

Film London

Response to DCMS Open call for evidence

National Lottery Good Causes: Fund what matters to you

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Are you answering this call for evidence as an individual member of the public, or on behalf of an organisation?

An individual member of the public	
On behalf of an organisation	✓

1. What is the name of your organisation?

Name	Film London
Prefer not to say	

2. Where in the UK are your organisation's headquarters based?

Country	England
Region	London

3. The government is interested in understanding whether there is a relationship between where organisations are based and the impact of and access to National Lottery Good Cause Funding. To aid we are asking for your organisation's headquarters postcode, but this is not a mandatory requirement.

If you are comfortable sharing, what is your organisation's headquarters postcode?

N4 3JG

4. How many employees does your organisation currently have?

1 – 9 employees	
10 – 49 employees	
50 – 249 employees	✓
250+ employees	
Don't know	
Prefer not to say	

5. Which of the following best describes the legal or operational structure of your organisation?

Unincorporated association	
Charitable trust	
Incorporated limited company	
Company limited by guarantee	✓
Charitable incorporated organisation	
Community interest company	
Co-operative or community benefit society	
Local Authority	
Educational institution	
Other (Please specify)	
Prefer not to say	
Don't know	

6. Which of the following sector(s) best represents your organisation? Please select as many as apply.

Environment	
Health, social care or wellbeing	
Social inclusion	✓
Sport	
Arts and Culture	✓
Consultancy	
Tackling poverty	
Education	✓
Children, Youth and Families	
National Lottery Distributor Body	
Heritage	✓
Local voluntary or grassroots group	
Local Authority	
Other (please specify)	
Don't know	

7. What was your organisation's approximate turnover in the last financial year?

For charities or non-profits, please use your total annual income figure (e.g. total funds raised plus any income from grants).

£49,999 or less	
£50,000 to £249,999	
£250,000 to £999,999	
£1,000,000 to £4,999,999	
£5,000,000 or more	✓
Prefer not to say	
Don't know	

EMPOWERING YOUR COMMUNITIES TO FEEL BENEFITS

The government wants to ensure that all communities can access and benefit from National Lottery good cause funding.

We're now going to ask some questions about the impact of National Lottery good cause funding.

8. How aware, if at all, are you of the impact National Lottery good cause funding has had in each of the following?

Your organisation or sector	
Very aware	✓
Somewhat aware	
Not very aware	
Not aware at all	
Don't know	
Nationally across the UK	
Very aware	✓
Somewhat aware	
Not very aware	

Not aware at all	
Don't know	
Your local area	
Very aware	✓
Somewhat aware	
Not very aware	
Not aware at all	
Don't know	

9. How do you think the National Lottery could better communicate with you about how it's investing good cause funding in your local area?

As an organisation partly supported by National Lottery funding and disbursing Lottery funds in London, Film London has an excellent knowledge of how Lottery funding is invested across its local area.

We are generally happy with the way in which the National Lottery communicates with stakeholders such as ourselves.

FUNDING WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO YOU

The government wants to understand the public's views on the current good causes and whether they reflect today's national priorities.

10. Which of the following areas, if any, do you think should be prioritised for receiving National Lottery good cause funding?

As a reminder, good cause funding should only be spent on projects and activities which do not typically receive core government funding - this is known as the additionality principle.

Heritage (e.g. funding to protect and promote historic buildings, public parks, community archaeology).	✓
Sport (e.g. funding for grassroots sports clubs, sporting initiatives, Olympic teams etc.)	
Arts and culture (e.g. funding for films, theatre, dance, music, literature etc.)	✓

The environment (e.g. local nature restoration, urban green spaces, tackling the climate crisis etc.)	✓
Health and wellbeing <u>which excludes core NHS spending</u> (e.g. funding for mental health support, local wellbeing initiatives etc.)	
Funding for community-led initiatives (e.g. projects which tackle poverty, loneliness, and support local charities)	✓
Education and skills <u>which excludes core education spending</u> (e.g. youth work, life skills, community training that opens doors to new opportunities etc)	✓
Don't know	

- 11. In the last financial year, the National Lottery raised £1.7bn for good causes. This is currently distributed as follows: Arts and Culture (20%), Sport (20%), Heritage (20%), Charitable activities including health, education and the environment (40%).**

Considering this, what percentage of funding, if any, do you think each of these areas should receive? Your answers must add up to 100%.

	%
Arts and culture	25
Heritage	25
Charitable activities including health, education and the environment	25
Sport	25
Total	100

- 12. As a reminder, the National Lottery good cause funding currently supports the following areas: Arts and Culture, Sport, Heritage, Local communities and charities including Health and wellbeing, Education and skills and the Environment.**

Good cause funding should only be spent on projects and activities which do not typically receive core government funding - this is known as the additionality principle.

Are there any further areas you would like to see supported by National Lottery good cause funding?

No.

13. The proportion of funding given to each area is established in law, but is not subject to any periodical review.

How often, if at all, do you think that the proportion of National Lottery good cause funding each area receives should be reviewed?

Don't know	
It should never be reviewed	
Less often than every 10 years	
Occasionally (e.g. every ten years)	
Regularly (e.g. every 5 years)	✓
Frequently (e.g. every 1-2 years)	

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES TO TAKE DECISIONS

The government wants to ensure that communities across the country have the opportunity to access and benefit from good cause funding.

