

# SHORT FILM FUNDING

Delivered in partnership with

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Awarding funds from

**THE NATIONAL LOTTERY®**

# CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>BFI NETWORK SHORT FILM FUNDING</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>CAN I APPLY?</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>WHAT CAN I APPLY FOR?</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>HOW DO I MAKE AN APPLICATION?</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>WHAT HAPPENS TO MY APPLICATION?</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>FEEDBACK</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>RESUBMISSION</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>SUCCESSFUL APPLICATIONS</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>BFI LOTTERY FUNDING GENERAL CONDITIONS</b>	<b>20</b>

# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to BFI NETWORK. We have a mission to discover and support talented writers, directors and producers at the start of their careers. We're seeking talent with the burning desire to tell original stories: people with inspired creative approaches and new perspectives, and work that might be surprising, revelatory or challenging.

We invest National Lottery funds in original filmmaking from adventurous storytellers, with a focus on projects which respond to our core objectives which are to support:

- the early careers of ambitious filmmakers;
- work with cultural relevance or progressive ideas;
- filmmaking that takes risks on talent, form and content, where the more commercial sector cannot;
- work that recognises the quality of difference – in perspective, in talent, in recruitment;
- an increase in the number of active projects originated by filmmakers outside London & the South East.

BFI NETWORK is a collaboration between the BFI, national film organisations and leading cultural venues around the UK, including the five English Film Hubs of the BFI Film Audience Network. The partners are:

PLACE	PARTNER
England: Film Hub North	Showroom Sheffield, HOME Manchester, Tyneside Cinema Newcastle
England: Film Hub Midlands	Broadway Nottingham & Flatpack Projects, Birmingham
England: Film Hub London	Film London
England: Film Hub South East	Independent Cinema Office
England: Film Hub South West	Watershed, Bristol
Northern Ireland	Northern Ireland Screen
Scotland (in partnership with Creative Scotland)	Scottish Film Talent Network
Wales	Ffilm Cymru Wales
UK-wide Documentary Partner	Doc Society

This BFI NETWORK Short Film funding programme supports projects with directors based in England and is run in partnership with the five English Film Hubs. The Hubs employ BFI NETWORK Talent Executives who are central to the review process for applications and work with filmmakers on the delivery of funded projects. This England-wide partnership means that more voices in more places can contribute to distinctive, original storytelling.

# BFI NETWORK SHORT FILM FUNDING

This fund is for fiction shorts, in both live action and animation. We want to support short films that:

- bring exciting new voices and bold narratives to the screen;
- provide space for experimentation and idea-testing;
- advance the careers of the filmmakers involved through showcasing their abilities to the industry and the public.

We support standalone short films and this can include projects that have the potential, further down the line, to be developed into other forms or formats (e.g. a feature film, content in serial form, etc.). The fund is intended to stimulate new ideas and stories, so it doesn't support adaptations of existing material.

## WHAT SUPPORT DO FILMMAKERS RECEIVE?

This fund provides grants to support the production costs of short films. Each award of funding is accompanied by creative oversight of the short film by a BFI NETWORK Talent Executive. As well as working with filmmakers prior to and during production, they may also be able to advise you on:

- finding screening opportunities, regionally and further afield;
- potential collaborators for your project;

- festival strategy for your film;
- other means to gain industry exposure for your work.

## OTHER SOURCES OF SUPPORT

- If you live in Northern Ireland, Scotland or Wales, contact the [BFI NETWORK partner in your nation](#) to find out more about their funding for new filmmakers
- If you're looking for documentary funding, you should go to the BFI Documentary Fund delivered by Doc Society, [here](#)
- If you are based in England and looking for Early Development funding for a feature film, there are separate guidelines available [here](#)
- For professional development opportunities please visit the [professional development section](#) of the BFI NETWORK website.



A photograph of a deer standing in a forest. The deer is looking towards the camera. The forest floor is covered with fallen leaves in shades of orange, yellow, and brown. There are green ferns and other plants in the foreground. The background shows more trees and foliage, with some leaves hanging from branches in the upper part of the frame.

# CAN I APPLY?

This funding is for writers and directors who haven't yet had a feature film produced and distributed, and the producers and teams they are working with.

Projects need to have a writer, director and producer attached before an application can be made. Writer-directors are eligible to apply, providing they are working with a separate individual as a producer. If you are seeking collaborators for your project, you could contact your regional [BFI NETWORK Talent Executive](#) who may be able to provide guidance. In some circumstances the Talent Executive may be able to allow an application from teams without a producer where this is discussed prior to application; the team would then need to confirm a producer for the project prior to our funding decision being taken.

