

# Film Exhibition Fund

## Guidelines: 2026-27

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### Introduction

The [BFI Film Audience Network](#) (FAN) reaches audiences across the UK to provide them with the opportunity to watch and enjoy a diverse range of films, regardless of their geography or circumstance.

[Film Hub Scotland](#) is one of eight Film Hubs that make up BFI FAN. Jointly funded by the BFI and Screen Scotland via the National Lottery, we support Scottish film exhibitors to reach a broad range of audiences with independent UK and international film, and to deliver against the priorities set out in [BFI's Screen Culture 2033 strategy](#).

To access support from Film Hub Scotland, you must first [become a member](#). **Membership is free** and offers many benefits, including training, funding, programming support, and access to the latest industry news.

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### Funding opportunities

Film Hub Scotland members can access a range of funding opportunities:

- [Film Exhibition Fund](#) - £2,000-£10,000 to support audience-facing screenings and events
  - [Pitch Pots](#) - up to £1,000 to support a new idea or access provision for your screenings
  - [Adventures in Cinema](#) - up to £2,000 to support screenings and film clubs for families and young audiences
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### Priority Outcomes

When completing your Film Exhibition Fund proposal, your activity should respond to at least one of the FAN and [BFI Screen Culture 2033 outcomes](#) (see more on page 10).

The more support you are seeking, the more outcomes we expect you to address:

- Engaging with children and young people
- Accessing a wider choice of films
- Tackling social, economic and geographic barriers
- Engaging with heritage collections that reflect the diversity of the UK

In your proposal, you must also be able to set out how you will address the [BFI Diversity Standards](#).



### **BFI FAN Priority Outcomes**

All projects funded by Film Hub Scotland must address **at least one** of the BFI FAN Priority Outcomes.

The more Priority Outcomes you address, the greater your chance of a successful proposal.

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## **Support to complete your proposal**

We recognise that people process information in different ways. If you'd like to access these guidelines in a different format, or would benefit from an initial chat with our team before you get started, please get in touch: [info@filmhubscotland.com](mailto:info@filmhubscotland.com).

If you require assistance when writing your proposal, you can request financial support through the [BFI Access Support Scheme](#).



# What is the Film Exhibition Fund?

The [Film Exhibition Fund](#) (FEF) supports Film Hub Scotland members to deliver events and screenings of independent film that reach new and diverse audiences in their local communities.

FEF supports a wide range of events and activity formats. In the past, our members have used FEF to:

- Deliver a year-round programme of documentary screenings in a location with limited screen provision
- Work with several local communities in their area to co-curate film screenings
- Run a film festival dedicated to a specific geographic region underrepresented in UK film programming
- Bring accessible film screenings to local Deaf and Disabled communities
- Commission an original score to a restored silent film and tour its performance around Scotland

...and much more! This is not an exhaustive list, and your activity does not have to fit an existing model.



**Please note:** The Film Exhibition Fund does not support **filmmaking & production costs**, or **capital costs** (see the full list of eligible and ineligible expenses on page 8).

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## Key information

Film Hub Scotland members can request **£2,000 - £10,000** per proposal to support audience-facing screening activity. This activity must meet the BFI FAN Priority Outcomes outlined on page 10.

You must be a member of Film Hub Scotland to submit a proposal. [Become a member](#). We are happy to discuss your proposal at any stage. Please get in touch: [info@filmhubscotland.com](mailto:info@filmhubscotland.com).

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## Key dates



**Fund opens:** 23 February 2026

**First assessment deadline:** 30 March 2026

**Second assessment deadline:** 4 August 2026

Proposals can be made at any time from **23 February - 4 August 2026**.

Your project should be delivered between **May 2026 - March 2027**. Please [get in touch](#) if you are hoping to begin your activity earlier, or complete it later, than these dates.

The result of your proposal will be announced between four and six weeks after the deadline. However, we reserve the right to make announcements earlier, or later, depending on the number of submissions we receive.

To allow time to process your proposal, we ask that you do not schedule your event(s) any earlier than **May 2026**.

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## Who can request support?

You must be a [member of Film Hub Scotland](#) to access our funding opportunities. Member organisations include cinema venues, mixed-arts centres, community cinemas, film festivals and touring programmes. To become a member, please complete our [Membership Application Form](#).