14. As you may know, National Lottery good cause funding is currently spent on both large-scale national projects and small-scale community-level projects.

When making decisions on how to spend the funding, to what extent do you think large-scale national projects or small-scale community-level projects should be prioritised?

National projects should receive <u>lots</u> more	
National projects should receive <u>slightly</u> more	
Both should receive roughly the same amount	✓
Local projects should receive <u>slightly</u> more	
Local projects should receive <u>lots</u> more	
Don't know	

- 15. From the following options, how do you think National Lottery good cause funding would be best spent across the UK?**

Funding should be primarily focused on communities with the greatest need (e.g. areas with higher poverty, fewer public services or facilities)	✓
Funding should be primarily focused on higher profile or national projects (e.g. national museums, Olympic sports, UK films)	
Funding should be primarily focused on all communities regardless of need	
None of the above	
Don't know	

- 16. To what extent, if either, would you support or oppose the amount of National Lottery good cause funding an area receives being linked to how many lottery tickets are sold there?**

Strongly oppose	✓
Tend to oppose	
Neither support nor oppose	
Tend to support	
Strongly support	
Don't know	

- 17. How much influence, if any, do you think the community in which your organisation operates has over decisions about where National Lottery good cause funding is spent?**

Not influence at all	
Not very much influence	
A fair amount of influence	
A great deal of influence	✓
Don't know	

18. We are aiming to make good cause funding more participatory, inclusive and representative for communities across the UK.

How best do you think the National Lottery and the 12 National Lottery Distributor Bodies, who distribute lottery funding to grant recipients, could give your community more of a say over where good cause funding goes?

This principle was addressed in Baroness Hodge's review of Arts Council England, which recommended that all funding other than that directed to nationally significant organisations should be devolved to new local and regional decision-making boards, drawn from local artists, local community organisations, local education representatives and local government.¹

We endorse that recommendation. We are encouraged by Arts Council England's response, which commits to embedding artform expertise and citizen voice, initially within the National Portfolio process, and we would like to see the same approach extended across all Lottery funds.² In our own sector that would mean inviting input from the communities we serve: makers, producers, exhibitors, and new entrants to the screen workforce.

Our experience suggests that delegated, locally rooted decision-making already achieves much of this in practice. As the BFI's delivery partner in London, Film London operates close to the communities it serves, and our programmes are shaped by continuous feedback from participants, industry partners and education providers.

Our Equal Access Network, which supports people from backgrounds historically underrepresented in screen production, both distributes opportunity and gathers labour market intelligence that informs the design of subsequent programmes. Feedback from beneficiaries, industry partners and other stakeholders is collected throughout our programmes and acted on.

The BFI's own delivery model already demonstrates what devolved decision-making can achieve at scale. Through the BFI Film Audience Network, BFI NETWORK and the BFI Skills Clusters, National Lottery investment is channelled to local and regional organisations which then take funding, programming and talent decisions in response to the needs and specificities of the communities they serve.

Film Hub London, which Film London manages as part of FAN, allocates the Film Exhibition Fund to exhibitors across the capital drawing on local knowledge that no centralised process could replicate. BFI NETWORK talent funding is devolved on the same principle, as is the work of the BFI Metro London Skills Cluster. We would encourage government and the distributor bodies to treat this model as a template for wider practice.

¹ Arts Council England: an independent review by Baroness Margaret Hodge, Department for Culture, Media and Sport, published 16 December 2025. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/arts-council-england-an-independent-review-by-baroness-margaret-hodge>

² Arts Council England, Independent Review of Arts Council England: our Response, 2026. <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/independent-review-full-response>

The Secretary of State's policy directions to the BFI already require it to involve the public and local communities in setting priorities.³ They also require it to ensure equality of opportunity, to reduce economic and social deprivation, and to ensure access to funding across the whole of the UK. Widening community voice should bring more people within reach of the funding while eligibility remains as broad as it is now.

The arm's length principle also remains essential, and we welcome the government's restatement of its commitment to it.⁴ Boards drawn from local artists, community organisations, education and local government would strengthen distribution. An allocation formula set by reference to where lottery tickets happen to be sold, which question 16 raises, would weaken it, and we oppose that strongly. Any new board or panel should be constituted so that the benefit of a grant reaches the public, participants and audiences rather than the bodies that administer it.

But distributing commissioning decisions across a larger number of new and regionally distinct bodies carries a risk to the consistency and the quality of what is commissioned. Assessing a short film, a first feature or an exhibition proposal calls for specialist judgement that takes years to build and that is currently concentrated in a relatively small number of experienced teams. Spread too thinly, or rebuilt from scratch in each area, it would produce markedly different standards between one part of the country and another, and applicants would face a lottery of a different kind. We raise this as a risk to be avoided rather than as a criticism of any existing arrangement.

Community voice has to be resourced. Boards and panels drawn from a largely freelance creative workforce require fees, travel costs and scheduling that accommodates caring responsibilities and irregular working patterns. Without that, participation defaults to those who can afford to volunteer, which reproduces the very exclusions the reform is intended to address.

In a city such as London, community is defined as much by sector, background and circumstance as by geography.

Funding structures should recognise these different types of communities. There are communities of place, meaning a borough, an estate or a high street. Communities of shared identity are those formed around heritage, language, faith, disability or sexuality. Communities of shared interest are those formed around a craft, a genre or a venue.

