



REFLECTIONS

APRIL 2018 - MARCH 2022

MORE FILMS IN
MORE PLACES FOR
MORE PEOPLE



Reflections | April 2018 - March 2022

The BFI Film Audience Network (FAN) is a collaboration of eight Film Hubs, managed by leading film organisations and venues across the UK.

Set up in 2012 and supported by National Lottery funding, it aims to build more diverse audiences for independent British and international film and to support the capability of the UK's independent exhibition sector.

The current iteration of FAN was launched in 2018 as part of the [BFI2022 strategy](#) and – as a result of the COVID pandemic, extended beyond its original duration to March 2023.

As the BFI2022 strategy period comes to a close, we reflect on the impact of FAN on audiences and the film exhibition sector over the past four-years.

The main priorities for FAN during this time were to:

- increase access to a wide range of independent British and international film for audiences across the UK
- enhance the quality and cultural depth of audience experience
- increase access to the UK's screen heritage
- deepen knowledge and build capability in its membership

All of this was to be done with a particular emphasis on increasing the diversity of audiences and boosting the number of 16–30-year-olds engaging with FAN activity.



Reflections

April 2018 - March 2022

This section looks at
FAN's audience facing
work, supported at a
Hub level

Total overview

52,000
screenings supported

1.6m
Admissions

300,000
Live Online Admissions

39%
of these were new
audiences

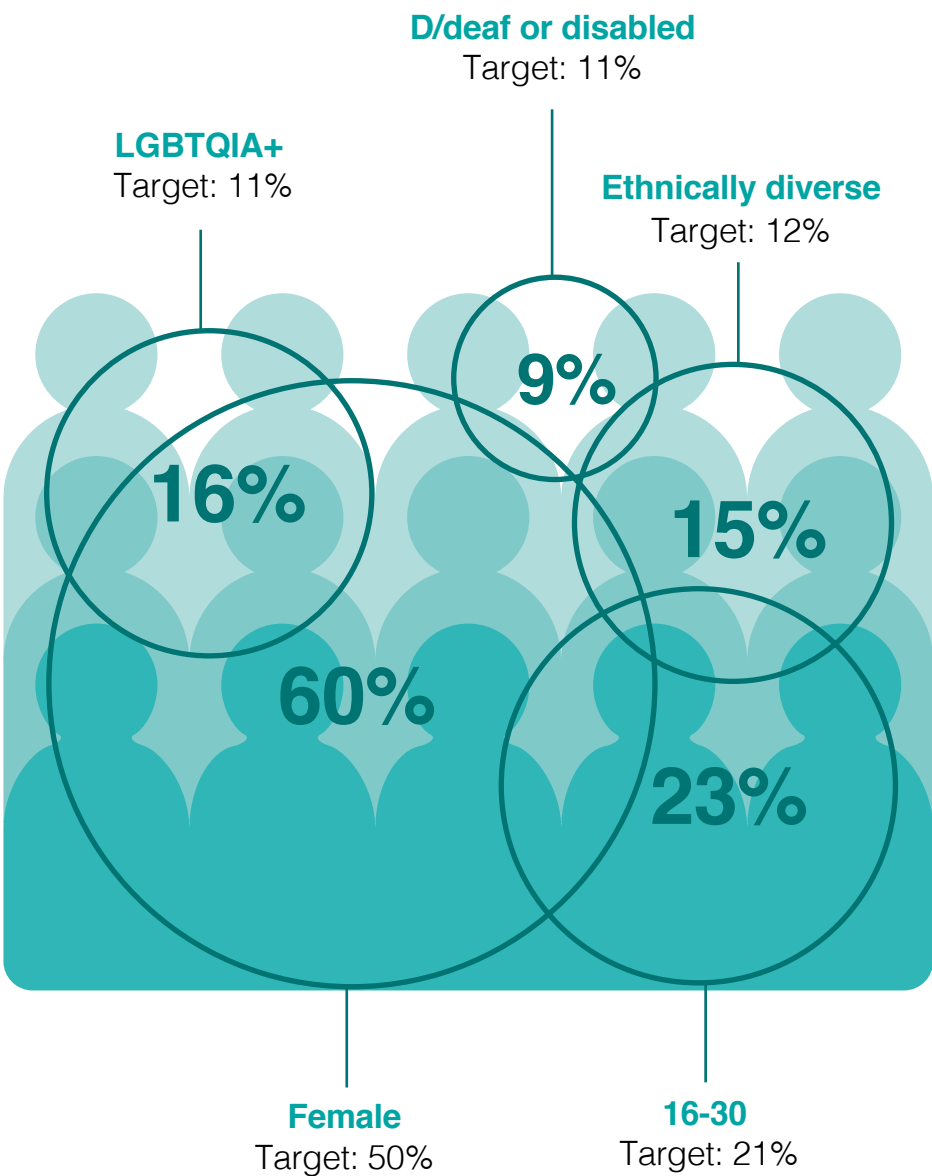
£4,987,000
£5m Lottery funding
invested in 1,300 projects
and 52,000 screenings

