

Film Hub South West
2023-24 Reflections



Introduction

Cover:
Image credit: Don Moore – Anna Navas
and Mark Jenkins at the Enys Men Q&A
at Plymouth Art Cinema

Film Hub South West is the driving force behind film culture in the region. We work towards a thriving and inclusive film sector, enabling more people to show, watch, and make films where they are – thanks to the support of National Lottery.

Led by internationally renowned cultural cinema Watershed in Bristol, a UNESCO City of Film, Film Hub South West is part of the UK wide BFI Film Audience Network (BFI FAN.) This is at the heart of the British Film Institute strategy, which seeks to ensure the greatest choice of film is available for everyone. Alongside this, we are home to BFI NETWORK and BFI Film Academy South West which nurture the region's new wave of talent.

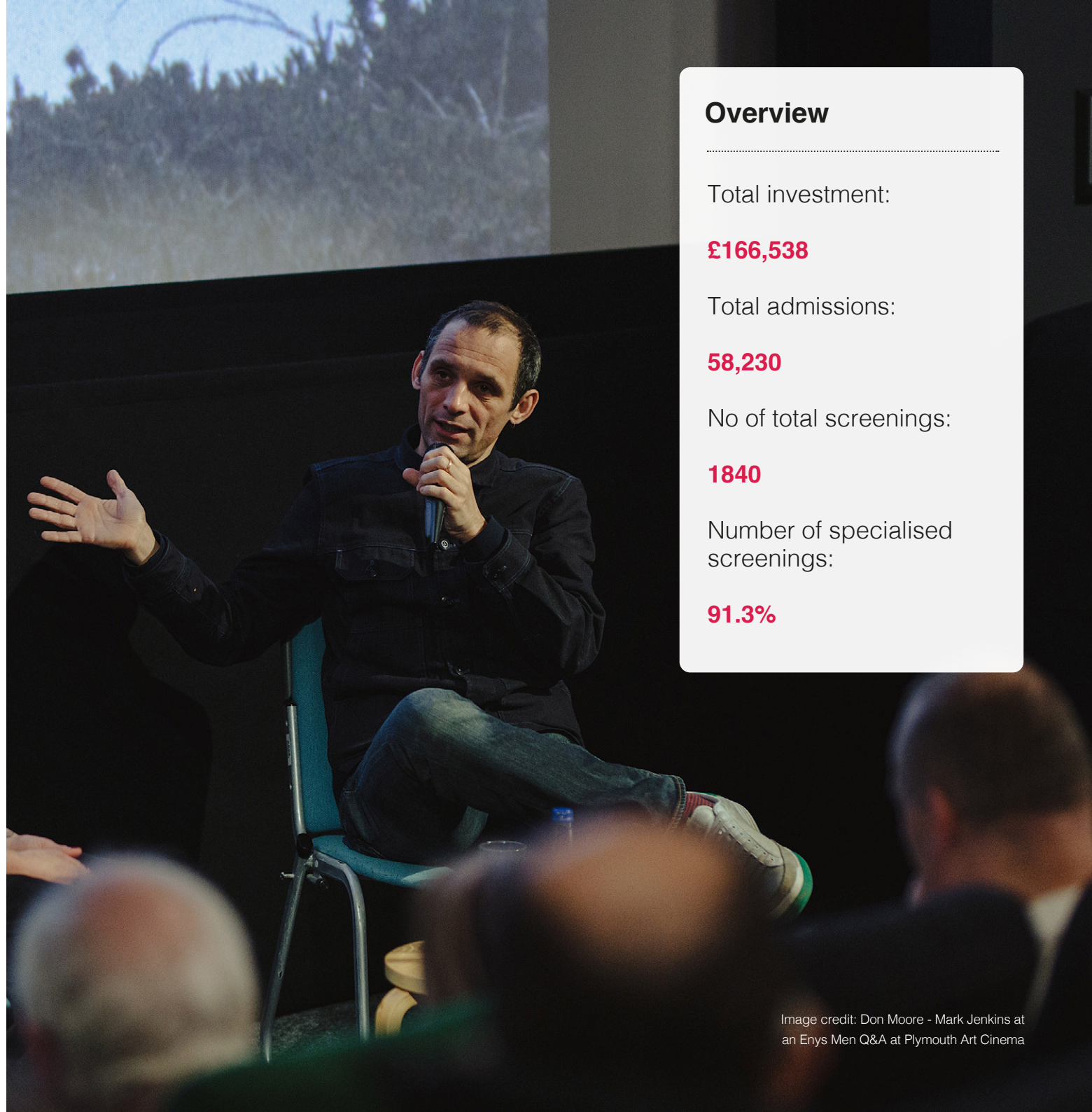
As the 2023-24-year ends, we reflect on the impact of Film Hub and BFI NETWORK and BFI Academy on audiences, talent, and the film sector over the past 12 months here in the South West.



