

£30M BFI CULTURE RECOVERY FUND FOR INDEPENDENT CINEMAS IN ENGLAND LAUNCHES GUIDELINES FOR APPLICATIONS

- **Grants will enable non-profit and independent cinemas to open with safety measures in place protecting employees and audiences**
- **Grants will also support independent cinemas on reopening as social distancing measures will restrict admissions for performances and takings**
- **Fund opens from 10 August to 30 October - www.bfi.org.uk/culturerecoveryfund**

London, Tuesday 28 July 2020. The BFI today releases the guidelines for the **£30m Culture Recovery Fund for Independent Cinemas in England** to support non-profit and independent cinemas which are facing prohibitive challenges in being able to reopen and operate whilst social distancing is in place and whose business has been heavily impacted following UK-wide closure since the end of March.

The fund which will be open from Monday 10 August until Friday 30 October, will be administered by the BFI as part of the Government's unprecedented £1.57bn support package to help Britain's culture, arts and heritage organisations hit hard by the pandemic which has included the closure of all cinemas across the UK. Of the 775 cinemas in the UK which form a vibrant part of our culture, 55% are independent venues.

Open to award both non-profit and independent commercial cinemas, including mixed artform venues, funding will be directed at building based venues which provide a year round film programme; it is, therefore, not available for film festivals or touring operators. It is anticipated that the first grants will be available from the end of August, helping many independent cinemas which are working towards a scheduled September re-opening.

The fund offers support via two strands addressing the high upfront health and safety costs facing venues and the challenges of financial viability in the early months of reopening as social distancing limits the number of cinema seats that can be sold at each performance. Cinemas are able to apply for grants from both strands which will be structured as follows:

- **£3m for safety grants** to enable cinemas (up to £10,000 per cinema) to put the necessary measures in place to ensure the safety of their workforce and the public; and/or
- **£27m business sustainability grants** (up to £200,000 per organisation) to support independent cinemas to operate viably under the restricted conditions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The fund's criteria has been designed to balance the urgent needs of the independent film exhibition sector with DCMS priorities for supporting organisations that play an important part in levelling-up their region, in particular protecting cultural assets in places where they

are the only publicly funded organisation and/or a key part of the cultural fabric in their community.

The fund will seek to sustain viable and important Culture institutions in the most cost-effective way possible whilst also serving as a catalyst for change. Cinemas applying to the fund for **business sustainability** grants will be required to demonstrate a commitment to increasing their organisational diversity and the diversity of their audiences. They will be expected to make commitments to improving the diversity of their boards and their senior teams; the development of more public programmes by curators/programmers from minority backgrounds; and the greater use of Culture venues as community spaces. They will also be expected demonstrate commitments to reducing negative impacts on the environment and increasing educational outreach.

Ben Roberts, BFI Chief Executive, said:

“The BFI Screen Sector Taskforce highlighted the huge financial pressures facing cinemas as some of the first cultural venues to reopen with strict social distancing and limited box office takings. So we really welcome the Government’s culture recovery funding and its vital support for independent cinemas, many of whom will soon be able to provide audiences with a positive and safe cinematic experience. We are also working closely with industry to encourage audiences to return to cinemas as they reopen across the UK.”

Phil Clapp, UK Cinema Association Chief Executive said:

“The challenges facing the entire UK cinema sector as it seeks to recover from the COVID-19 lockdown are difficult to overstate. Today’s confirmation of significant funding support for smaller cinema operators is therefore hugely welcome. We’d like to thank BFI colleagues for all of their hard work in getting us to this point, and look forward to working with them over the coming weeks in ensuring that as wide a range of venues as possible are able to benefit.”

The guidelines and details for cinemas looking to apply to the **Culture Recovery Fund for Independent Cinemas in England** are published at www.bfi.org.uk/Culturerecoveryfund.

Cinemas in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland come under the devolved Government administrations.

The BFI has already put in place a [package of support](#) for individuals, organisations and businesses across the sector that have been most impacted by COVID-19 (including the BFI’s FAN COVID-19 Resilience Fund, Production Continuation Fund, Sales Company Organisational Fund and COVID-19 Emergency Relief Fund with The Film & TV Charity for freelancers) and is also continuing to work with industry and Government to develop and implement a robust, sector-wide strategy for recovery.

In addition to the Culture Recovery Fund for Independent Cinemas in England, a number of significant initiatives that have resulted from the work of the **BFI’s Screen Sector Task Force** and members include the Government’s announcement today of a scheme to support independent film and television production struggling to get coronavirus-related insurance; creating guidance for film

and television production to restart and cinemas to reopen, both given the greenlight by Government and Public Health England; and the quarantine exemption for film and high-end television cast and crew.

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Notes to Editors

About the DCMS Culture Recovery Fund

The Government's **£1.57bn Culture Recovery Fund** is the biggest ever one-off investment in Britain's world-class culture, arts and heritage institutions. It aims to help organisations to help weather the impact of coronavirus by staying afloat while their doors are closed, safeguarding the sector for future generations and support their employees whilst they are closed. The UK's world-renowned galleries, museums, heritage sites, music venues and independent cinemas are critical to keeping our economy thriving and employ more than 700,000 people.

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.

During the COVID-19 pandemic the BFI has provided a **package of measures** worth over £5m to support the film sector including funding for productions that have had to halt before completion; a resilience fund for festivals and exhibitors; a contribution to the COVID-19 Film and TV Emergency Relief Fund for freelancers; a sales company support fund; and funding flexibility for its partners and projects.