78%
of FAN supported films
were independent
British and international
titles

36%
of screenings were
enhanced or had added
value element such
as introduction, Q&A
sessions etc.

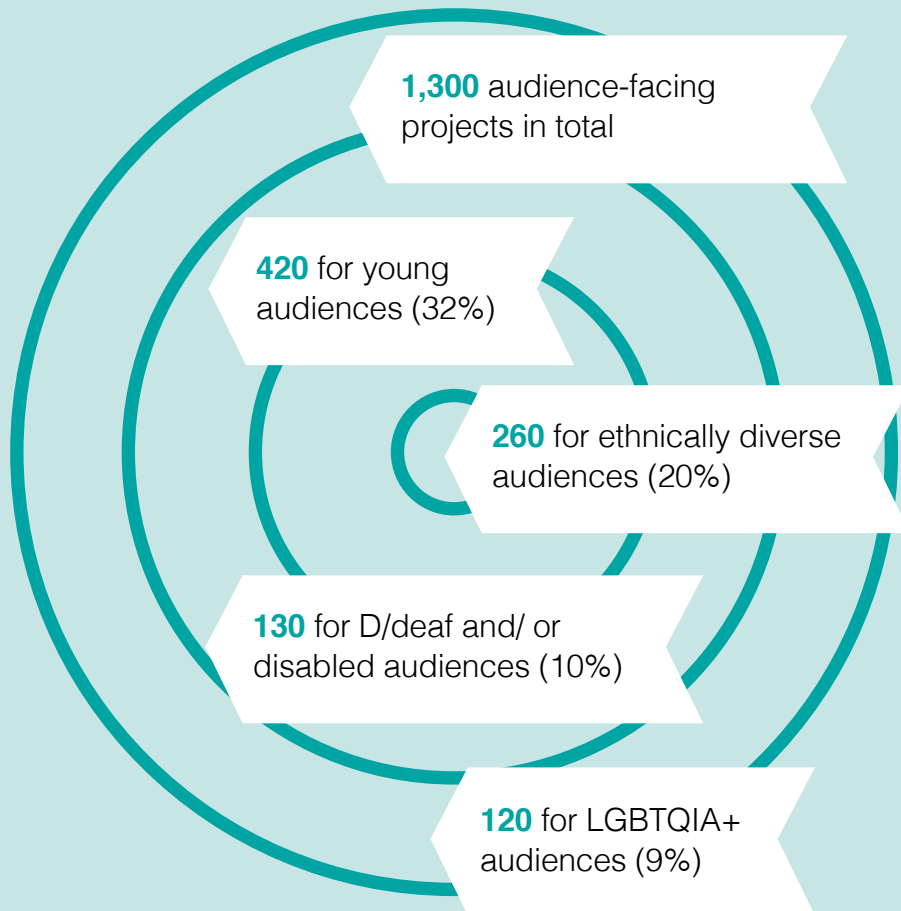


96% would come to venue again.



* based on 68,000 audience surveys.

FAN Hub-supported Projects targetting specific Audience Groups



Whilst most projects are intended to reach multiple audience groups, some are targeting specific people and communities.



In addition to this year-round, Hub based audience activity, BFI FAN has also delivered 10 thematic seasons across the UK including BFI Blockbuster, Film Feels and the screen heritage focused Changing Times. Between them, these programmes supported 380 projects which lead to 3,000 screenings, 110,000 physical admissions and a further 36,000 live online views.