Image credit: Kelvin Williams - Cables & Cameras, Inspired 2024

Film Hub South West, BFI NETWORK South West and BFI Film Academy South West are part of the BFI Film Audience Network, supported by The National Lottery

More films,
to more
people,
in more
places



Overview

Total investment:

£166,538

Total admissions:

58,230

No of total screenings:

1840

Number of specialised
screenings:

91.3%

Image credit: Don Moore - Mark Jenkins at
an Enys Men Q&A at Plymouth Art Cinema

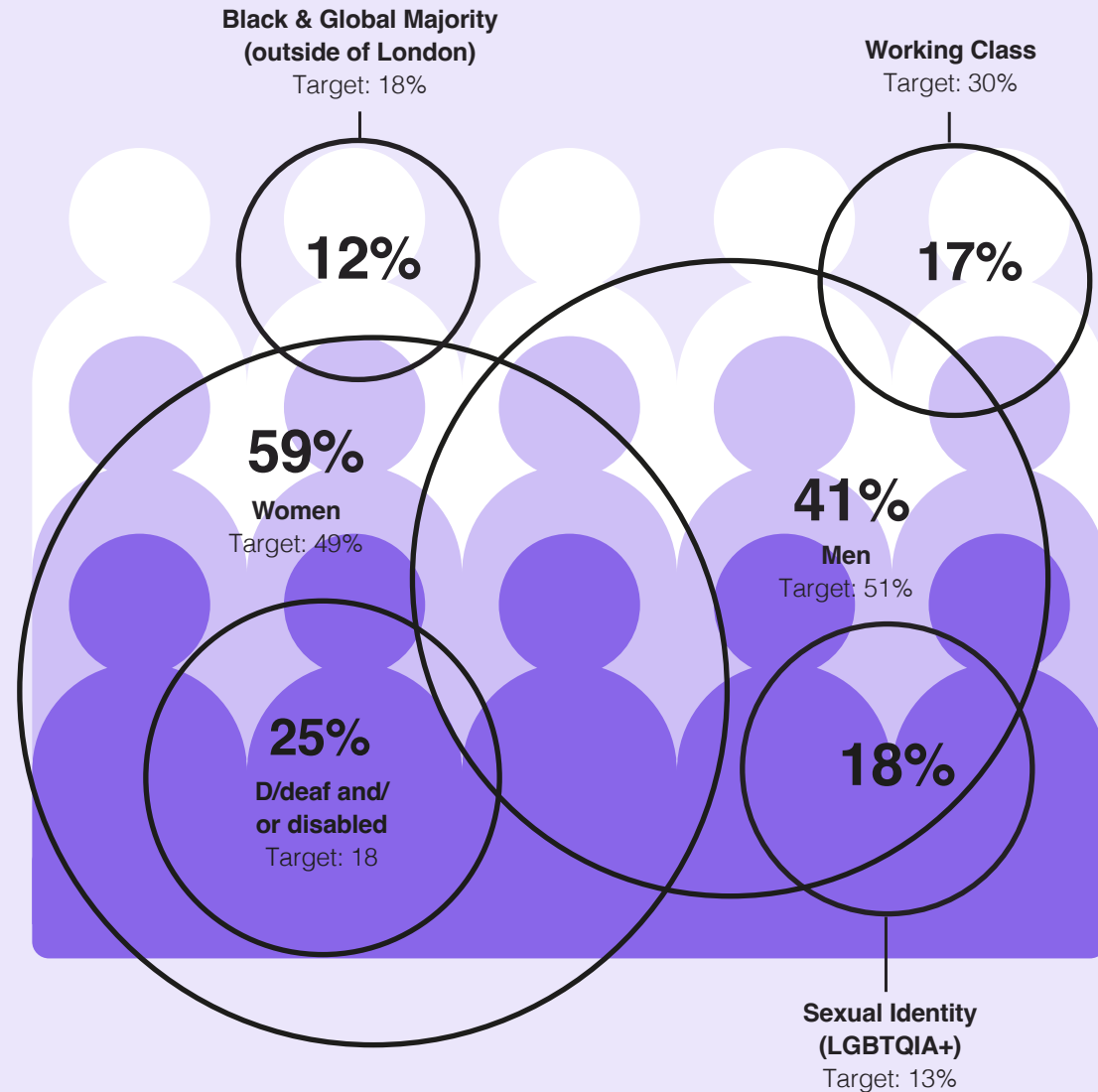
Audience survey demographics

Film Hub South West is committed to working towards a more accessible and inclusive sector. To that end, we are