Equally, decision-making structures should be able to reflect these communities of practice and identity alongside place.

Representation in the bodies that distribute funding matters as much as representation on the boards that advise them. Following an independent review of diversity and inclusion in our own organisation, Film London set a recruitment target designed to reflect the population of the city we serve, and has exceeded it. We set out the figures at question 23. Decisions about where Lottery money goes in London are

³ British Film Institute policy directions for the National Lottery, issued by the Secretary of State under section 26 of the National Lottery etc. Act 1993. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/british-film-institute-policy-directions-for-the-national-lottery>

⁴ Department for Culture, Media and Sport, National Lottery Good Causes: Fund what matters to you, 1 July 2026 (updated 24 July 2026), which states that the government remains committed to the arm's-length principle. <https://www.gov.uk/government/calls-for-evidence/national-lottery-good-causes-fund-what-matters-to-you>

taken by people drawn from the communities that the funding support is intended to reach.

SIMPLIFYING ACCESS TO FUNDING

The government wants to improve efficiency and ensure that everyone can access the funding they deserve.

- 19. Which of the following statements best describes your organisation's experience with the National Lottery good cause funding application process? Please only think about the organisation you currently work for.**

My organisation has applied / is currently applying for a grant	✓
My organisation has <u>never</u> received a grant <u>but has</u> <u>considered</u> applying	
My organisation has <u>never</u> received a grant and <u>hasn't</u> <u>considered</u> applying	
I was not aware that lottery good cause funding was available	
Don't know	

- 20. Which of the following, if any, would most encourage you or your organisation to apply for National Lottery good cause funding? Please select all that apply.**

Positive testimonials from successful applicants	
Access to supportive resources / templates when applying	
An accessible application process (e.g. different languages, methods of applying)	
The opportunity to access extra funding / money	✓
High success rates of applications	
Opportunity to work with the National Lottery	✓
Simple and easy application process	✓
Confidence that my application would be successful	
Clear eligibility criteria	✓

Other (Please specify)	
Nothing would encourage me to apply for funding	
Don't know	

21. Which of the following, if any, would you say are the biggest barriers that you or your organisation would encounter when thinking about applying for National Lottery good cause funding? Please select all that apply.

Subsequent reporting obligations too demanding	
Previous experiences of being rejected for funding	
Language barriers when applying	
Limited access to necessary technology needed to apply	
Too much documentation / admin would be needed	
Competition for funding would be too high	✓
Lack of time to apply	
Unsure whether we'd be eligible for the funding	
The application process would be complex	
Unaware of good cause funding opportunities	
Lack of confidence that an application would be successful	
No need to apply / don't need the funding	
Other (Please specify)	
There are no barriers to applying	
Don't know	

22. How do you think the National Lottery and the 12 National Lottery Distributor Bodies, who distribute lottery funding to grant recipients, could encourage more people that are eligible to apply for good cause funding? What more could they be doing?

We endorse the Hodge Review's recommendations on minimising the application bureaucracy that currently deters applicants, and on establishing dedicated funding

strands tailored to underrepresented groups and underserved areas. Those recommendations were addressed to Arts Council England, but they apply equally across all Lottery provision.

Our own delivery points to several measures that demonstrably lower the barrier to entry:

- All Equal Access Network courses and activities are free at the point of use.
- Opportunities advertised through our [STRIDE](#) platform carry an explicit offer of alternative formats and support with access needs.
- We are testing alternative methods of application, including video, for use where a standard written process presents a challenge to the candidate.
- Where candidates face particular hardship we make exceptions on travel and subsistence, and we signpost applicants to ScreenSkills bursaries and comparable sources of support.
- The timing, location and format of activity is planned around caring responsibilities, disability and irregular freelance working patterns, with sessions delivered partly or wholly online where that widens access.
- Differentiated engagement strategies, including specific communication channels and partner networks, are used to reach each target group rather than relying on a single open call.
- Our websites and materials take account of specific access needs, including neurodiversity and impaired vision or hearing, through clear language, considered visuals and captioning.
- Mentors are supported to become advocates for change within their own organisations, and mentees are encouraged to become mentors in turn.
- Where participants need it we refer them to specialist support on health and wellbeing alongside the practical training.

Beyond this, three changes at distributor level would make the most difference. Forthcoming funding rounds should be signalled earlier and more clearly, so that smaller organisations can plan capacity rather than scramble. Application and reporting requirements should be proportionate to grant size, since the current burden falls hardest on the smallest applicants. And greater use should be made of intermediary and delegated distributors, who sit closer to their communities and can offer the hands-on application support that first-time applicants typically need and that a central body cannot realistically provide at scale.

Further investment in BFI FAN and BFI NETWORK local outreach would allow Film Hubs and Talent Executives to spend more time in the places and with the groups least likely to approach a national funder unprompted, and to give the one-to-one application support that converts an expression of interest into a submission. Outreach of this kind is itself funded work, and that capacity is the key constraint on widening the applicant pool. It is inexpensive relative to the grant budgets it unlocks.

23. We've just about finished. Do you have anything else that you would like to tell us as part of this Call for Evidence?

The BFI Film Audience Network, BFI NETWORK and the BFI Skills Clusters

We want to record our strong support for the delivery structures already in place, which represent National Lottery funding working as intended.