During assessment of your application or after we make any award to the project, the Talent Executive may recommend you attach an additional producer to your film in cases where your team would benefit distinctly from this additional expertise.

The writer, director and producer on the project will need to be able to demonstrate a creative track record as part of the application. This could be student work, or something created at a grassroots/non-professional level, and it may be in film, television, theatre or another artform. All of these team members need to be over 18 and not in full-time education.

If members of your team are involved in other short film projects that are also seeking funds, or have secured funds, from BFI NETWORK, you should state this in your application. It will need to be clear to us that those concerned would be able to fulfil their obligations to each film, should they be offered funding for more than one project.

### WHAT SHOULD I DO BEFORE APPLYING?

Before you make an application you will need to:

- **Register for the BFI NETWORK Postroom**, an online space for filmmakers to post previous short films or new scripts, where they can be viewed by industry executives. This can lead to connections being made with funding decision-makers, producers and agents. You'll be asked as part of the application process to confirm that your project's writer, producer and director have each created a profile and uploaded sample work. You can find the Postroom [here](#) and create a profile [here](#).
- **Read the [BFI Diversity Standards](#)**, a set of measures that prompt you to consider how your project can contribute to creating a more inclusive UK film industry. You'll be asked to respond to the Standards in your application.

## CHECKLIST BEFORE YOU APPLY

Please check that you meet the below criteria, and any other specifications made in these Guidelines, before submitting your application:

I'm seeking funding for a 'single project' fiction short film in live action or animation of no longer than 15 minutes in length

☐

The director, or at least one of the co-directors, of my project is / are resident in England<sup>1</sup>

☐

The writer(s) and director(s) of my project have not written a feature film that has been produced and received distribution

☐

The writer(s), director(s) and producer(s) of my project each have a creative track record as described above and I can demonstrate this in the application

☐

The writer(s), director(s) and producer(s) of my project are each aged 18 or over and not in full-time education

☐

I think that my short film would be capable of qualifying for certification as a British film through:

- i. Schedule 1 to the Films Act 1985 (The Cultural Test)<sup>2</sup>;
- ii. One of the UK's official co-production treaties; or
- iii. The European Convention on Co-Production

☐

My short film will be wholly original to me and my team and is not based on anyone else's pre-existing work

☐

I believe that my film would be capable of obtaining a BBFC certificate which is no more restrictive than BBFC '18'

☐

The writer, director and producer of my project have each created a BFI NETWORK Postroom account and uploaded sample work

☐

I have considered how the project will address the BFI Diversity Standards

☐

## Speculative Submissions

We can only make awards to projects that have been submitted to us through the online application process. This means that we cannot accept, or read, informal submissions such as feature ideas or other materials submitted by any means other than the online application portal.

<sup>1</sup> It is fine for your writer and / or producer to be resident in other parts of the UK.

<sup>2</sup> A summary of how points for the Cultural Test for film are allocated and full guidance on British certification and tax relief can be found on the BFI website at: [bfi.org.uk/film-industry/british-certification-tax-relief](https://www.bfi.org.uk/film-industry/british-certification-tax-relief)



# WHAT CAN I APPLY FOR?

You can apply to this fund for **up to £15,000** for, or towards, the production costs of your short film. You should only ask for the amount you will actually need. Most of the awards we make will be for an amount lower than £15,000. We will assess the feasibility of your budget and may offer you funding at a different amount than that which you've requested.

This fund is for short films of **up to fifteen minutes** in length (and it's fine to aim to make a film that's considerably shorter). We will look at your script and the rest of your application to gauge how long your film is likely to be. As an indication, a typical page of dialogue will roughly equal a minute of on-screen time.

## MUSIC

Music can be complicated to clear in terms of permissions, and expensive. If we make an award for your short film, our agreement with you for the funding will include parameters for use of music within the film, to ensure that additional costs or delays do not arise during distribution of the film in relation to getting permission to use music.

A close-up, profile view of a woman with dark hair and a nose ring, looking intently at a green plant. The background is a lush green field with out-of-focus foliage.

# HOW DO I MAKE AN APPLICATION?

Applications for this funding are open year-round so you can **apply at any time** via the [BFI NETWORK](#) website.

When first using the online application portal you will be asked to create an account: this is separate to the Postroom profile described above, and means you can save and review your applications before submission. You will be able to access all your previous and in-progress applications at any point by logging into [your account](#). If you need support in completing the application form please contact us on [bfinetwork@bfi.org.uk](mailto:bfinetwork@bfi.org.uk)

It should be your project's producer who completes this form. They will be considered the 'lead applicant' to whom, if your application is successful, the award will be made. Producers can apply either as individuals or through a production company.

