UK & Ireland 2024 Box Office Review – Comscore Movies

Total box office revenue across UK & Ireland in 2024 was £1,060,740,010, the second post-pandemic year to achieve over £1 billion. This result is on a par with 2023 and 8% higher than 2022.

Prior to the pandemic, annual box office had exceeded £1.3 billion in each of the five years up to 2019. While current box office remains 22% behind 2019, 2024 was only the second full year without any restrictions on cinema audiences since the pandemic and, perhaps unsurprisingly after a further two years of disruption to audiences and film productions, it is taking some time to fully re-establish the cinemagoing habit.

Of the five nations making up the UK & Ireland territory, Scotland had the strongest year-on-year growth, with box office 2.4% higher than 2023. Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland also rose, each up 1% in local currency, with no change in England or Wales.

During the year, a number of new cinemas opened across four nations, with major new sites launched by Everyman, ODEON, Picturehouse and Vue as well as some smaller operators, and with some sites initially earmarked for closure being resurrected by operators including Omniplex and Merlin.

Year	Annual Box Office	% Change vs Prior Year	Total Number of New Releases	Number of New 'Saturation' Releases
2017	£1,380,743,945	+ 4%	926	175
2018	£1,378,092,820	0%	925	181
2019	£1,354,438,163	- 2%	938	188
2020	£323,752,724	- 76%	447	75
2021	£597,503,578	+ 85%	504	108
2022	£980,468,929	+ 64%	929	143
2023	£1,063,158,728	+ 8%	1,015	176
2024	£1,060,740,010	0%	1,114	200

2024 saw further improvement in the number of releases, as the hangover from production delays caused by COVID followed by the Hollywood actors' and writers' strikes receded. Both the total number of films released and the key 'saturation' releases (playing in 250+ cinemas) have now returned to pre-2020 levels. While most distributors have returned to a "cinema first" release strategy following an experimental period of simultaneous or shortened release windows encompassing cinema and streaming platforms, the average theatrical window remains shorter than was the case pre-pandemic.

As inflation and interest rates have eased, so too seem to have any signs of the cost-of-living crisis affecting cinemagoing. Nevertheless, cinema operators continue to innovate, offering a range of special offers and discounts, and adding value via investments in premium experiences such as recliner seating and bigger screens. The now-annual National Cinema Day also ran for a third time at the end of August with a special trailer highlighting upcoming releases.

Social media is now a key driver of film awareness, particularly YouTube, TikTok and Instagram where potential audiences can easily discover official and fan-generated video content. The FOMO appeal of participating in cultural moments at the cinema saw its 2023

peak with #Barbenheimer last July, and seems not to have lessened in 2024, with widespread conversation around top titles *Inside Out 2*, *Deadpool & Wolverine* and most recently *Wicked*.

Seven films achieved a full 5 star rating from audiences in our PostTrak exit poll: *Bob Marley: One Love*, *Deadpool & Wolverine*, *Haikyu!!: The Dumpster Battle*, *The Holdovers*, *Turning Red*, *Wicked* and *The Wild Robot*. Rounding out the Top 10 audience picks are *The Garfield Movie*, *Kneecap* and *Mufasa: The Lion King*. Across these ten films, which have so far grossed a total of £177m, 70% of opening weekend viewers said they would 'Definitely Recommend' the film to friends, and on average 24% said they came because they heard the film was good. Word of mouth ranks alongside in-cinema advertising as the main ways people hear about new films, with friends and family just ahead of social media. Each positive experience generates more visits and this momentum is rebuilding to bring audiences back regularly.

Top 10 films in UK & Ireland in 2024:

Data from 5th January 2024 to 2nd January 2025

1. *Inside Out 2* (Disney): £59.2m
2. *Deadpool & Wolverine* (Disney): £57.5m
3. *Wicked* (Universal): £55.6m – still on release
4. *Despicable Me 4* (Universal): £48.6m
5. *Dune: Part II* (Warner Bros): £39.6m
6. *Moana 2* (Disney): £36.4m – still on release
7. *Paddington In Peru* (Studiocanal): £34.2m – still on release
8. *Gladiator II* (Paramount): £31.0m – still on release
9. *Beetlejuice Beetlejuice* (Warner Bros): £26.3m
10. *Kung Fu Panda 4* (Universal): £22.1m

After a strong Q1 led by *Dune: Part II* (delayed from its planned 2023 release), the box office was up 9% versus Q1 2023.

However, production delays caused the year's second-biggest release *Deadpool & Wolverine* to move from its expected early May release to late July, depriving cinemas of the May bank holiday blockbuster when audiences would traditionally be exposed to trailers for upcoming releases. In previous years this Summer kick-off slot in April or May has been occupied by Marvel titles including *Avengers: Endgame*, *Doctor Strange In The Multiverse Of Madness* and *Guardians Of The Galaxy Vol. 3*, and crowd-pleasers like *The Super Mario Bros. Movie* and *Top Gun: Maverick*.

Q2 2024 had a range of releases for different audiences but none of the magnitude of *Deadpool & Wolverine*, with *Kingdom Of The Planet of the Apes* leading the pack until *Inside Out 2* debuted in mid-June.

At the end of Q2, the overall box office was running 8% behind the first half of 2023 and hit a low point of -15% at the end of July, before August proved to be one of the strongest months of the year, led by the July holdovers *Deadpool & Wolverine* and *Despicable Me 4* and new releases *It Ends With Us* and *Alien: Romulus*.

