cinemas](#). The [BFI](#) and [Julie's Bicycle](#) have a number of recommended resources that may be useful when planning around sustainability including the [BFI Sustainable Screen Hub](#) and the [Creative Climate Tool](#).

Priority will be given to projects responding to these priorities and principles in London's Outer Boroughs: Barking and Dagenham, Barnet, **Bexley, Brent, Bromley, Croydon, Ealing, Enfield, Haringey, Harrow, Havering, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Kingston upon Thames, Merton, Newham, Redbridge, Richmond upon Thames, Sutton, Waltham Forest.**

BFI DIVERSITY STANDARDS

Project proposals should take an inclusive approach to audience development, setting out how they will address the [BFI diversity standards](#). This means giving clear consideration to fair representation on screen, in the workforce (where appropriate) and ensuring that audiences feel welcome in your cinema spaces.

The Standards focus on the protected characteristics defined in the [UK Equality Act 2010](#), in relation to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, gender fluid and non-binary identities, religion and belief - as well as socio-economic background, language, caring responsibilities, geographical location and wider intersectional experiences.

Larger awards will be expected to respond in more detail. Please get in touch if you need help interpreting the Standards.

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

PREVENTION OF BULLYING, HARASSMENT AND RACISM

There is much work to be done to create safe, respectful, workplaces across the screen industries. BFI and BAFTA 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. We encourage applicants to read and share them within their organisation. All our funding agreements seek 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. If you intend to engage with volunteers you must ensure that you adhere to the relevant legislation and have a volunteer policy in 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 these policies in place, please get in touch and we can signpost you to additional resources to help you to develop your policy.



ELIGIBILITY & FUNDING

AM I ELIGIBLE?

You must be a BFI FAN member organisation in order to access Film Hub London funding. Filmmakers and individuals cannot apply. To become a member, please [fill in our Membership Application](#).

Membership is free to qualifying organisations and offers access to our [range of funding, support and benefits](#).

Organisations who have received previous support from the FAN Film Exhibition Fund are eligible to submit a proposal on completion of the previously supported project including the completion of the associated reporting requirements. Proposals from these organisations should be for new work or the continuation of activity which has not been supported under existing funding arrangements. Venues supported by Film Hub London's Cinema Incentive Scheme are eligible to apply with activity distinct from that supported by the Cinema Incentive Scheme.

HOW MUCH CAN I ASK FOR?

Members can request up to **£5,000** per proposal.

The average funding allocation from the FEF in 2025/26 was £2,475 (the smallest being £900 and the largest £5,000).

Larger requests will need to demonstrate audience reach, strategic impact and address more of the criteria.

If you are applying for under £4,000, projects should aim for a subsidy from the Fund of between £5 and £10 per audience member with the higher limit to accommodate projects delivering access provision which may incur greater cost. For example, a project seeking an award of £3,500 would be expected to deliver minimum admissions between 350 and 700. Applications of over £4,000 should deliver a minimum of 1,000 admissions.

ELIGIBILITY & FUNDING

Audience targets should be realistic with a clear basis provided for their calculation. This might include reference to audiences attending previous, similar or equivalent activity. While we do not have a set percentage requirement for match funding, we expect to see box office income and other partnership support - whether in cash, volunteer time or other in-kind contributions.

There will be two deadlines for final proposals: 5pm, Monday 2 March 2026 and 5pm, Monday 28 September 2026.

Funded activity must be completed by 31 March 2027. If you have a multi-year project in mind that could run beyond this date, this may be considered, subject to funding and demonstrable need.

USE OF FUNDS

ELIGIBLE EXPENSES:

- Film rights and transport;
- Rights clearances and curation;
- Project staffing costs e.g. project management or travel expenses;
- Venue or equipment hire;
- Marketing, advertising and PR;
- Event costs - e.g. speaker, talent or artist fees;
- Volunteer expenses;
- Evaluation costs;
- Accessibility – e.g. supporting materials, subtitling fees;
- Outreach e.g. community engagement or transport for isolated audiences
- Other audience development – e.g. young programmers workshops;
- Online activity such as web platforms or hosting fees.

This list is not exhaustive and other items may be considered

ELIGIBILITY & FUNDING

INELIGIBLE EXPENSES:

- Film Premieres
- Filmmaking or workshops relating to filmmaking
- Formal education activities/school events
- Capital for new film equipment or building repairs
- Closed events which are not open to the public, including student film events, industry showcases, or unticketed events where numbers cannot be reported
- Programmes where film is not the central art form, such as opera, literature, dance on film, or entire programmes of artists' moving image
- General running costs not related to the activity, or activity covered by other funding
- Programmes that duplicate provision in the same area
- Events taking place outside of Greater London
- UK applicants based in other Hub regions. If you aim to establish work in Greater London such as touring programmes, this will not be a priority. We suggest you speak to your main Hub region as a first step to establish process. You should also read the [BFI Audience Project Fund](#) guidance to see if your plans meet the fund's criteria.