Film Hub Lead Organisations (Glasgow Film Theatre) are not eligible for support through FEF, even if they meet the above criteria.

We welcome **collaborative approaches and partnership proposals** to this fund. Please [get in touch](#) if you would like to discuss this further.



If you have been previously funded by us, we will review the outcomes of that project (how well it achieved its aims and how the funding was managed) when we assess your new proposal. Overall, priority will be given to those with a **demonstrable track record of work** that meets FAN's objectives.

If you are **new to film exhibition**, or have less experience putting on public screenings, we recommend our [Pitch Pot fund](#).

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## How much can you request?

We assess each proposal individually. We begin by considering the amount requested against the number of in-person admissions projected. This gives us a cost-per-head (CPH). A CPH of £5, or less, is the baseline for established events taking place in the Central Belt.



We consider the amount you have requested against the number of in-person admissions projected. This gives us a **cost-per-head (CPH)**.

We understand that your CPH may increase depending on different factors. We will assess your CPH against our assessment criteria (p17) and will consider: whether it fulfills our priority outcomes; the location; the intended audience; the quality of programming; and your commitment to access and sustainability.

For example, for a project delivering events accessible to the local Deaf and Disabled community in a remote area of Scotland, we would expect the CPH to be higher than for a general-audience festival in Edinburgh. Still, it might be helpful to work backwards from the £5 CPH, bearing in mind that our expected CPH **rarely exceeds £12.50**.



We tend to consider proposals of **over £8,000 for only exceptionally strong projects** which meet our priority outcomes.

**Please note:** we are unable to support 100% of activity costs. 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 – included in your budget.

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## Online Activities

**The primary focus of the Film Exhibition Fund is in-person events that bring audiences together for a communal viewing experience.**

Online activities are **not a priority**, but will be considered as part of a broader programme where they add value and create meaningful engagement (for example, by improving access for Disabled audiences).

# Submitting your proposal

Before you begin writing up your proposal, we recommend that you [book a Funding Surgery](#) with our team to discuss your ideas. We can indicate if your project is the right fit for this Fund, and what to consider before you proceed.

You should submit your proposal **at least 6 weeks in advance of your project** start date to allow time for assessment, project development and marketing lead-in. Awards cannot be made retrospectively (i.e. to cover expenditure that has already been incurred).



You should submit your proposal at **least 6 weeks in advance** of your project's start date.

You will need to submit a [Budget Proposal](#) and, where possible, a [Marketing Plan](#), alongside your proposal.

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## Recommended steps

1. [Get in touch](#); we're always happy to discuss your ideas/plans
2. Read the [Budget Guidance document](#)
3. Fill out the [Budget Proposal](#) and the [Marketing Plan](#)
4. Complete the online [Film Exhibition Fund Proposal Form](#) (also available as PDF and Word Document) and attach your Budget and Marketing Plan

Unfortunately, due to the competitive nature of this fund, even proposals that meet the criteria may not be supported.

However, in the event that we are not able to support your project, we will provide feedback on why this was the case.



We advise you to **submit your proposal as early as possible** due to the competitive nature of this fund.

## Additional Advice and Support

Additional advice and support may be available to projects with strong inclusion aims, which 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.

We also recommend all members to familiarise themselves with the [BFI FAN Access Directory](#) developed by BFI FAN's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Champion, Charlie Little.



# Is my project eligible?

Each organisation will have its individual need. However, broadly speaking, the Film Exhibition Fund can support the following project costs:

## Eligible Expenses

- Film licensing and print transferring/transportation costs
- Activity-specific staffing costs - e.g. curation, marketing or project management expenses
- Venue hire and activity-specific equipment costs
- Marketing, advertising and PR campaigns
- Event costs for enhanced screenings - e.g. speaker, talent or artist fees
- Volunteer and front-of-house expenses
- Reporting and evaluation expenses
- Accessibility costs - e.g. commissioning Descriptive Subtitling, providing live-captioning, BSL interpretation
- Outreach and community inclusion costs - e.g. providing transport for isolated audiences
- Audience development expenses - e.g. young programmers' workshops
- Curation and licensing for screen heritage and archival materials
- Costs related to online activity, such as web platform or hosting fees (only if such expenses are directly connected to the project)

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



All proposed spend should **contribute to the activity** for which you are seeking support.