By the end of Q3, the deficit vs. 2023 had improved to -10%, and a strong November set up a nail-biting end-of-year race to close the remaining deficit of just 2% going into December. The final six weeks of the year delivered 18% of the year's box office, compared to 12% from the same period in 2023.

Four of the current Top 10 films are still on release and will move up the chart. In addition, *Mufasa: The Lion King* and *Sonic The Hedgehog 3* will finish in the year's Top 10, having been released in the final two weeks over the Christmas holidays. Whereas Summer is traditionally the strongest release period, 2024 will end with six of its Top 10 films coming in its final two months, and current number 3 *Wicked* moving past the Summer releases to claim the top spot.

The Top 10 films accounted for 38.6% of 2024's total revenue, demonstrating improving diversity in the market and less reliance on a small group of titles. In 2023, 40.5% of ticket sales came from just the Top 10 titles, and in 2022 it was even less diverse, with 43.8% of revenues coming from just the Top 10 titles.

Disney reclaimed its place as No.1 distributor, achieving a market share of 20.9% (up from 19.2% last year) and a total gross of £221m. Across 19 new releases and 49 pre-2024 holdovers, Disney currently has three of the Top 10 films and will add a fourth when *Mufasa* completes its run. Four other new titles also scored over £5m, including January awards magnets *All Of Us Strangers* and *Poor Things* and franchise re-starters *Kingdom Of The Planet Of The Apes* and *Alien: Romulus*.

Universal holds its place at No.2, achieving box office of £206m for a 19.5% share. Universal released the highest number of films, 30, and saw eight of these achieve over £5m. As well as their three Top 10 titles, Universal had hits with animations *Migration* and *The Wild Robot*, action/comedies *The Fall Guy* and *Argylle*, and diverse offerings for adults including *Speak No Evil*, *The Holdovers* and *The Bikeriders*.

Warner Bros takes third place with £173m and a market share of 16.4%. It scored ten titles with over £5m this year; top titles were *Dune: Part II*, *Beetlejuice Beetlejuice*, *Godzilla X Kong: The New Empire*, *Twisters*, *Wonka* (released 2023 but adding £14m this year), *Joker: Folie A Deux* and *One Life* – all contributing over £10m.

Paramount and Sony ranked fourth and fifth, reversing their 2023 positions and each increasing their share with 10.2% and 9.3% respectively. Paramount will end with two titles in the year's Top 10, *Gladiator II* and *Sonic The Hedgehog 3*. Sony's top title was the breakout book adaptation *It Ends With Us*, currently No.11 in the 2024 chart. The top European distributor was Studiocanal at No.6 (up from last year's No.9), with fifteen new releases led by *Paddington In Peru* and a market share of 6.8%.

In total, 180 different distributors released films this year, up from 164 in 2023 and 136 in 2022. The Top 10 distributors' films accounted for 89.5% of box office, a further sign of greater diversity returning to the market (from a concentration of 91.5% in 2023, 93.6% in 2022 and 95.7% in 2021).

Top 15 British/Irish films in UK & Ireland in 2024:

Data from 5th January 2024 to 2nd January 2025

1. *Paddington In Peru* (Studiocanal): £34.2m – still on release
2. *Gladiator II* (Paramount): £31.0m – still on release
3. *Wonka* (Warner Bros): £14.2m in 2024 (£63.5m lifetime)
4. *Alien: Romulus* (Disney): £13.3m
5. *Back To Black* (Studiocanal): £12.3m
6. *One Life* (Warner Bros): £10.0m
7. *Wicked Little Letters* (Studiocanal): £9.6m
8. *The Garfield Movie* (Sony): £9.0m
9. *Poor Things* (Disney): £7.5m
10. *Civil War* (Entertainment): £6.4m
11. *Argylle* (Universal): £5.9m
12. *Conclave* (Black Bear): £5.8m – still on release
13. *All Of Us Strangers* (Disney): £5.3m
14. *Lee* (Studiocanal): £4.4m
15. *Small Things Like These* (Lionsgate): £4.0m – still on release

Paddington In Peru, *Gladiator II* and last year's top British release *Wonka* were the highest-grossing British/Irish films this year, with threequel *Paddington In Peru* still playing and on course to overtake *Paddington's* £38m (2014). Studiocanal takes an impressive three of the Top 10 spots and five of the Top 20. In total, local British/Irish productions and co-productions doubled their box office this year, achieving £246.3m versus 2023's £123.6m and 2022's £135.8m, accounting for 23% of the year's overall total. Looking ahead to 2025, *Bridget Jones: Mad About The Boy* is likely to be the highest-grossing local production, releasing on Valentine's Day.

Phil Clapp, Chief Executive of the UK Cinema Association commented:

"While the early months of 2024 were undoubtedly challenging for cinema operators here in the UK as elsewhere, the upswing in admissions we saw here over the Summer and in particular during the closing months of the year confirm once again that when great films are available, audiences are ready to turn out in huge numbers for the big screen experience. As the film slate strengthens further into 2025 and beyond, we remain supremely optimistic that for all of its challenges, the last year has provided a solid foundation for further growth and recovery."

Andy Leyshon, Chief Executive of the Film Distributors' Association was similarly upbeat on the 2024 performance and said:

"Reaching box office parity with 2023 represents a decent overall performance for the UK and Ireland theatrical market. Amongst some notable highs, 2024 also had its challenges, but the last couple of months have shown us that cinemagoing remains in rude health with audiences keen to see the huge variety of films on offer. With 2025 starting in similarly fine fettle, the year ahead looks packed full of promise for fans of the big screen."

Note: The 2024 date range was Friday 5th January 2024 to Thursday 2nd January 2025 (52 playweeks).