monitoring how well our members are connecting with specific audience groups. These figures are based on 2,520 surveys / 5% response rate.

“This is such a rarity, and as someone who is trans myself, it was wonderful to see such a relatable and realistic film... in the hope it will inspire empathy.”

Stroud Film Festival 2024 attendee

Demographics data



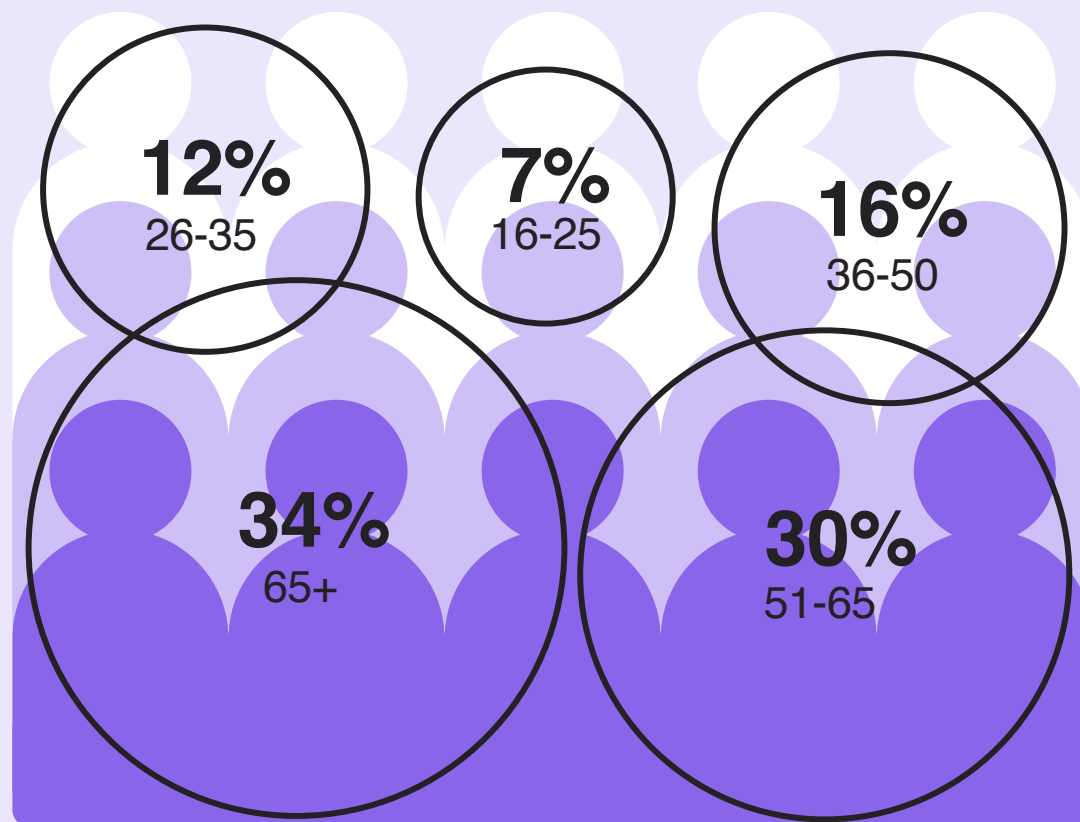
“This film has opened our eyes to a world that’s like us but different”

Afrika Eye x Bude young attendee
(A screening of Rafiki)

“I am happy that the film was subtitled... I find them to be beneficial and also, I imagine it increases the accessibility of the festival.