Supported by National Lottery funding, the BFI Film Audience Network (FAN) is central to the BFI's aim of ensuring that the greatest choice of film is available for everyone.

Established in 2012, FAN is a unique, UK-wide collaboration made up of eight Hubs managed by ten leading film organisations and venues strategically placed around the country. FAN supports a stronger and more connected approach to growing audiences for UK and international film on the big screen, and has over 2,100 members comprising cinemas, festivals, mixed-arts venues, community cinema and film archives, which can access training, funding, programming support and network opportunities. FAN also supports talent development through 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.

The BFI FAN Film Hubs are:

- Film Hub Midlands, led by Broadway in Nottingham working in partnership with the Birmingham-based Flatpack
- Film Hub North, led collectively by Showroom Workstation in Sheffield and HOME in Manchester
- Film Hub South East, led by the Independent Cinema Office
- Film Hub South West, led by Watershed in Bristol
- Film Hub Scotland, led by Glasgow Film Theatre
- Film Hub Northern Ireland, led by Queen's Film Theatre in Belfast
- Film Hub Wales, led by Chapter in Cardiff
- Film Hub London, led by Film London

This is a genuinely UK-wide structure through which Lottery money reaches local organisations that understand their own audiences, venues and workforce, and that are answerable to them. Taken together with the BFI Skills Clusters, it already delivers much of what this call for evidence is seeking: devolved decision-making, reach into places that a central body cannot service directly, and a distribution network that can be scaled up without being rebuilt. Our first ask of government is therefore to protect and build on this structure rather than reopen it.

DCMS chose BFI FAN as its film example when it announced this call for evidence, which we take as recognition that the network already does much of what is regarded as best practice.⁵

⁵ National Lottery Good Causes: Fund what matters to you, as above. BFI FAN is the film example among the illustrative case studies of good cause funding in action.

Public benefit and private gain

The policy directions to Lottery distributors require money to be distributed for projects which promote the public good and which are not intended primarily for private gain.⁶ The BFI applies that requirement through its own test, investing only where there is evidence of need, an absence of sufficient commercial funding, and clear benefit to the public.⁷

Allocating funding by reference to where lottery tickets are sold would make distribution a function of consumption, directing money to the places where players spend most rather than to the places and people where a grant achieves most. That is a departure from the public benefit test rather than an application of it.

It also bears on what Lottery money should buy in a sector where a large commercial market already operates. The case for Lottery support rests on what that market does not supply: first features, short films, training for people without industry contacts, exhibition of work that will never fill a multiplex, and audiences in places the commercial exhibition estate has left.

Every programme described in this response is structured so that the benefit accrues to individuals and to the public. Our skills and talent work funds training, mentoring and bursaries for the participant, and does not subsidise the employers who subsequently hire them. Our industry partners contribute placements, expertise and access, and receive no Lottery funding. Where we support microbusinesses, the purpose is to give founders from backgrounds the industry has historically excluded a route into it. Film Hub London assesses exhibition applications on their contribution to widening access to film rather than on the commercial return to the venue.

Scale and proportion

Film is a small part of National Lottery Good Cause funding. The BFI distributes 13.52 per cent of the Arts and Culture share, which is 2.7 per cent of total Lottery receipts, and that is a proportion rather than a fixed sum.⁸ Its funding plan for 2026 to 2029 commits £150 million across audiences, education and heritage, filmmaking and talent development, skills and workforce development, international work and industry insight.⁹

Set against the reach described in the rest of this response, that is a modest allocation delivering disproportionate public benefit, and it is the basis on which we have supported an increased share for Arts and Culture at question 11.

We also note that Allwyn has stated publicly an ambition to double good cause funding by 2034, to around £60 million a week.¹⁰ If that ambition is realised, the question becomes

⁶ The policy directions to National Lottery distributing bodies require them to have regard to the need to ensure that money is distributed for projects which promote the public good and which are not intended primarily for private gain. See the BFI policy directions cited at note 3, and, for the same requirement in the same terms, the policy directions to the National Lottery Community Fund.

⁷ BFI National Lottery Funding Plan 2023-2026, which states that the BFI will invest only where there is clear evidence of need, an absence of sufficient commercial funding, and clear benefit to the public. <https://www.bfi.org.uk/strategy-policy/screen-culture-2033/national-lottery-strategy/bfi-national-lottery-funding-plan-2023-2026>

⁸ National Lottery Good Causes: Fund what matters to you, table of distribution of good cause funding across causes and distributors.

⁹ BFI National Lottery Funding Plan 2026-2029, published September 2025. <https://www.bfi.org.uk/strategy-policy/screen-culture-2033/national-lottery-strategy/bfi-national-lottery-funding-plan-2026-2029>

¹⁰ Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Public to have their say on National Lottery Good Causes, 1 July 2026, recording Allwyn's commitment to an ambition to double good cause income by the end of the fourth

where additional money can be absorbed productively and quickly. The pipeline of viable applications already exists, and the infrastructure to handle it is already funded and in place, as the figures below show.

Young people

We note the particular interest in projects that benefit young people. FAN's Young Audience Champion work is directly relevant. Through Film Hub London we support exhibitors and venues across the capital to build sustained relationships with young audiences, and to give young people themselves a role in programming and curating what their local cinema shows. This is precisely the kind of participatory, locally led activity that the additionality principle exists to fund, and it depends on the Hub structure to reach venues that would not otherwise have the capacity to undertake it.