ELIGIBILITY & FUNDING

HOW TO SUBMIT A PROPOSAL

We strongly encourage you to contact us before submitting your proposal so we can offer you any necessary guidance or advice.

If you wish to proceed you will need to submit a proposal and budget, all of which are available to [download from our website](#). If you have access requirements that mean you need assistance with the process, you may be able to benefit from the [BFI Access Support scheme](#).

Completed proposal documents should be submitted via email to filmhublondon@filmlondon.org.uk

WHEN WILL I HEAR BACK?

We aim to notify you of the outcome of your submission within 5 weeks of the deadlines listed above - this might be delayed if there are complexities or outstanding questions associated with your request.



ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Your proposal will be assessed by the Film Hub London team. External assessors may also be brought in to review your proposal.

Those that are recommended for support by the Film Hub London team will then be considered either by the Film London Board or Film London Audience Development Sub-Committee who will either ratify the team's recommendation or decline it.

The following assessment criteria will be considered:

ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY: Are the proposed activity and timescale achievable? What are the long-term plans to reach audiences? Does the organisation have the required staff, partnerships and venue buy-in to deliver the project? Does the organisation have relevant previous experience?

FUND OBJECTIVES: Are all eligibility criteria met? Will the proposal engage audiences with independent UK and international film, documentaries, TV and/or screen heritage programming in an inspiring and ambitious way? Does the activity respond to any of the fund's other key focus areas? and if so how?

AUDIENCES: Are projected admissions realistic? Is it clear how audience targets have been set and is the basis for them reasonable? Is there a clear need for the activity - does it provide audiences with access to films otherwise unavailable locally? Subsidy per head will be a consideration.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

MARKETING & EVALUATION: Who are the target audiences and how will they be reached? Are the intended audiences in line with FAN's priorities? Does the applicant have experience of reaching audiences in this way? What does success look like and what will the organisation learn from the project?

BFI DIVERSITY STANDARDS: Does the proposal clearly respond to the BFI Diversity Standards?

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT: does the proposal seek to mitigate its negative environmental impact? Where applicable, will it raise audience awareness of the climate and biodiversity crises?

BUDGET: Have all costs been considered and are they reasonable/eligible? Does the budget balance? Does the project represent value for money? Have details of income been provided? Have access costs been included? Have appropriate staffing costs been included?

Please give clear examples when answering each question, to help us understand how you meet the criteria.

Please note: when appropriate, previous project performance may be considered when making a funding decision on proposals by organisations who have already received Film Hub London funding.

DECISIONS & FEEDBACK

DECISIONS & FEEDBACK

If your proposal is successful, we may discuss amendments and wish to see a revised plan before confirming funding. Project timelines will need to accommodate this process.

You may also need to supply relevant supporting documents such as your most recent annual or semi-annual report and accounts (as submitted to Companies House), evidence of your organisation's bank account, or any other documents necessary for Film London to complete a financial health check. You may also need to undertake an online identity check.

If there are no recommendations or amendments to be made, you will be sent a confirmation email setting out the terms and conditions attached to the funding. These will cover payment information, crediting guidelines, audience surveying, and monitoring and reporting requirements.

Film Hub London anticipates a high demand for support and we expect this fund to be oversubscribed. We will consider projects against the aims and objectives of Film Hub London and FEF, however, even if you meet all those criteria, please be aware that we may not be able to support your activity.

DECISIONS & FEEDBACK

If you are unsuccessful in your proposal, you will be contacted by email. Being unsuccessful does not prevent you from accessing future Hub opportunities, however you will not be able to resubmit a declined proposal to the Film Exhibition Fund in the 2026/27 financial year.

You may seek funding for a new and different proposal in 2026/27 but you should contact the Hub team in advance to discuss this. You may also submit proposals to other hub opportunities including other open funds and bursaries.

Due to the volume of funding requests we expect to receive, feedback will not always be possible.

COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

The funding decision is final. Inevitably applications will be turned down and applicants may be disappointed by this result. Formal appeals against the final decision will not be considered unless the applicant has good cause to believe that the procedures for processing the application were not adhered to, or applied in such as a way as to prejudice the outcome of the application.

Film Hub London is a collaborative network of film exhibitors in the capital that share a common goal: to ensure cinema is accessible to as many people across the city as possible. From independent cinemas and multiplexes through to pop-ups and local film clubs, we bring together film exhibitors from across the city to learn from and support each other. The Hub works to make cinema more accessible and better reflect London's diverse communities, particularly in areas outside central London. Film Hub London is managed by Film London and supported by National Lottery funding as part of the BFI Film Audience Network (FAN) and BFI NETWORK.

t: 020 7613 7697 e: filmhublondon@filmlondon.org.uk



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. 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.

IMAGES:

Rio Cinema (front)

Prince Charles Cinema(pg. 2)

Lexi Cinema (pg. 7)

Rich Mix (pg. 10)

Hackney Picturehouse(pg. 11)