## Ineligible Expenses

There are expenses that are **not suitable** for support from the Film Exhibition Fund:

- Filmmaking costs (including workshops), support for filmmakers to develop or distribute their own work, or for programmes that exclusively engage filmmaker audiences
- Capital costs
- Programmes entirely comprised of free events, unticketed events or screenings where audience numbers cannot be reported
- Core costs or general running costs of organisations not specifically related to the activity
- Activity that should be covered by statutory education, including events taking place on school grounds/in school hours
- Closed events which are not open to the public, including student film events, industry showcases, or un-ticketed events where numbers cannot be reported
- Exclusively submissions-based festival programmes
- Events not primarily focused on film exhibition or screen culture
- Activity covered by existing Film Hub Scotland funding arrangements – i.e. projects already receiving other FHS funding
- Programmes that duplicate existing provision in the same area – e.g. a festival that focuses on a niche already occupied by another established festival in the same location
- Activity taking place in a venue not open to the public – e.g. members-only venues
- Core set-up costs for new film clubs, festivals, and venues – e.g. memberships, incorporation fees, administrative fees
- Charity fundraising screenings

Again, this list is **not exhaustive**, and we will use our discretion to determine the eligibility of requested costs.

# BFI FAN Priority Outcomes

Film Hub Scotland is focused on increasing access to screen culture and growing audiences that are representative of the UK population.

The BFI FAN Priority Outcomes are a set of goals outlined by the BFI in their [Screen Culture 2033 strategy](#).



Proposals that **address several** BFI FAN Priority Outcomes have a **greater chance of securing our support**.

To be funded by Film Hub Scotland, your project must deliver against **at least one** of these outcomes. Where possible, you should align your audience development activity with as many of these outcomes as possible.

The **BFI FAN Priority Outcomes** are:

- **Engaging with children and young people**

The BFI recognises that early cinema visits are important for the health of the exhibition sector, so our funds can support you to engage with children, families and young people (25 and under). Your activity may be aimed at welcoming children, young people or family groups to your events, or you may work with a Young Programmers' group to curate your programme. If working with children and young people, you will need to demonstrate that you have safeguarding policies in place. Please note: we are not able to fund screenings that take place in schools.

- **Accessing a wider choice of film**

The BFI wants to give everyone the chance to see the greatest possible choice of film and moving image on the big screen, be it classic films, international cinema, British cinema, documentaries, screen heritage, new works by emerging talents or immersive and interactive content. Your project may offer your audience an ambitious programme that broadens their horizons, or you may screen a series of films that have not been shown locally before.

- **Tackling social, economic and geographic barriers**

It's important that you consider how your project can tackle barriers to enjoying screen culture, such as prohibitive costs, lack of cultural provision and lack of accessible screenings. We are particularly keen to

support projects that engage audiences from remote, rural, and island locations and working-class backgrounds, as well as projects engaging with Deaf and Disabled people, LGBTQIA+ people, Black, South Asian, South East and East Asian people and others of the Global Majority.

- **Engaging with heritage collections that reflect the diversity of the UK**

We want to see proposals that allow your audience to experience screen heritage in creative, relevant and engaging ways that reflect the diversity of Scotland and the UK. We can support activities that showcase various types of screen heritage material – from restored silent cinema to archived family footage documenting the past. If your proposal includes archival material, **please ensure you have contacted the relevant archival collection** before seeking support from us.



# Cross-Cutting Principles

Alongside the BFI FAN Priority Outcomes, there are **three cross-cutting principles** that we will ask you to address in your proposal:

- **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)**

BFI FAN champions everyday inclusion. We want to see how your project considers access and inclusion from the beginning. We want to know how it will contribute to diversifying audiences for the widest range of cinema, and broaden the range of stories represented on screen. Where applicable, we also value projects that tackle underrepresentation in the exhibition workforce.



## EDI Resources

- [Film Hub Scotland](#) - Access & Inclusion resources
- [Inclusive Cinema](#) - data, case studies and how-to-guides to support UK film exhibitors

- **Environmental Sustainability**

We are committed to minimising the negative environmental impact of the work we support and we ask all recipients to contribute to this aim. In your proposal, please summarise the steps you are taking 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](#), [Depot](#), [HOME](#) and [Scott Cinemas](#).