FilmBath 2024 audience feedback

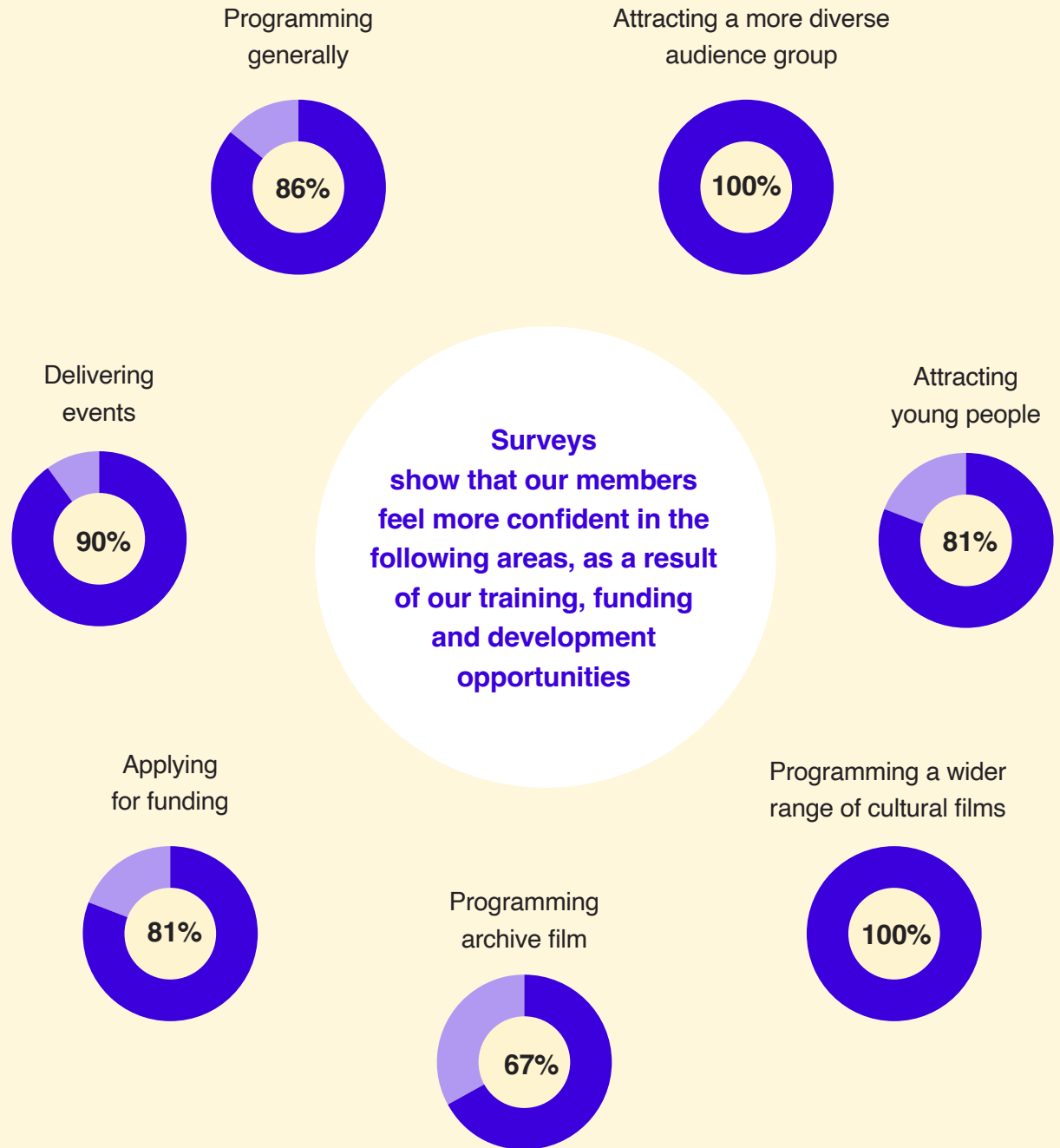
Age ranges



Membership has increased from 105 members in 2018 to 127 members in 2024/25, a 21% increase in membership

Since 2012, as Film Hub Lead Organisation for the South West, Watershed has built on its exemplary practice to inspire a growing membership of exhibitors to engage audiences.

