



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ENDS

Press contacts

Colette Geraghty, Senior PR Manager, Corporate, Industry and Partnerships, BFI
colette.geraghty@bfi.org.uk / 020 7173 3256 / 07957 864 362

Tina McFarling, Media Advisor, Corporate, Industry & Partnerships
tina.mcfarling@bfi.org.uk / 020 7957 4797 / 07879 421 578

Judy Wells, Director Press and PR, BFI
judy.wells@bfi.org.uk / 020 7957 8919 / 07984 180 501

Notes to Editors

BFI FAN COVID-19 Resilience Fund Awardees

Film Hub London

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

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

Film Hub Midlands

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

Film Hub NI

CINEMAGIC
MOVIE HOUSE
NERVE CENTRE
SECOND CHANCE CINEMA

Film Hub North

ALNWICK PLAYHOUSE
ARC
BREWERY ARTS CENTRE
CHORLEY THEATRE

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

Film Hub Scotland

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

Film Hub South East

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

Film Hub South West

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

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

Film Hub Wales

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

About the BFI Film Audience Network

Supported by National Lottery funding, the BFI Film Audience Network (FAN), is central to the BFI's aim to ensure the greatest choice of film is available for everyone. Established in 2012 to build wider and more diverse UK cinema audiences for British and international film, FAN is a unique, UK-wide collaboration made up of eight Hubs managed by leading film organisations and venues strategically placed around the country. FAN also supports talent development with BFI NETWORK Talent Executives in each of the English Hubs, with a mission to discover and support talented writers, directors and producers at the start of their careers.

BFI FAN Film Hubs are:

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

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

About the BFI

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

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

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