We understand the particular interest to be in people aged roughly 25 to 30, and in disadvantaged communities and grassroots organisations. Our Lottery-funded work is concentrated on exactly that group. Film London Connect provides mentoring at the point where a young person is trying to convert interest into a career. The Metro London Skills Cluster is our principal route for new entrants. Film Hub London builds young audiences through exhibition, and our Spotlight programme reaches young people with no existing connection to the industry. Together these address both getting young people through the door and keeping them in work once they are there.

FAN has since published six case studies illustrating Young Audience Champion activity in venues across the UK, including [Open City Documentary Film Festival](#)'s experimental short films for families with children aged 2 to 7, and [The Garden Cinema](#)'s year-round family programming for children aged 5 to 11. Further examples cover [The Ultimate Picture Palace](#)'s Kino Kids Cinema Club for children and families, the [NI Science Festival](#)'s festival events programmed by young people aged 18 to 26, [Discovery Film Festival](#)'s shorts supporting early years development for children aged 0 to 3, and [Cellb, Wales](#)'s engagement of rural teens and young adults across a multi-arts venue. The full set is available via [FAN's Young Audiences hub](#).

Screen heritage and London's Screen Archives

Film London runs London's Screen Archives, the regional screen archive for London, established in 2006. It preserves, digitises and provides public access to screen heritage held across more than 50 archives in the capital. The collection spans more than a century and holds over 23,000 titles, including home movies, amateur film, newsreel, animation, artists' work and contemporary born-digital material. Around 1,500 films are free to watch on the archive website, which receives more than 340,000 views a year.

In 2025/26, the archive acquired 300 titles, digitised 94, catalogued 466 to Screen Heritage UK standards and delivered 84 events, screenings and exhibitions. Collections are being made available well beyond the archive sector, and material from the collection will feature in the London Museum's new permanent galleries in large-scale projections and newly commissioned work. Acquisitions come from charities, community groups, local archives, independent filmmakers and members of the public, and the digitisation programme

licence in 2034, from £30 million to £60 million a week. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/public-to-have-their-say-on-national-lottery-good-causes>

concentrates on the material that record: street parties, carnivals, workplaces, civic occasions and family celebrations filmed by the people who were there.

‘Undocumented’ project: community-led heritage preservation

Undocumented is the clearest example we can offer of Lottery money producing community-led heritage practice. Delivered by London's Screen Archives with The New Black Film Collective, and supported by the BFI National Lottery Screen Heritage Fund, it addresses the historic absence of Black home movies from UK archives.

The project created a space to discuss the importance of preserving the Black experience in London, and it then went further than discussion. Its Screen Heritage Ambassador programme ran workshops for Black Londoners in digitisation, non-western archiving, cataloguing and programming, building a cohort of skilled community ambassadors who continue as custodians of screen heritage in their own right. In 2024 we screened rare footage of Black communities in London with The New Black Film Collective at more than 97 events, reaching audiences of over 27,000 people across the capital.

In July 2026 we published [Undocumented: A Framework for Community-Led Black Screen Heritage Practice](#), which sets out the learning of the first two years for the benefit of the whole sector. It covers trust, shared authority, community expertise, care-centred practice and the importance of creating lasting opportunities beyond participation, and it offers practical questions for any archive seeking to work this way. The framework is being presented at the Archives and Records Association Conference, at the BFI and Centre for Television Histories networking day, at INA in Paris and at the FIAT/IFTA World Conference. A project funded in one city is therefore setting practice nationally and internationally.

Building capacity beyond the funding

A three-year Resilience award from the BFI National Lottery Screen Heritage Fund, concluding in March 2026, shows what this kind of investment builds. Archive membership grew from around 25 organisations, mostly local authority archives, to 54, drawing in artist-led organisations, charities, specialist collections and community organisations including Cinenova, not/nowhere, Sense, the Wiener Holocaust Library and Moorfields Eye Hospital. Licensing activity rose by 144 per cent in 2025/26 against 2023/24, and approximately one third of that income is redistributed directly to member organisations as royalties. The award also produced the archive's first formal Collections Policy.

The award relaunched and expanded the volunteer programme, which is our strongest evidence that resilience funding creates careers rather than tasks. Volunteers and early-career archivists gained practical experience in accessioning, recanning, cataloguing and digitisation across major collections, and several progressed into paid archive roles, into placements with partner archives, and into postgraduate and doctoral study. We have since launched a peer-learning programme supporting 15 early and mid-career screen heritage professionals, predominantly from Global Majority backgrounds or identifying as Deaf or disabled.

The award further produced more equitable licensing, including discounted rates for Deaf-led productions using the British Deaf Association collection and tiered non-commercial rates for grassroots filmmakers and community screenings. Lottery money spent on organisational resilience therefore widened access, generated earned income and returned a share of that income to the smaller archives in the network. That is capacity which outlasts the grant.