96% of organisations surveyed indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied as members.



Large scale projects

The Film Exhibition Fund is our annual open call offering up to £10k for large scale projects.

Funded organisations:

16

Audiences reached:

26,736

Total investment:

£71,928



“Dirt in the Gate’s work is vitally important and cutting edge in film-on-film event curation. Please continue to support them.”

Dirt in The Gate Audience Comment

“I love the Purbeck film festival! It brings film to a rural area and makes great use of little venues like village halls which bring small communities alive!”

Purbeck Film Festival Audience Comment

Image credit: Jean Dixon –
Purbeck Film Festival

Cinema Unbound: The creative Worlds of Powell and Pressburger

As part of the UK wide BFI season: Cinema Unbound: The Creative Worlds of Powell and Pressburger, Film Hub South West supported over 59 events leading to audiences of 3,375 during the three-month season.

Regional highlights included legendary editor and widow of Michael Powell, Thelma Schoonmaker introducing a screening of *Black Narcissus* at Avening Memorial Hall and Exeter Phoenix presenting an immersive screening of *The Red Shoes* at Exeter's iconic Cathedral.



“To see a brilliant film such as this, in such a remarkable setting (the lighting alone was magnificent), was a genuine “once in a lifetime” experience.”

Red Shoes at Exeter Cathedral presented by Exeter Phoenix Audience Comment

Image credit: Alex Toze –
The Red Shoes at Exeter Phoenix for The
Creative Worlds of Powell and Pressburger

Cinema Incentive Scheme

The [Cinema Incentive Scheme](#) encourages to programme a broader range of cinema beyond the mainstream. Participating venues commit to a minimum number of specialised screenings per year and access a bonus when the number of specialised screenings goes beyond a threshold.

Total investment across 9 venues:

£43,000

The Poly, Falmouth

Plymouth Arts Cinema

The Roses, Tewkesbury

Electric Picture Palace, Wootton- Under-Edge

The Barn, Dartington

Exeter Phoenix

Gloucester Guildhall

The Pound, Corsham

The Curzon, Clevedon



Image credit: Don Moore - Enys Men Q&A at Plymouth Art Cinema

**“It feels like a golden
nugget of hope in a bleak
ol’ landscape”**

Participating venue

**“Amazing and unique
scheme, which justifies risk
taking for a venue like ours”**

Participating venue

Small-scale projects

Our Audience Pitch Pot offers up to £2k funding to widen audience reach.

Projects funded:

13

Audience members reached:

9486

Total investment:

£11,960

New organisations funded included Pat's Film Club (Truro) and Screams by the Sea (Bournemouth), alongside Cables & Cameras (Bristol), Afrika Eye (Bude), Dirt in The Gate (Christchurch) and Chagford Film Festival.

Case study: Scream By The Sea

The inaugural "Screams By The Sea" film festival, celebrated independent horror and genre cinema connected with local and nationwide audiences

The festival saw 145 attendees come together to celebrate a day of film screenings and networking at Bournemouth Pavilion.



Screams By The Sea

“Excellent organisation and spirit. Great value to the community and internationally. Felt like it had been going years but it’s the first one.”

Scream By the Sea Audience Comment

“Our mission is to carve out a space to celebrate exciting new voices. The festival not only achieved this goal but also laid a strong foundation for the future. As the festival wrapped up, there was a palpable sense of excitement for what’s to come.”

Festival Director Radi Nikolov

Bursaries

£2,103 bursaries to
17 organisations

Bursaries have enabled members to attend a range of festivals such as Cinema Rediscovered, LFF and Grimmfest, and training such as The Box Archive Day, the ICO Screening Days and Distributor Slate Days.

“It’s an incredibly important at this time in the UK arts industry to support other festivals and see how we can help each other grow these events. Thanks to Film Hub South West supporting me with a bursary, I could finally attend.”