Building Sector Capacity: FAN's Impact on Member Organisations

More than **140 organisations** joined FAN during 2018-2022 which now has over **1,700 members** including cinemas, festivals, multi-arts venues, community cinemas, pop-up event organisers and film archives.



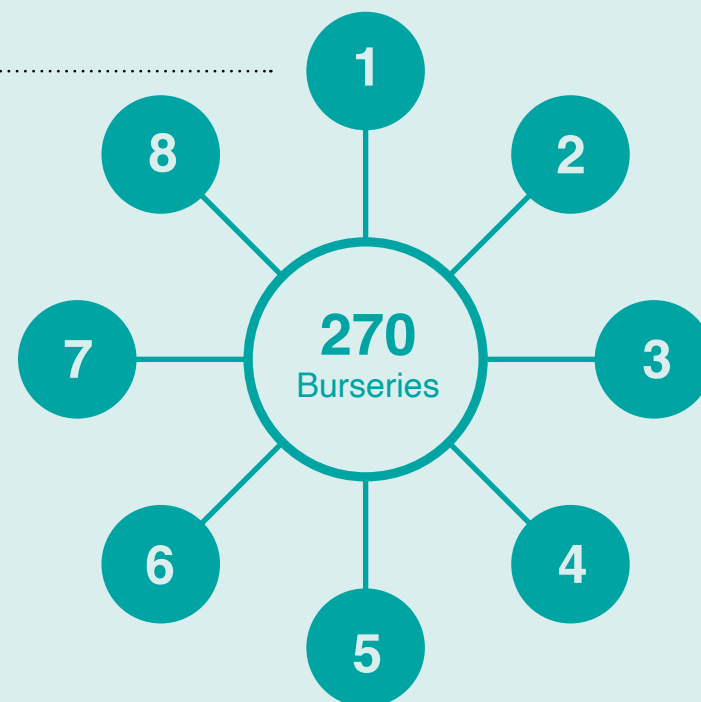
Organisation Membership



Membership has increased **11%** from 1,560 in 2018 to 1,730 in 2021

Bursaries distributed

270 professional development bursaries have been distributed across the eight Hubs - enabling FAN members from across the UK to attend a full range of conferences, festivals, and training



Survey response & member satisfaction

19%

of FAN members who received funding responded to our survey.



OUT OF THESE

99%
of FAN members were satisfied or very satisfied with their membership.



FAN members can access a regular and ongoing programme of member support activity – from meetings, drop ins and workshops to formal training courses and of course the ever-popular bursaries.

A particular focus across FAN has been on supporting members to reach young and underrepresented audiences with initiatives and resources such as the [Inclusive Cinema](#), the [FAN guide to safeguarding for exhibitors](#) and a huge range of project case studies, inspiration and resources on the [Bigger Picture website](#).




“[BFI FAN] support means we can move ahead with our new film strategy...to focus on diverse, independent films refreshing interest and developing new audiences in our community. Funding is very welcome, but equally the expert advice, mentoring and enthusiasm of the FHW (Film Hub Wales) team has given us a tremendous boost.”

BFI FAN Member, Wales

BFI FAN COVID-19 Resilience Fund

When the first COVID-19 lockdown was announced, no-one knew what would happen or what the long-term impact would be. But with cinemas closing overnight BFI FAN quickly took decisive action.



£1.3m

NATIONAL
LOTTERY
FUNDING

£150,000

CULTURE AT
RISK BUSINESS
SUPPORT FUND

The BFI FAN Covid 19 Resilience Fund was the first Covid relief fund for the cultural sector to be launched in April 2020. It offered a total of **£1.3m** of National Lottery funding, plus **£150,000** from the Mayor of London's Culture at Risk Business Support Fund, to support the film exhibition sector to cope with the financial impacts of COVID-19.

Within a few weeks of opening, the Fund had made 130 awards to organisations across the UK, ranging from £450 to £23,000.

BFI FAN MEMBERS SAY

All recipients of BFI FAN COVID 19 Resilience Funding reported that they were **'very' satisfied** with their experience of their FAN Hub.

"Thank you so much for helping me to order my thoughts and to understand what is possible and sensible given the enormity of the problems faced by us all."