Attracting investment alongside the Lottery

Lottery funding also gives us the standing to raise money elsewhere. Spotlight, our young people's programme in outer London boroughs with little screen provision, has drawn £46,100 of non-Lottery investment into film activity in Newham and in Barking and Dagenham. Culture within Newham contributed £15,000 to launch the PictureEast Film Festival in January 2025, and Newham Heritage Month a further £8,000 for Cold Islanders in September 2025. Film Barking and Dagenham, funded by the borough's studio levy, put in £10,000 to extend the festival into Barking and Dagenham in January 2026. BD Giving gave £2,000 for the My Heathway screenings at Dagenham Heathway in October 2025. The developer L&Q gave £2,000 for Parkside Community Cinema in March 2026 and a further £8,000 in September 2026 to keep it running. The Barking and Dagenham Cultural Partnership Group, itself Arts Council funded, provided £1,100 for a youth group to establish its own film club.

A separate £20,000 came from National Lottery Awards for All for the second year of the PictureEast Film Festival in Newham in January 2026. That shows the same effect operating within the Lottery itself: a programme built with distributor funding becomes a credible applicant to a small grants scheme, and the two together reach further than either would alone.

The pattern holds across our screen heritage work. A digital transformation project funded by Bloomberg Philanthropies is making the archive website more accessible, and an AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Landscape Award held with Brunel University will place three doctoral researchers a year on the collection. Local authorities, developers, community foundations, philanthropic funders and research councils all invest alongside the Lottery once the Lottery has established that the work is deliverable and that the relationships on the ground are real. This is the practical answer to the question of how funding builds capacity beyond the grant, and it is also a caution: remove or fragment the core investment and the other money loses the thing it is matching.

Reaching audiences that other provision misses

An earlier project makes the same point at scale. London: A Bigger Picture, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund and delivered across 15 outer London boroughs to 2017, ran 242 audience-facing events attended by 35,913 people. Its KinoVan, a mobile cinema showing local archive film at street parties, carnivals, markets and fetes, travelled 3,500 miles to 144 events and reached 31,383 visitors, taking screen heritage to outer boroughs with little arts provision and to people who would never book a ticket for it.

The project also ran dementia-friendly reminiscence screenings, using archive film of London from 1896 onwards in care homes, community centres, cinemas and dementia cafes. Those sessions reached 524 people living with dementia and their carers across 22 screenings, and they supported the emotional wellbeing of older people by connecting them to others and to their own life history. This is health and wellbeing benefit delivered through heritage funding, and it is exactly the sort of outcome that a narrow reading of any single good cause would fail to capture.

The same project trained 52 volunteers through two ten-week courses run with Birkbeck, and volunteers contributed 454.5 days of work. It attracted 1,191 films from 110 donors, totalling more than 350 hours, which added roughly 50 per cent to partner archives' digitised holdings. Members of the public brought in the record of their own communities, and that record now exists because a Lottery-funded project went out and asked for it.

National Lottery investment in London reaches well beyond London

We recognise that this call for evidence considers reach outside London and around areas of multiple deprivation. However, Lottery investment recorded as London investment does not necessarily stay in London.

For example, the BFI Metro London Skills Cluster, which Film London leads, covers London together with three of the gateway counties to its west. Those are Hertfordshire, Surrey and Buckinghamshire. The studios the cluster serves are largely outside the capital. They include Pinewood, Shepperton, Leavesden, Elstree, Bovingdon, Longcross and Shinfield, alongside London facilities such as Ealing, Twickenham, 3 Mills, Eastbrook and Wharf. Training a new entrant in Barking for a job at Leavesden produces a Hertfordshire outcome from a budget line recorded against London.

The cluster's partners extend that reach further. The National Film and Television School has centres across the UK. London Higher represents 37 universities in the capital, many with academic partnerships elsewhere in the UK. New City College is one of the largest further education colleges in the country, with campuses across east London and Essex. Both the higher and further education partners share practice more widely through the Association of Colleges and Universities UK. Our industry partners work across the nations and regions. These partners include Sony, Channel 4, Amazon, NBC Universal, 60Forty Films, Pilot Skies and FilmFixer. They contribute placements, expertise and industry access, and receive no Lottery funding. It is worth noting that this is all additional funding we have been able to leverage, with industry matching lottery funds

The cluster's second phase, funded by the BFI from April 2026 to March 2029, will build on relationships established with other skills clusters during the first phase. We would also like to expand into the full Thames Estuary production corridor. That takes in south Essex and the north Kent coast as well as seven London boroughs, and it has seen rapid growth in games, animation and visual effects as well as in film and television.

Several of our Lottery-funded programmes have been UK-wide in reach rather than London-facing. The Production Finance Market and its New Talent Strand were Lottery funded until 2025 and drew producers from across the UK, the New Talent Strand giving access to producers who could not otherwise have afforded a place at a finance market. The London Screenings were funded on the same basis. Our work through the BFI Innovation Fund produced a toolkit for games microbusinesses that is available nationally.

We also run accelerator programmes for microbusinesses led by founders from diverse or traditionally excluded backgrounds. Those include Game Changer, funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, the BFI Innovation Fund games toolkit, and the New Talent Strand of the Production Finance Market. These programmes are directed at entry to the sector rather than at the commercial growth of a business, and the beneficiaries are founders whom the industry's ordinary routes have not reached.

Lottery support in London is not a measure of London's benefit, and reducing it would reduce activity in Hertfordshire, Surrey, Buckinghamshire and Essex as well as in the capital.

Equity, diversity and inclusion

Film London is a member of Onvero, formerly the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion. In 2021 we commissioned an independent review of diversity and inclusion in the organisation, and we have acted on all of its recommendations.