Tessa Williams, Forbidden Worlds Film Festival,
on going to Grimmfest



Working towards a more inclusive film exhibition sector



Image credit: Film Hub South West –
Beyond Boundaries 360

Beyond Boundaries 360

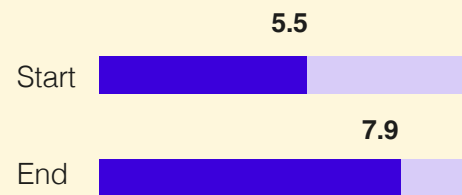
A cohort of 12 creative practitioners were supported as part of Beyond Boundaries 360, our annual development programme for creatives interested in film curation, event production and audience development. They were invited to participate in a reflection process which helped set goals and monitor their progress.

Results from their reflections (on the right) give an indication of the impact of the programme.

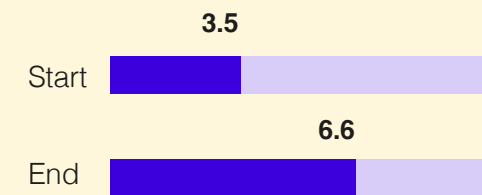
“It was great to have actual hands on and practical tangible information. It was informative and demystified a lot of the film industry making it much more approachable.”

Participant

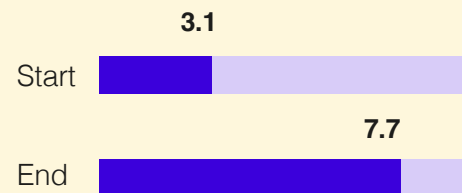
I have a strong network that helps me realise my practice:



I am a confident film exhibitor:



I know how to access the funding and opportunities needed to develop my practice:



I see my future in the creative arts:



2023-24

alumni stories



Sal Creber

Freelance film curator and exhibitor

Sal went on to create [Reel Life Monsters](#) – celebrating and sharing horror films that contain LGBT+ subtext. For their first event at Komedia Bath in Bath, they presented a double bill of folk horror films with a talk by Lucian Stephenson, and art by Monty and Danny Leigh.



Nathan Hardie

Writer and Content Creator

After completing the BFI LFF Critics Mentorship programme, writer and facilitator [Nathan Hardie](#) looked to Beyond Boundaries 360 to further explore how film festivals and event cinema are put together. Alongside the informative sessions, he also had the opportunity to attend ICO Screening Days at BFI Southbank. Using these experiences, Nathan was hired as Marketing and Outreach Coordinator for the 2024 edition of film festival Cinema Rediscovered, collaborating with BFI Academy South West to run a Roaming Reporters scheme.

Member support: regional marketing & PR workshops

Responding to members' feedback, we produced three workshops (City Eye in Southampton), Exeter Phoenix and Watershed (Bristol) to help region-based marketers connect with each other and develop fresh approaches to audience development, marketing and PR.

31 participants took part in the sessions which included contributions from leading practitioners such as Pam Beddard PR, marketer Anne-Marie Dames (Beyond Boundaries 360 alumnus) Ellie Kirby (Comms Manager, Watershed.)

“It was great to hear about how we can use TikTok and ‘new’ media ways to solidify our branding. Using Letterbox for film festivals was a genius idea.”

Workshop Participant

“It was really valuable to connect with others and hear how they do things. And frankly share some of my ideas.”

Workshop Participant

Spotlight: Create Studios, Swindon

As part of the new BFI Film Audience Network (FAN) wide initiative Spotlight, Film Hubs were invited to make a strategic intervention in parts of the region that currently have little cultural cinema infrastructure. Swindon's Create Studios was awarded a £147,000 over 3-years to lead Spotlight in Swindon, Wiltshire and South Gloucestershire to nurture partnerships and grow the opportunities for people to access film screenings.

Highlights in 2023-24 included the launch of Create Studios' Sofa Screenings, a new Reel25 Young Programming scheme (involving 15 participants) and a taster session for organisations and individuals wanting to put on film screenings. In addition, they collaborated with Stroud Film Festival to put on screenings in Gloucester's foodbanks, which saw 228 people attend.