"In the absence of FAN funding, the most likely outcomes would have been redundancy and the subsequent shutdown of the organisation."

"The BFI COVID Resilience Fund grant resolved any immediate cash-flow issues and allowed us to settle deferred debts to suppliers. This gave us a firm steading on which to plan, fundraise and deliver the online activity detailed."

"The grant has helped us to maintain vital marketing and engagement staff who have contributed to our operational capacity and virtual connectivity with our audience, and volunteer engagement, which is supporting us to rebuild planning towards re-opening."

"It ensured that we had the finances to retain and bring back earlier than expected our programming and curatorial staff, ensuring we had the expertise to restart our cultural film programme and audience engagement activities."



Case studies

The following case studies offer a snapshot of the range and variety of work delivered and supported by FAN – both at Hub level and UK wide. They are not exhaustive but are intended to illustrate how FAN has responded to specific themes or priorities.



CASE STUDY

Reaching big audiences: BFI Musicals

70 FAN members, across 161 venues, delivered over 587 enhanced screenings and events reaching audiences of over 28,500

Over the past five years, BFI FAN reached audiences all over the country through a series of UK wide themed seasons. From October 2019 - January 2020,

the BFI Musicals blockbuster season saw the greatest ever celebration of big screen musicals with venues across the country taking part.

- **49%** of attendees were new audiences.
- Events aimed at 16–30-year-olds made up **43%** of all activity
- **94%** rating 'good or 'very good' audience satisfaction ranking for venue/event
- Extensive press coverage including **55** major feature articles and interviews

49%

Attendees were new audiences

"I brought my two children along to watch West Side Story. What a wonderful experience it was for them to view it on the big screen."

Audience comment,
Widescreen Weekend, Bradford



CASE STUDY

Increasing programme diversity: 'Off the Beaten Track' with The Theatre, Chipping Norton

Since introducing Off The Beaten Track, **1100 admissions** have been generated for the Theatre, with sell-outs for films such as Kore-eda Hirokazu's *Shoplifters*.

The North Oxfordshire 216-seat Regency-style theatre joined FAN's Film Hub South East Programming Group

in 2018 and set out to build its audience with more adventurous programming.

Re-packaging under-performing left-field arthouse titles under the banner of Off The Beaten Track, they provided monthly screenings offering audiences 'a programme of independent and innovative cinema from across the world.' Ticket prices were **reduced from £10 to £7.50** to encourage audiences to take a risk on less-well known titles. As a result, attendees continued to return repeatedly to see new films.



“The support and knowledge from the FHSE office, and their willingness to help is excellent, and the breadth of knowledge and input from other members of the group enables us to take risks and create a much broader programme.”

BFI FAN member

**Ticket prices
were reduced
from £10 to £7.50**



CASE STUDY

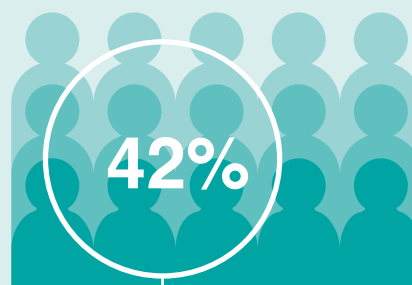
Increasing programme diversity: Collective

2000 audiences attended Collective across Northern Ireland – **42%** of which had never attended an event by the host cinema previously

Collective is a touring scheme designed to bring independent British and Irish films to rural and urban audiences. During 2019/20,

there were 32 screenings including The Dig, Gaza and Extra Ordinary with several talent Q&As.

- **59%** of audiences surveyed said they had an increased appetite for independent British and Irish film as a result
- It also allowed some organisations to take a risk on more independent titles that they would have not normally shown



Attendees were new audiences



“How many of these films would we have shown without Collective? None.”

Programme participant

The initiative continued post-covid and demonstrably helped with the re-opening of community venues supporting titles such as Wildfire and Nowhere Special.

CASE STUDY

Boosting geographic reach: Rural touring with Cine North

Cine North enables rurally isolated communities that are underserved by cinema to experience a wider range of films, screening more than **2,500 films** to over **160,000 people**

Since 2018, Cine North, delivered by Eden Arts, has supported more than **150 community hubs**, often village halls, in remote areas of Cumbria and Yorkshire, and more recently Lancashire and the Tees Valley. With the support of FAN's Film Hub North, Cine North offers training, technical advice,

programming, promotional support and access to a diverse film menu.