## EQUALITY MONITORING FORM

On starting an application you'll first be asked to complete an Equality Monitoring Form, which opens up in a separate window. This collects data to help measure how effective the BFI is in attracting a diverse range of applicants for funding. It requests information about the writer, director and producer on your project. When filling it in, you can select 'prefer not to say' if you'd rather not share the information requested.

## PROJECT, TEAM AND SUPPORTING MATERIAL

These sections will ask you for information including:

- your story idea;
- a statement from your director;
- the practical elements of producing the film;
- CV summaries for your writer, producer and director;
- links or attachments to previous creative work from your core team members, such as short films, writing samples or visual art work. You can also provide links to materials expressing your ideas for your new project;
- how your project responds to the BFI Diversity Standards, e.g. how it might address industry under-representation in relation to disability, gender, race, age, sexual orientation and / or socio-economic status. The information you provide for this answer may be anonymised and used to help inform future funding decisions, research and strategy.

## FINANCES

You'll be asked to state the amount of funding you are seeking from the BFI for your short film, alongside the total cost of producing it.

If the total cost of your film exceeds the amount you are requesting from the BFI, you don't need to have all of the additional funds raised at the point of application, but will need to show an achievable plan for securing them. These additional funds would need to be secured before we make any award to you.

## BUDGET

At the end of the form you will need to attach a budget using the Excel template provided alongside these guidelines, showing your projected income and a breakdown of your anticipated costs. If you need any guidance about how to complete the template, please let us know.

Your budget should make sure to include sufficient funds to cover:

- all costs you expect to incur, with estimates used if necessary;
- the clearance of all rights in the film worldwide in all media in perpetuity (including use fees, repeat fees and residuals);
- payment for all cast and crew at least at National Minimum Wage rates or higher ([gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates](https://gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates)), in line with any guidance provided on the budget template;
- the production insurances;
- all the delivery materials (see [Successful applications](#) below) required by the BFI;
- a 5% contingency;
- any other requirements of funding detailed within these Guidelines.

Please note that the funding from the BFI will be a grant and inclusive of any VAT.

## ATTACHMENTS

At the end of the form you will be asked to attach the script of your short film in standard industry format, submitted as a PDF or Word doc. This has to be a script rather than a pitch, treatment or outline. Applications for an animated short may submit a storyboard in place of a script.



# WHAT HAPPENS TO MY APPLICATION?

Once you have submitted your application, you'll receive a confirmation within 14 days of submission that it has been received and a unique ID number will be assigned to the application.

## A. ELIGIBILITY

We will check that your application is eligible for funding, using the criteria identified in [Can I Apply?](#) above. Only complete applications can be assessed so if there is information missing from your application this will make it ineligible.

If it is ineligible, we will send you an email to inform you of this. If at this point you realise you've made an error on your application which has rendered it ineligible, please tell us at this point, as we may still be able to assess it.

## B. ASSESSMENT

Your application will be assessed against the following criteria:

- its potential contribution to meeting the [stated objectives of the BFI Film Fund](#);
- the creative strengths of the proposal;
- the strengths of the project team;
- how the story will connect with audiences;
- the impact your project could have in addressing the BFI Diversity Standards;
- the project's likely need for National Lottery support, e.g. related to its potential cultural impact;
- the overall balance of projects receiving support, to ensure variety in the work being funded.

The assessment will also take into account how you have managed any previous BFI funding you may have received.

The Talent Executive in your region will lead on making recommendations for funding to the BFI and will be your main point of contact. If the Executive in your region decides that they do not want to put your project forward for support, it will automatically be reviewed by an Executive in another region. This will provide each application with a second chance of being funded. If neither Executive wishes to propose your project for support, you will be informed of this outcome and your application will be declined.

A Talent Executive may contact you to discuss your project, including to suggest you make revisions to your application prior to a final decision being made. You might be asked for further information, or invited to have a phone call or meeting – this doesn't mean any commitment has been made to fund your project, but will help the Executive gather the information needed to make a decision.

We may consult other external readers or colleagues from other organisations regarding your application. If this occurs, the individuals involved will be required to maintain confidentiality regarding the application contents and agree not to retain application materials following their review.

We may undertake a due diligence assessment of the applicant as part of the review process; details of this are provided within the application form.