“A brilliant opportunity to gain hands on experience of film programming and independently develop skills around exhibition and events. Aswell as learning Reel25 is a great environment to explore your love of film with other young people.”

Eve, Reel25 member



Image credit: Create Studios - Sofa Screenings

Through BFI NETWORK we support the new wave of filmmakers

The BFI NETWORK team is here to nurture the South West's new wave of filmmaking talent and to support writers, directors and producers who have original stories to tell and inspired approaches to their craft. Thanks to National Lottery funding, Film Hub South West is home to two BFI NETWORK Talent Executives for the region.



We Fund Filmmakers

In 2023-24 we funded 5 short films through our Short Film Fund (including one animation)

In 2023-24 we funded 4 Early Development Fund feature projects (including one immersive project)

The total award amount of both projects in 2023-24 was £94,953

Committed to inclusivity

“I felt completely supported and championed by Jess, Nadia, and Ella throughout and I think they have a brilliant balance of guidance and nurture, with a hands-off approach that made us feel responsible for our own progress and left us with a sense of autonomy but also community and creative home.”

New Voices participant

“Partnering with Film Hub South West has been a valuable addition to our work at Blak Wave Productions, particularly in supporting our efforts to give a platform to unheard voices and increase representation in both the crew and the stories being told.”

Blak Wave Productions Co Founders
Michael Jenkins and Somina Fombo

South West & beyond...

BFI Flare
BFI London Film Festival
Bolton Film Festival
New York Animation Film Awards (USA)
British Animation Festival
Iris Prize
Brighton Trans Pride
Aesthetica Film Festival
Salem Horror Fest (USA)
Encounters Film Festival
Cornwall Film Festival
Norwich Film Festival
Kurz Film Festival (Germany)
This is England (France)
Hollyshorts (USA)

...The films we've supported are seen across the world



We train talented professionals in the region



Image credit: Jade Ayino – Nida Manzoor, roundtable

During the 2023-24 period we held 68 events across the South West (a mix of online and in-person sessions) with 908 registrations.

We run regular professional training through development labs for writers, directors and producers, and we offer screenings, 1:1s, networking and roundtables with

debut feature filmmakers (e.g. Luna Carmoon, Nida Manzoor and Molly Manning Walker).

In the 2023-24 period we delivered activity at Making Waves Film Festival, Cornwall Film Festival, Two Short Nights (Exeter Phoenix), Southampton Film Week, Queer Vision and Encounters.

- 93% of participants achieved what they hoped out of our events.
- 100% of participants would recommend our events to others.
- 70% of feedback responses stated that they had learned something new of relevance to their role or career aspirations.

We work collaboratively with partners

We've worked with amazing partners, both in the region and beyond, such as: Blakwave Productions; Little by Little Films; Grey Moth; Bristol Screen Producers; Bristol Old Vic Theatre School; ScreenSkills; Cables & Cameras; Make Shift; Making Waves; The Script Factory; Bournemouth Film School; Queer Vision; Exeter Phoenix; Screen Cornwall and BFI DocSociety.

“I really feel like the South West is becoming the ‘place to be’ for making films, and a lot of that has been made possible because of BFI NETWORK South West’s work.”

Xenia Glen (writer-director of BFI NETWORK-backed short, Alo)



Image credit: BFI NETWORK x BFI
DocSociety Fact & Fiction event

Case Study:

New Voices 2023

We launched the third iteration of New Voices with founding partners Blak Wave Productions and Little By Little. New Voices is a programme for underrepresented writer-directors with a short film idea who would benefit from support to develop their script, build their confidence in the craft and prepare them to apply for BFI NETWORK funding.

This time we forged a new partnership with Grey Moth, and a collaboration with Bristol Old Vic Theatre School, which enabled the writer-directors to workshop their scripts with actors.

- 6 out of 8 participants applied for the BFI NETWORK Short Film Fund after completing New Voices.
- 100% of feedback respondents said that they gained new skills from taking part in New Voices 2023.

“It still feels a little unreal, this whole thing. I can’t express enough how grateful I am for it all, for the opportunity, the support, the experience. It means the world and I feel like a much stronger writer and filmmaker than I did going into this.”