Our own workforce is part of that record. Film London has a workforce of approximately 60 staff and freelancers and carries out an annual monitoring survey. Following the 2021 review we set a target for Black and Global Majority staff to make up 40 per cent of the organisation, in order to reflect the diversity of London's population. Our most recent survey records 39 per cent of the workforce as coming from diverse backgrounds, 57 per cent from white backgrounds and 4 per cent preferring not to state, which places the organisation within a point of that target. Recruitment is running ahead of it: across the 12 roles advertised in the current financial year, 42 per cent of those recruited identified as coming from an ethnically diverse background, 17 per cent as Black and 8 per cent as disabled.

Of the workforce as a whole, 67 per cent are female and 29 per cent male. On disability, 73 per cent identify as non-disabled, 20 per cent have declared a disability and 8 per cent preferred not to declare, and 22 per cent identify as neurodivergent. Our senior management team has high female representation and brings ethnic diversity to the leadership of the Skills Cluster.

Because we serve one of the most diverse cities in the world, our Lottery-funded programmes deliver strongly on equity, diversity and inclusion. That holds across Film Hub London, BFI NETWORK, Undocumented, our young audiences work, Spotlight, FLAMIN and the Skills Cluster. We focus specifically on the London boroughs identified as Priority Places, which are Barking and Dagenham, Brent, Croydon, Newham and Enfield, and we reach communities there through Spotlight, young audiences work, the Hub, NETWORK, skills provision and resilience funding.

At the centre of the skills programme is our Equal Access Network. It supports people from backgrounds that have typically been underrepresented in screen production to enter the industry, to remain in it, to progress within it and, where relevant, to return to it after a break. It covers film, television, animation, visual effects, post-production and games.

We can supply case studies from any of these programmes if that would be helpful. Two recent examples from Film London Connect illustrate what the mentoring relationship delivers in practice: [Newton Ndukuba and Gareth Lowrie](#), and [Sofia Soto and Felix Schmilinsky](#).

Environmental sustainability

No Film London programme is funded by the Lottery specifically for environmental work. Our corporate commitments nonetheless apply to everything we deliver with Lottery money.

We calculate and offset our carbon footprint annually and we are carbon neutral. We have a Carbon Reduction Plan in place and we are signed up to Race to Zero. Our sustainability policy applies to all our programmes and we share best practice with the partners we fund and work alongside. Sustainability is therefore embedded throughout all our projects.

Demand on FAN and BFI NETWORK funds

Demand on these funds substantially exceeds what is available. The Film Exhibition Fund administered by Film Hub London has been heavily oversubscribed in every recent year:

- 2023/24: for three months of rolling FEF, Film Hub London received requests of £151,295 against a budget of £58,000, equalling 261 per cent of the funds available.
- 2024/25: for two rounds of FEF, requests of £151,882 against a budget of £58,000, equalling 262 per cent of the funds available.
- 2025/26: for two rounds of FEF, requests of £239,522 against a budget of £58,000, equalling 413 per cent of the funds available.
- 2026/27: for one round of FEF, with a second round to come in September, requests of £139,816 against a budget of £75,000, equalling 186 per cent of the funds available.

These substantial shortfalls meant that in 2025/26 Film Hub London was able to fund less than a quarter of the exhibition activity that London venues and festivals brought forward, all of it assessed as viable and all of it aimed at widening access to film. A modest uplift to FAN and BFI NETWORK budgets would convert directly into additional activity, because the pipeline of applications already exists, the assessment infrastructure is already in place, and the marginal administrative cost of distributing more money through an established Hub is close to nil.

This is the context in which Allwyn's ambition to double good cause funding matters. Additional money would flow through existing machinery to applications that have already been made, already been assessed and already been turned down for want of funds.

The position of London

A final issue is material to the government's consideration of how good cause funding is distributed, which is the position of London.

The mismatch between demand and share

With the exception of skills funding, London currently receives a share of Lottery funding broadly equal to that of the other English regions, while carrying a substantially greater volume of demand. That share does not reflect the size of the industry, the size of the population it serves, the concentration of talent, or the level of need based in the capital.

Within the skills cluster network the highest allocation goes to the Yorkshire cluster and the Metro London Skills Cluster is the second highest. Skills is the one area in which London does comparatively well.

The scale of the mismatch is clearest in short film funding. The BFI's 2022 evaluation of the first five years of BFI NETWORK found that London received 8 per cent of the national short film production budget while consistently accounting for around half of national applications to the fund.¹¹

The same evaluation found that the application to award ratio for the national Short Film Fund between 2018 and 2020 averaged nine unsuccessful applications for every successful one, and that the ratio in London was five times higher. The position has worsened since: London accounted for 56 per cent of national applications in 2023, a record high, and we commissioned eight short films from a pool of 650 applications, an application to award ratio of approximately 81:1. A production fund uplift of £25,000 was made available to

¹¹ BFI, evaluation of the first five years of BFI NETWORK, 2022. <https://www.bfi.org.uk/industry-data-insights/reports/bfi-evaluations>

London that year in recognition of the spike, equivalent to 5.6 per cent of BFI NETWORK's total spend on shorts.