### **Lottery Finance Committee Consideration**

Following assessment of each application, funding recommendations will be made to the BFI Lottery Finance Committee. This is the final stage of the funding decision process.

All applicants will be informed in writing of the decision on their application. If your application is declined, all supporting materials will be deleted from your submission in line with our record retention policy.

The decision of BFI NETWORK as to whether it wishes to support your application is final, but there are circumstances in which a project can be e-submitted for support with a new application – please see

[Resubmission](#) below.

## C. TIMELINE SUMMARY

STAGE	TIMELINE
Email acknowledgment of your application	Within two weeks of submission
Decision to progress or decline your application	Within eight weeks of acknowledgment

If we or the Talent Executive request additional materials from you, the amount of time it takes for you to supply these may have an impact on our ability to take a decision on your application within the above timeframe, and it may take more than eight weeks after acknowledgment to reach a decision.

# FEEDBACK

We are only able to support a small percentage of the applications received and unfortunately have to say 'no' far more often than we are able to say 'yes'. Where applications are not successful, the Talent Executive who has reviewed your application may be able to provide you with feedback. You should always receive some feedback if you've had a project meeting or detailed call with the Talent Executive as part of the application process, or if they requested additional creative material from you.

Some of the reasons we decline applications are:

- the project was not eligible for funding;
- it did not align with our stated objectives for this funding;
- we felt the material was too familiar or derivative;
- we didn't feel that the project 'needed' National Lottery support, i.e. it should be financeable by other means;
- there was insufficient engagement with the BFI Diversity Standards.

We welcome constructive feedback from you on our application process, so we can continue to improve: please send any feedback to [bfinetwork@bfi.org.uk](mailto:bfinetwork@bfi.org.uk)





# RESUBMISSION

If your application is not successful, you may be able to re-apply to us. This can happen when a core element of the project changes e.g. a new writer or director. In this instance, contact your regional Talent Executive who may be able to invite a resubmission – you'll need this before you can apply again. In any resubmissions, please identify clearly how the project has changed since your previous application.

# SUCCESSFUL APPLICATIONS

If your application is successful, you will be made an **offer of funding** as set out below. Following this, a Talent Executive will provide creative input and oversight of your project. In some cases this Talent Executive may be in a different region of the UK to you.

You will need to provide an agreed final budget and a confirmed Specification for your short film, prior to us sending you the offer of funding. This will constitute the agreed criteria against which the project will be delivered.

The award will take the form of a non-recoupable grant and you will be required to enter into an agreement with the BFI that sets out the terms and conditions of our funding. The agreement will include the following:

- 1 A legal undertaking by you that the work being funded is wholly original to you and your team and that all third party materials incorporated in the film are cleared for use in the film in all media in perpetuity.
- 2 A permanent license to the BFI to enable it to exhibit the film in educational establishments or by on-line means on the BFI's website (including the BFI Player and the BFI NETWORK) and to authorise others to do so via linked websites throughout the world in perpetuity and the right to use clips of the film.
- 3 A right of approval for the BFI of each cut of the film.

- 4 A right of approval of all main production elements (including heads of department) and final credits.
- 5 A requirement to put in place all customary production insurances on which the BFI must be named as an additional insured.
- 6 A delivery date by which you agree to finish work on your short film and submit the required delivery materials to us.
- 7 A cashflow that breaks down the award total into instalments, with the final payment being subject to submission to us of the delivery materials. The majority of the award is generally provided in an initial instalment (e.g. of 90%) to provide funding for use during delivery when costs are incurred. Any underspend on the award will be retained by, or reimbursed to, the BFI.
- 8 Delivery materials: We will require delivery of the following items (the cost of which must be contained in the budget for the film):

## Film and Video Materials

- | 1 Pro Res 422 (HQ) file: the Pro Res must be delivered either on a portable hard drive, such as the Avastor HDX series, or uploaded direct to a secure client account on the BFI's file transfer portal.
- | 1 H264 .mov or .mp4 file: the H264 file may be delivered on a hard drive or via a secure cloud-based computer file transfer service.

- | 1 password protected Vimeo link.

## **Publicity Materials**

- | 1 full master set of production stills taken from the film.
- | 1 full master set of 'Behind the Scenes' stills taken from the film.
- | 1 written pack to include one synopsis of approximately 250 words and a 160 character logline, flyers and other publicity material, full credits list, biographies of principal cast, individual producer(s), director(s), writer(s) and key crew, and production information, in electronic format by e-mail or file transfer.