Jojo Bossman, New Voices participant 2023



Image credit: Jade Ayino, New Voices roundtable

Spotlight on: BFI-backed short films 2023 – 24



Talent Executive Nadia Attia on set with Alysha Christal (producer) and Shakira Newton (writer-director)

“As part of the 2023-24 Short Film Fund, we awarded five projects from south west-based writer-directors who were looking to take a step-up in their creative practice. One was from a theatre background, one was a BAFTA Scotland-nominated animator, two had been making waves as TV screenwriters and one was an actor moving into directing with his second short (and is now developing his first feature with Screen Cornwall). These projects take us to a working men’s club in Portsmouth, a clay pit in Cornwall and a magical woodland brought to life in stop-motion. They are stories that confront audience pre-conceptions, bring complex queer relationships to the screen and centre distinct voices from across the region. We’re excited and proud to nurture these diverse filmmakers, who each have a wealth of skills and experiences and whose passion for filmmaking really shines through.”

Nadia Attia & Jess Wheeler,
BFI NETWORK Talent Executives

BFI Film Academy South West



1182

young people
engaged in 2023-24

Highlights

2023-24

Inside Screen, March 2024

Inside Screen saw 120 emerging filmmakers aged 16 – 25 flooding into Watershed for a day of screenings, talks and networking.

“I have always found the idea of networking really daunting but this has given me loads more confidence”

Inside Screen Attendee



19 – 25 Devon Film Fund

The 19 – 25 Devon Film Fund returned this year to offer one Devon-based filmmaker £1000 plus other in-kind resources to create a short film. This year, five talented filmmakers did a five-minute live pitch to be in with a chance of receiving the fund. Sapphire Medeema received the 2024 pot for her film Dogs and Fireworks which

follows a neurodivergent teenager and her older brother, sitting in a car on the anniversary of their grandmother's death as they discover they have surprisingly different memories of the same family events.

The previous year's recipient, Leila Lockley, premiered their black comedy short In Memoriam at Two Short Nights 2024.



Sapphire Medeema, Two Short Nights 2024, Alex Toze - Exeter Phoenix

“The 19-25 Devon Film Fund was genuinely the best thing that could’ve happened to me at that time of my life when I was about to graduate and was floundering as to how to get into film.”

Leila Lockley, programme participant

Opportunities Across The South West

Placing young people at the centre, BFI Film Academy South West worked with regional partners such as Aardman Animations, Exeter Phoenix, Screen Cornwall, Somerset Films, Cables and Cameras, Cinema Rediscovered, Create Studios, Calling The Shots, and Making Waves Portsmouth to deliver a range of development opportunities and commissions.

In December 2023 BFI Film Academy South-West partnered with Aardman Academy to run an Animation Day to 121 16-25 yr olds at Watershed. This involved Aardman Academy giving young people the chance to handle props and puppets; a screening of local animation shorts from BFI Network South-West, a premiere screening of Chicken Run: Dawn of the Nugget; plus Aardman's Andy Symanowski delivering a Masterclass talk about his career and the making of Chicken Run: Dawn of the Nugget.



Image credit: BFI Film Academy

“Thank you for a great day and for organising this brilliant event – The students (and staff!) loved it and it gave them inspiration and insight into the animation industry”

Post-16 College Lecturer

Get in touch





Showing films

Film Hub South West

-  filmhub@watershed.co.uk
-  [@FilmHubSW](https://twitter.com/FilmHubSW)
-  [@FilmHubSW](https://www.instagram.com/FilmHubSW)
-  [Film Hub South West](https://www.facebook.com/FilmHubSouthWest)




Making films

BFI NETWORK South West

-  bfinetwork@watershed.co.uk
-  [@NetworkFHSW](https://twitter.com/NetworkFHSW)
-  [@FilmHubSW](https://www.instagram.com/FilmHubSW)
-  [South West Talent Connect](https://www.facebook.com/SouthWestTalentConnect)

Starting out

BFI Film Academy South West

-  film.academy@watershed.co.uk
-  [@FilmAcademySW](https://twitter.com/FilmAcademySW)
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Film Hub South West, BFI NETWORK South West and BFI Film Academy South West are part of the BFI Film Audience Network, supported by The National Lottery
