



Pitch Pots

Funding Guidelines 2026

Film Hub Midlands, BFI Film Audience Network

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1. Introduction

The BFI Film Audience Network (FAN) reaches out across the UK to ensure people have the maximum possible opportunity to watch and enjoy a diverse range of films, regardless of geography or circumstance.

As part of FAN, Film Hub Midlands has been awarded funding from the BFI National Lottery to reach a broad range of audiences with independent UK and international film and deliver against the priorities set out in the BFI's Screen Culture 2033 [strategy](#):

The Film Exhibition Fund – Pitch Pots aims to help the independent film exhibition sector and support the development of cultural organisations across the Midlands. It will support exhibitors to carry out audience development activity in line with **one or more** of the BFI and FAN priority outcomes.

2. About Pitch Pots

We are now seeking proposals from Hub members that will help us meet FAN priority outcomes during the period **April 2026 – early March 2027**.

Our Pitch Pots are intended to support FHM Members to reach new and diverse audiences for British, independent and international films and broader screen experiences in their local communities in line with one or more of the BFI and FAN priority outcomes.

The Pitch Pots are available to help support a risk and try something new. Whether you are new to film exhibition and want to put on your first screening or an established cinema or community screen who wants to trial a new type of programming, we want to help audiences in the Midlands engage with the widest range of film and broader screen experiences in as many places as possible.

3. Key information at a glance:

Financial support: up to £2,000

Open for proposals: 1 April 2026

Deadline for proposals: Rolling until funds are exhausted

Activity window: April 2026 – early March 2027

4. Priority Outcomes

We ask that your proposal for audience development activity must be in line with **one or more** of the BFI and FAN priority outcomes as follows:

- **Engaging with Children and Young People**

We recognise the important role early cinema visits have on the health of the exhibition sector both now and in the future. By engaging with children, families and young people, organisations can introduce new audiences to their work and foster future generations of cinemagoers. When looking at activity regarding young people we encourage organisations to think about how it represents audience development within their contexts and intersects with other priority areas.

- **Accessing a wider choice of film**

One of our key aims is to support everyone to be able to see the widest range of film and moving image, including classic and international cinema, documentaries, TV and screen heritage and games. We are keen to support programmes and projects that are inclusive and reflect a diversity of lived experiences to broaden horizons and bring people together for communal big screen experiences.

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

We want to improve access to screen culture for people across the Midlands by lowering barriers such as prohibitive costs, lack of cultural provision, lack of accessible screenings and threshold anxiety. We are particularly keen to support projects that engage audiences from working class backgrounds and projects engaging with disabled people, LGBTQAI+ people, Black, South Asian, South East and East Asian people and others of the global majority.

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

Providing audience access to screen heritage is a key component of a diverse and rich screen culture and deepens our understanding of both the past and present. We can support activities that showcase various types of screen heritage material. If your proposal includes archival material, please ensure you have contacted the relevant collection before seeking support from us.

Underpinning our work are the following cross cutting principles that all supported activity will need to address.

- **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion**

FAN champions everyday inclusion. We would like to see how your project will meaningfully contribute to diversifying audiences for the widest range of cinema and how it will broaden the range of stories represented on screen. Where applicable we also seek opportunities to tackle under representation in the exhibition workforce.

- **Environmental Sustainability**

We are committed to minimising the negative environmental impact of the work we support and ask all members recipients to contribute to this aim. In your proposal, please summarise steps you are taking both to minimise the environmental impact of your activity and -where applicable - taking opportunities to improve audience awareness of the climate and biodiversity crises.

You can read more about these key outcomes on [our website](#), including our commitment to the **BFI Diversity Standards**, environmental sustainability, and bullying and harassment documents. All activity supported by our funding should address the BFI Diversity Standards.

We will prioritise proposals that help us meet our priority outcomes and inclusion targets:

- Disabled (including those with a longstanding physical or mental condition and those identifying as D/deaf or neurodiverse)
- Black and Global Majority
- Gender balance – of those identifying within the gender binary (also monitoring trans and non-binary identities)
- Sexual identity – those identifying as LGB+
- Working class background
- Accessible screenings (closed captions, audio description, BSL interpretation, marketing materials, ticket incentives or discounts)
- Relaxed screenings (autism, neurodiverse, dementia or baby-friendly)

We are particularly committed to ensuring disproportionately affected audiences, such as disabled, those with a longstanding physical or mental condition, and those identifying as D/deaf or neurodiverse, can experience independent film and be welcomed into cinema spaces.

All Pitch Pots proposals will be asked to demonstrate how their activity promotes inclusivity among audiences, on screen and – where possible - in the workforce.

We ask that all proposals positively respond to the Standards, and priority will be given to proposals that do this in a clear and convincing way. Applicants should particularly focus on Standard D and how their proposal provides inclusive audience development opportunities and Standard E that requires evidence of conscious commitment and tangible actions to improve overall accessibility.