## **Documentation**

- | 1 Final Cost Report.
- | Any applicable rights clearances.
- | Copies on emailed PDFs or on disc of all clearance agreements including Artists Agreement(s), Contributors Agreements (to include at a minimum all Heads of Department: DOP, Sound Recordist, Editor, Art Director/Production Designer, Sound Designer (if applicable)) and Music Contributors Agreement and a copy of the music cue sheet.
- | Equality Monitoring Report submitted via online link. This will request information on the contributors to your project and where applicable will be used to measure success against the BFI Diversity Standards.

- 9** An undertaking from you to acknowledge publicly that you have received National Lottery funding. The support provided by BFI NETWORK is only possible because of the National Lottery. We ask the filmmakers we fund to do everything they can to acknowledge the National Lottery as the source of this funding. This includes displaying the National Lottery logo on your short film, related marketing materials, press releases and on the front pages of project and organisational websites. We ask beneficiaries to actively acknowledge and spread the word about their project being made possible by money raised by National Lottery players, whenever they can. This includes mentioning the National Lottery, at a minimum, on press releases, on print and marketing materials, online including through social media, and when speaking to the industry and the wider public about the project.
- 10** An undertaking from you to deliver against the plans made by you in relation to the BFI Diversity Standards. Failure to deliver against those undertakings without good cause may affect your ability to receive future project funding from the BFI.
- 11** Standard termination provisions.



# BFI LOTTERY FUNDING GENERAL CONDITIONS

- 1** The information in these guidelines can change. The law and Government regulations on distributing National Lottery funds may also change. The BFI therefore reserves the right to review this funding scheme and/or change its policies, procedures and assessment criteria.
- 2** The application form does not necessarily cover all the information the BFI uses to decide which applications to fund. The BFI can ask applicants for extra information.
- 3** All applications are made at the applicant's own risk. The BFI will not be liable for loss, damage or costs arising directly or indirectly from:
  - the application process;
  - the BFI's decision not to provide an award to an applicant; or
  - dealing with the application.
- 4** Please check your application form carefully. The BFI will not process applications which are incomplete or which do not comply with these guidelines.
- 5** The BFI's decisions on applications are final.
- 6** The BFI will not pay any funding until it has received a fully executed copy of the funding agreement and any conditions precedent to that agreement have been satisfied or waived by the BFI.
- 7** The BFI will publicise information on the number of applications it receives and the awards made. This information will include the name of the successful applicant, award amount, project name and project details.
- 8** The Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives members of the public the right to request certain information held by the BFI. This includes information held in relation to applications to the BFI's National Lottery funding programmes or schemes. Therefore if you choose to apply to the BFI you should be aware that the information you supply, either in whole or in part, may be disclosed under the Freedom of Information Act.
- 9** Sometimes the BFI's Governors or members of staff may be involved in some way with applicants. This interest has to be declared in applications from such applicants. The relevant Governor or staff member will not be involved in assessing the application or the decision to make an award. Applicants are advised not to try to influence the success of their application by approaching a Governor or staff member.



- 10** It is important that applicants carefully check the information given in the application form. The BFI Standard Terms and Conditions entitle it to withhold or reclaim an award in the following circumstances:
- if the application was filled in dishonestly or with incorrect or misleading information about the organisation or the project whether deliberately or accidentally; and
  - if the award recipient acts dishonestly or negligently to the disadvantage of the project.

The BFI will follow up cases of suspected fraud and will pass information to the police.

- 11** The BFI requires that any measures taken by applicants to address underrepresentation are fully in compliance with the Equality Act 2010 – see more at [equalityhumanrights.com](https://equalityhumanrights.com).
- 12** Complaints and Appeals: The BFI's decision is final. Inevitably applications will be turned down and applicants may be disappointed by this result. Formal appeals against the final decision will not be considered unless the applicant has good cause to believe that the procedures for processing the applications were not adhered to, or applied in such a way as to prejudice the outcome of the application. A copy of the BFI's Complaints and Appeals procedure can be obtained on request from the BFI's Communications Office.

- 13** Recognition of the National Lottery: The BFI distributes 'good cause' National Lottery Funding. We ask all of our partners and award recipients to increase the visibility of the National Lottery by:

- promoting and proudly displaying the National Lottery logo; and
- warmly and energetically finding ways to get all beneficiaries to spread the word.

It is therefore an important condition of BFI funding that the source of the funding (being the National Lottery) is prominently acknowledged through conspicuous use of the BFI/National Lottery lock up logo and through agreed verbal and written acknowledgement. Also that partners and beneficiaries take frequent opportunities to highlight not just the fact of the funding but why it is funded and therefore the good work that is possible through the National Lottery.