## Sustainability Resources

- [BFI resources](#) for sustainable film exhibition
- [Culture for Climate Scotland](#) - sign the [Green Arts Charter](#)
- [Julie's Bicycle](#) - lots of resources, including the [Creative Climate Tool](#)

- **Geographic Spread**

BFI FAN aims to support audiences throughout the UK. We want to ensure that screen culture can be accessed by diverse communities across Scotland – from the Central Belt to the Outer Hebrides, from Dumfries and Galloway to Orkney. We are excited to see proposals for projects in areas that have historically been underserved, or where there is little/no screening provision.

# BFI Diversity Standards

In line with the [BFI Diversity Standards](#), we encourage activity aimed at, and/or co-produced with, under-represented groups.

The Diversity Standards focus on under-representation in relation to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, sex, sexual orientation, and religion and belief (as they pertain to the [Equality Act 2010](#)), as well as socio-economic background, caring responsibilities and geographical location.

We are particularly committed to ensuring that disproportionately affected audiences (such as Disabled people, those with a longstanding physical or mental condition, and those identifying as deaf, hard of hearing or neurodiverse) can experience independent film and be welcomed into cinema spaces.

All Film Exhibition Fund proposals will be asked to demonstrate **how your activity promotes inclusivity** among audiences and on screen.

We ask that all proposals embrace the Standards. Priority will be given to proposals that do this in a clear and convincing way - especially those seeking larger amounts of financial support.

If your project has additional accessibility requirements, these are **eligible to be added to your budget**.



You should particularly **focus on Standard D** (how does your proposal provide inclusive audience development opportunities?) and **Standard E**, which requires you to show how your project is committed to action that improves audience accessibility.

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## Responding to the Standards

Use the information below to guide your responses to the Standards:

- **Standard A | On-screen representation**

Tell us about your film programme; does it feature meaningful representations of lead characters and supporting characters from under-represented groups? Do the films feature themes, stories or locations not often seen in cinema?

- **Standard B | Project team**

Tell us about your team; are key personnel representative of your local area and/or the project's intentions? If your project involves recruitment or partnership working, are processes in place to ensure these opportunities are inclusive? Smaller project teams may wish to discuss volunteer/community participants and/or the filmmaking teams represented in their programme.

- **Standard C | Industry access**

Tell us about any professional or informal development opportunities; will the project team take part in training or mentoring programmes? Will your activity provide new employment opportunities or career progression for team members from under-represented groups? Will you be engaging community groups or participants?

- **Standard D | Audience development**

Tell us about your audiences; are you planning to engage under-represented groups? How will you do this - do you have a community engagement strategy or appropriate partnerships in place?

- **Standard E | Accessibility**

Tell us about your accessibility plans; Is your website/venue accessible? Do you programme captioned films? What steps are you taking to make your events accessible and welcoming to disabled audiences?



# Additional Areas of Focus

## Safeguarding

Projects involving children, young people or vulnerable adults should have appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies in place.

Where relevant, you will be asked to confirm this in your proposal. For more information on safeguarding, read the [Guide to Safeguarding for Film Exhibitors](#) published by our colleagues at Film Hub London.

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## Prevention of Bullying, Harassment and Racism

Bullying, harassment and racism have no place in our industries and we expect all organisations we fund to share our commitment to this principle. The [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 ask all FHS members to engage with these principles by, as a minimum, reading them and sharing them within your organisation.

Members seeking support will also be asked to confirm that they have, or intend to put in place, an anti-bullying and harassment policy for their organisation. We can support you if you do not currently have a policy in place; please [get in touch](#).

Bullying and Harassment policies are not formal assessment criteria, but the information you provide will be used to gauge how we may support you further in this area and ensure best practice across the Film Audience Network.

If a proposed action will incur modest additional costs, you can include these in your budget for consideration.

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## What next?

If you are interested in seeking support from Film Hub Scotland's [Film Exhibition Fund](#), please complete and submit:

- [Film Exhibition Fund Proposal Form](#)
- [Budget Template](#)
- [Marketing Plan Template](#)

More information about how your proposal will be assessed is provided in

the following pages. Please note that your proposal may be reviewed by an external assessor unfamiliar with your organisation or its work, so you should aim to describe your plans and relevant experience clearly and concisely.