The number of venues has grown from **60** to **70** despite the Covid lockdown. Future plans include recruiting a new cohort of Young Programmers to support the development of young audiences.

“Cine North is a vital project providing underserved, rural communities in the North of England with access to diverse film content and a high-quality cinema experience. Without Cine North many of these places would not have any access to cinema at all.”

Adrian Lochhead,
Director, Eden Arts



CASE STUDY

Increasing programme diversity: The Arc's Bigger Picture Project

After the success of the ARC programme, it is now being replicated at The Dukes in Lancaster and the National Science and Media Museum in Bradford.

ARC is a multi-artform arts centre situated in the heart of Stockton-on-Tees.

Within the region, research in 2019 had identified South Asian audiences were being under-served. The Bigger Picture project started by consulting with and understanding local South Asian audiences, which was

small given the approximately **7%** South Asian population in Stockton-on-Tees. Led by freelance producer Amandeep Dhillon, the project has not only programmed South Asian films but also deeply engaged South Asian audiences, as well as wider audiences.

- ARC screened South Asian films from all over the world and in various languages over an **18-months** period.
- **92% of audiences** attending identified as Asian, a total of **9%** of ARC's entire cinema audience in the period of Sept 2021 – March 22.
- On seeing the almost immediate results and how the audience development work might be replicated, Film Hub North is supporting Amandeep work with The Dukes in Lancaster and the National Science and Media Museum in Bradford to develop their version of the programme.



"It's brilliant to be able to see Telugu films locally. I usually have to go to Newcastle, or Leeds, to see them. It's brilliant I can come somewhere closer."

Audience member

CASE STUDY

Reaching young audiences: Exeter Phoenix

As a result of a new targeted marketing campaign, **Exeter Phoenix found 44% of the total audience for their new line-up were under 25s.**

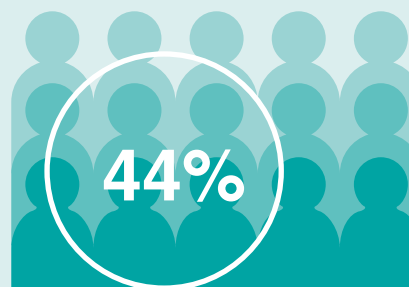
In 2018, Exeter Phoenix embarked on a mission to reinvigorate its existing under 25s ticket offer by launching a new marketing campaign. Leading with films such as Skate Kitchen and Climax and collaborating with partners such as Women of the World and Vice, the scheme found **44%** of the total audience for these films were **under 25s**, a trend which continued six months on.

This injected new energy and sense of possibilities into Exeter Phoenix as a whole, and especially for its young collaborators.

Two years on, Exeter Phoenix built on this with a new focus on inclusion. **14 young people** were recruited to join a Young Audience Panel, an initiative led by Cinema Outreach Coordinator Thea Berry (also a FAN Young Consultant.) They took part in a series of workshops to share knowledge about putting on film events and set about rebranding screening room Studio 74.

“It was exciting to hear about the possibilities in film and broadened my mindset about what makes a good cinema event.”

Young Audience Panel participant



Attendees
were under 25



Operating as a network: Off Y Grid

Over four years, the Off Y Grid project achieved over **66,700** audience admissions.

In 2016, venues across North Wales were invited by FAN's Film Hub Wales to take part in a project designed to reduce isolation, build creative infrastructure, and generate buzz around British independent and international films. The ambition was to create 'big ideas in small places' with rural audiences and Welsh culture, heritage, and access at the core.

Five years on, this local network has improved access to a wider menu of films through shared social media and access to co-ordinated talent Q&As.