Headline production figures overstate London's advantage

It is sometimes argued that London already captures the majority of production activity: BFI Research and Statistics Unit figures show that 62 per cent of commercial film production turnover was spent in London in 2022.¹² However, that figure includes inward investment alongside independent domestic production, and 86 per cent of the UK's production spend in that year came from inward investment projects. Once inward investment is stripped out, the picture for emerging and independent filmmakers in the capital is considerably more sobering, and it is in that gap that Lottery funding does its work. The theatrical market share of genuinely independent UK film stands at 3.7 per cent, against 39 per cent for British qualifying films produced with US studio backing.

A high-budget production shooting in a London borough does not help a first-time filmmaker in that borough finance a short or a debut feature.

Need and diversity within London

London is also more economically and socially diverse than aggregate regional figures suggest. It is the most ethnically diverse region of England and Wales, with 46.2 per cent of residents identifying with Asian, black, mixed or other ethnic groups at the 2021 Census, and a further 17 per cent with white ethnic minorities.¹³ It has the highest proportion of residents identifying as LGBTQ+ of any region in England and Wales.

It is also home to some of the most deprived boroughs in the country: Trust for London found that in 2019/20, 39 per cent of Londoners had an income below the level needed for a minimum standard of living, against 28 per cent across the UK as a whole.¹⁴ We direct activity specifically at the London boroughs identified as Priority Places, namely Barking and Dagenham, Brent, Croydon, Newham and Enfield.

The Indices of Deprivation 2025, published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in October 2025 strengthened the case.¹⁵ That release moved the income domain to an after-housing costs measure for the first time. Because housing costs in the capital are far above the national average, the official measure now records deprivation in London that the previous methodology did not capture. The number of Londoners counted as income deprived rose from 1.1 million under the 2019 indices to 2.2 million under the 2025 indices.

Seven London boroughs now sit among the 20 per cent most deprived local authority districts in England. In Tower Hamlets, 60 per cent of neighbourhoods fall within the 20 per cent most income deprived nationally. Tower Hamlets, Newham and Hackney record the highest levels of children and of older people living in income deprivation of any districts in the country. On barriers to housing and services, 351 of the 700 neighbourhoods across

¹² BFI Research and Statistics Unit, Statistical Yearbook. <https://www.bfi.org.uk/industry-data-insights/statistical-yearbook>

¹³ Office for National Statistics, Census 2021, ethnic group, England and Wales.

¹⁴ Trust for London and the Centre for Research in Social Policy, Loughborough University, A Minimum Income Standard for London 2022. <https://trustforlondon.org.uk/research/a-minimum-income-standard-for-london-2022/>

¹⁵ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, English Indices of Deprivation 2025, published 30 October 2025. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2025>

Hillingdon, Hounslow, Ealing and Brent are among the 10 per cent most deprived in England, and 230 of them are among the most deprived 5 per cent.¹⁶

Deprivation in London is concentrated, specific to particular domains, and obscured by regional averages. The 2025 data traces a crescent of higher multiple deprivation running from Enfield through Haringey and Hackney into Tower Hamlets, Newham and Barking and Dagenham, with further concentrations in Brent, Ealing and Hounslow. Four of the five Priority Places we target sit within that pattern, those being Enfield, Brent, Newham, and Barking and Dagenham. An assessment carried out at a regional level would register none of it, and we would ask that deprivation be assessed at the neighbourhood level at which the indices themselves are constructed.

What Lottery funding delivers in London

Lottery investment in London delivers strongly against precisely the outcomes with which this call for evidence is concerned.

Between April 2023 and March 2026, the BFI Metro London Skills Cluster, which Film London leads, delivered short industry-focused courses to 3,771 participants and accredited courses to a further 455. A further 2,956 people received broader skills support through seminars, masterclasses, information and drop-in sessions, industry taster days, studio visits, help with CVs and networking events. Averaged across the three years, 53 per cent of the beneficiary cohort identified as Black and Global Majority and 30 per cent declared a disability. By the end of March 2026, 414 people had reported a job outcome, a figure which by definition does not yet capture most year three participants.

Film London Connect, our mentoring programme, was made possible by Lottery match funding through the Skills Cluster and would not otherwise have happened. Between April 2024 and July 2026 it paired 232 mentees with 150 volunteer industry mentors, against an initial target of 200 mentees. Of those mentees, 42 per cent were young people from low income families or living in poverty, 31 per cent were LGBTQ+, and 28 per cent were young people with special educational needs and disabilities. 53 per cent identified as part of the Global Majority.

At programme level, 85 per cent of mentees reported stronger relationships, 73 per cent reported improved learning or work outcomes, 26 per cent reported improved mental health and wellbeing, and 17 per cent reported improved employment opportunities.

Conclusion

We support the objective of ensuring that people across the whole of the UK have equal access to opportunity. The current distribution does not yet deliver equality of access for London, where demand and need are both exceptionally high, and where headline production figures conceal a much harder environment for emerging and independent talent than those figures imply.

Spreading investment more equally should mean bringing other parts of the UK up to London's level rather than diminishing the capital, and we would ask that any review of Good Cause funding distribution weighs volume of demand and levels of deprivation

¹⁶ Greater London Authority, Indices of Deprivation 2025: an exploratory analysis, London Datastore, 10 November 2025. <https://data.london.gov.uk/blog/indices-of-deprivation-2025-an-exploratory-analysis>

alongside geography when assessing whether an area's share is proportionate. The test throughout should remain the one the policy directions already set, which is where a pound of Lottery money delivers most public benefit.