“You should aim to describe your plans and relevant experience clearly and concisely”

For film festivals and larger-scale screening activity, funding may also be available from [Screen Scotland](#). For community cinemas, [Cinema For All](#) provides advice and information on setting up local screen facilities.

If you have questions about the proposal process, or would like to discuss submitting a proposal in a different way, please [get in touch](#) with our team who will be happy to discuss this.



# Assessment Criteria

Your proposal will be assessed by the Film Hub Scotland team. External assessors may also be consulted to review your proposal.



Proposals will be scored using the [Film Exhibition Fund Assessment Criteria](#).

## We will specifically look at:

**Fund objectives:** Will the proposal engage audiences with culturally valuable film programming? Does the activity respond to any of the fund's other key focus areas? Are all eligibility criteria met?

**Audiences:** Are projected admissions realistic, and is the basis upon which they've been reached clear and logical? Is there a clear need for the activity, and does it provide audiences with access to films otherwise unavailable locally? Is the activity targeted at an audience group that is currently under-served or under-represented?

**Organisational capacity:** Does the organisation have the capacity to carry out the proposed activity? This will include consideration of project management, management oversight, risk management, marketing, audience development and evaluation plans. It will also consider previous performance for those who have previously received FHS funding.

**Marketing & Evaluation:** Who are the target audiences, and how will they be reached? Does the member have experience of reaching audiences in this way? What does success look like, and what will the organisation learn from the project? What are the longer-term plans to continue to reach audiences?

**Budget:** Are all reasonable costs considered and are they appropriate/eligible? Does the budget balance? Have access costs been included? Have income details been included? What is the audience cost-per-head for this activity? Does the project represent good value for money? Have appropriate staffing costs been included?

**BFI Diversity Standards:** Does the proposal address the [BFI Diversity Standards](#)? Will activity address under-representation amongst audiences, on screen or - where applicable - in the workforce?

**Environment:** Does the proposal convincingly set out how it will mitigate its negative environmental impact? Where applicable, will the proposal boost audience awareness of the climate and biodiversity emergencies?

**Geographic spread:** Will the project contribute to the provision of a diverse screen culture for communities across Scotland?

We recommend that you refer to the [Film Exhibition Fund Assessment Criteria](#) when preparing your proposal. This will ensure that you are providing all the information the assessors will be looking for. The larger the amount you are seeking, the higher we would expect your project to score in the assessment.

Where a conflict of interest prevents any Film Hub Scotland staff from assessing a proposal, they will recuse themselves from the assessment process and will be substituted by an external assessor or another member of staff.



**Please note:** We expect this fund to be oversubscribed. We must balance a range of factors in the decisions we make, so **we may not be able to fund your activity even if it meets the criteria.**



# Decisions and Feedback

## Unsuccessful proposals

If you are unsuccessful in your proposal, you will be contacted by email. Being unsuccessful does not prevent you from accessing future Hub opportunities; however, **you will not be able to resubmit a proposal for a rejected 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 FHS opportunities, including other funds and bursaries.

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## Successful proposals

If your proposal is successful, the assessment panel may discuss any required amendments and wish to see a revised plan before confirming funding. This process can take additional time. Activity timelines will need to accommodate this. If there are no recommendations or amendments to be made, you will be sent a confirmation email setting out the terms and conditions attached to the funding. These will cover payment information, crediting guidelines, and monitoring and reporting requirements.

**Please note:** final confirmation will be subject to availability of Lottery funding.

All supported activity will require organisations to survey their audiences using our online template - please bear this in mind when planning your evaluation strategies.

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## Complaints and Appeals

Our decision on support is final. Inevitably, some proposals will be unsuccessful and Hub members may be disappointed by this result.

Formal appeals against the final decision will not be considered unless there is good cause to believe that the procedures for processing the proposal were not adhered to or applied in such a way as to prejudice the outcome of the proposal.

Our full comments and complaints procedure can be found on [our website](#).

# Useful links

- [Film Hub Scotland](#)
  - [Film Exhibition Fund](#)
  - [BFI Film Audience Network](#)
  - [Sign up to our newsletter](#)
  - [Book a Funding Surgery](#)
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## Got a question?

Email us: [info@filmhubscotland.com](mailto:info@filmhubscotland.com)