5. Am I eligible?

You must be a Film Hub Midlands Member in order to access Film Hub Midlands funding opportunities. Our Membership includes organisations of various sizes and shapes - from community cinemas to festivals to multi-arts centres. To become a Member, fill in our [Application Form](#). Please contact us if you are unsure whether you are a current Member.

Organisations must be formally constituted (e.g. as a community interest company or limited liability company registered at Companies House; a charity or trust registered with the Charity Commission; a Local Authority or statutory body; or a voluntary group with a written constitution) and have a business bank account.

We can only accept proposals from legally constituted organisations operating in the Midlands. Proposals should be submitted **at least 8 weeks in advance of their project start date** to allow time for assessment, project development and marketing lead-in. We cannot accept proposals from projects that are currently happening and/or advertised, selling tickets online.

6. How to seek financial support

You will be asked to submit a [proposal form](#) and [budget template](#). The proposal form will give you the opportunity to describe your activity and how it contributes to Film Hub Midland's priorities as outlined in this document. If you have any questions about the fund, the priorities, the submission process or would like to discuss your proposal, please get in touch. If you have not accessed funding from FHM in the past, we strongly recommend contacting us in advance of submitting your proposal.

Please submit your proposal via the Google form and send us your budget template to hello@filmhubmidlands.org

7. Access Support

If you have any access requirements and would like to submit your proposal in another way or have queries about the process, get in touch with our team who will be happy to discuss this.

If you have access requirements that mean you need assistance when seeking support from Film Hub Midlands, you may be able to request this through the BFI Access Support Scheme. Find out [more information here](#).

8. How much can I ask for?

Members can request up to £2,000 per proposal.

We want our projects to reach as many people as possible, and we always consider the value we provide per screening and audience member. For proposals that are closer to the maximum amount available (i.e. £2,000), we would anticipate projects with a high number of screenings to reflect that.

Please note that we are not able to fund 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 the budget.

Your activity must be completed by early March 2027.

To help you complete your budget, we have created a [specific budget guidance](#) document.

9. Assessment criteria:

Your proposal will be assessed by the Film Hub Midlands team and (where applicable) external advisors who will specifically look at:

- Activity eligibility: Does the proposed activity meet the priorities and timescale of the fund?
- Audience reach: What are the audience targets, and will the planned activity deliver them? Subsidy per head will be a consideration. Whilst we appreciate predicting admissions can be difficult, please provide carefully considered estimates or ask us for guidance.

- Impact: What is the cultural ambition of the proposed programme? Are relevant partnerships in place to effectively deliver the activity?
- Organisational capability: Is the organisation demonstrably able to carry out the proposed activity? This will include consideration of project management, management oversight, risk management, marketing, audience development and evaluation plans.
- If you have previously had a project supported by Film Hub Midlands, the outcomes and effectiveness of that project will be taken into consideration when considering any new proposal
- Budget: Are all reasonable costs considered? Does the budget balance and are all costs eligible? Have access costs been included?
- Legacy: What are the longer-term plans to continue to reach audiences?
- BFI Diversity Standards: Does the proposal clearly address the BFI Diversity Standards?

Please note that we expect this fund to be oversubscribed and may not be able to fund your activity even if it meets the criteria. The larger the amount you are seeking, the higher we would expect your project to score in the assessment.

Additional advice and support may be available to projects with strong inclusion aims, that specifically address:

- Economic barriers and / or engage working-class audiences
- Disability.

Proposals that meet these criteria may be shared with specialist freelancers, who will review a select number of projects, from across FAN, UK wide. Any eligible applicants will be contacted to discuss in more detail. If you require more information at application stage, please contact us.

10. 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 Film Hub opportunities.

Successful proposals

If your proposal is successful, the assessment panel may discuss any required amendments and we may wish to see a revised plan before confirming financial support. This process can take additional time. Activity timelines will need to accommodate this.

You may also need to supply relevant supporting documents such as your most recent annual or semi-annual report and accounts (as submitted to Companies House), evidence of your organisation's bank account, or any other documents necessary for Film Hub Midlands to complete a financial health check.

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 financial support.

Terms and conditions will include payment information, crediting guidelines and monitoring and reporting requirements. All funded activity will need to survey their audiences using our standard template / online survey tool- please bear this in mind when planning your evaluation strategies.

11. Complaints and Appeals

The funding decision is final. Inevitably some proposals will be unsuccessful, and Members may be disappointed by this result. Formal appeals against the final decision will not be considered unless the proposing organisation has 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 process.

A copy of the Complaints and Appeals procedure can be found [here](#).

12. Contact us

Film Hub Midlands is a sector development organisation supporting film culture in the Midlands region. The Hub collaborates with a range of organisations and individuals to help great films get made, screened and seen in the region. Our work is supported by National Lottery funding and we are proud to be a member of the BFI Film Audience Network and BFI NETWORK.

E: hello@filmhubmidlands.org

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. 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.