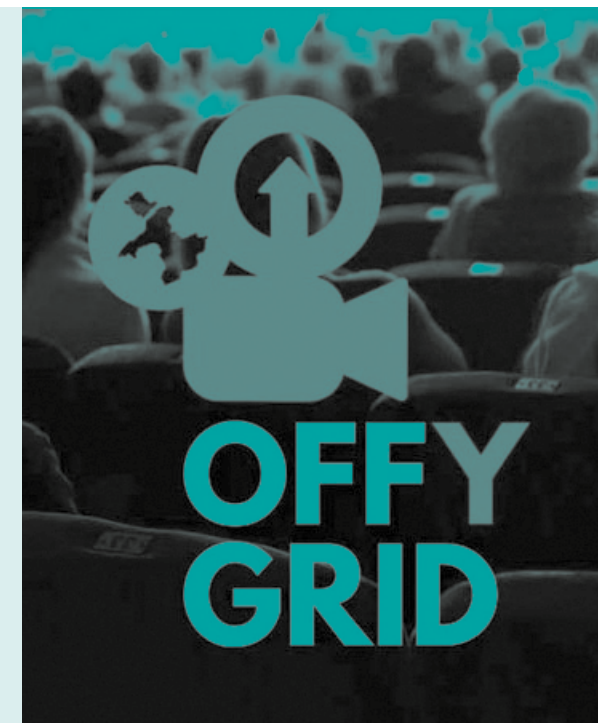
- The seven participating venues are Galeri, Pontio, Cellb, Neuadd Dwyfor, Neuadd Ogwen, Dragon Theatre and TAPE.
- The tour showed **513 films** across **2,338 screenings** with admissions **222%** over target
- Touring Q&As such as The Welshman, I, Daniel Blake and 20th Century Women promoted active discussions.

In 2022, the project is supporting various Welsh made films including special events around Gwledd (The Feast.)



“Being part of the network gives us all economies of scale and stronger bargaining power when negotiating a deal with a distributor or talent.”

Off Y Grid Venue



Developing skills: Film Camp

Over the past five years, Film Camp has engaged with **300** established and emerging film exhibitors from across the Midlands.

Launched in 2017 at Flatpack Festival in Birmingham, Film Camp is an annual one-day training event exploring some of the latest innovations in cinema exhibition. It gathers film exhibitors from across

the Midlands to share their experience and discuss new models and ways of thinking. The day is open to anyone interested in showing films - from large-scale exhibitors to community cinema organisers.

Highlights of Film Camp include:

- **68%** of attendees aged under 35
- Attendees are invited to explore a range of topics and workshops from how to boost your bottom line to how new SubPac technology is giving audiences the opportunity to experience film in a whole new way.

“The event was great as other events similar to this are mostly filled with older people who have been in the industry for a while, Film Camp gave me a chance to connect with people who are on the same level as me within the industry and the conversations I had with people were fresh and inspiring.”

BFI FAN Member



**Attendees
were under 35**



Developing skills: Innovation Lab

From 2019-2022, Innovation Lab helped **49** participants from **35** organisations develop new skills.

The primary focus of the Innovation Lab was to bring together a cohort of practitioners to learn, share and develop their practice leading to new practical ways of delivering against BFI FAN priority areas. In 2019, this project focused on developing younger audiences (16-30). From 2020 to 2022, Innovation Lab prioritised building partnerships that improve the cultural and racial diversity of screen exhibition.

In 2020-22, 16 of the participants identified as Black, Asian and ethnically diverse. Each Lab took place over a concentrated period allowing participants to explore subjects in more depth and spend time getting to know a wider network of possible collaborators.

“I arrived with nerves and trepidation but left feeling energised, confident and proactive. Whilst what we do is relatively small compared to running a venue or a festival, it was reassuring to be able to engage in conversations about how we develop ‘Next Audiences’ and can collaborate, share experiences and work together”

Innovation Lab participant



Connecting the sector: This Way Up

Since 2014, delegate numbers have ranged from **132** in 2014 to **684** in 2020

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This Way Up brings together exhibitors from across the UK to share innovative ideas, celebrate best practice, and collectively imagine the future of cinema-going for audiences across the UK.

Taking place in a different city each year, this FAN initiative also provided an opportunity for delegates to visit other venues (FACT in Liverpool in 2018, Nottingham Broadway in 2019, Bristol Watershed in 2021 and Dundee Contemporary Arts in 2022).

Over its nine years, This Way Up has covered a range of topics to help exhibitors reflect on changes in the sector.

Topics have included:

- Programming
- Governance
- Screen Heritage
- Environmental Sustainability
- Cinema Stories – which shine a spotlight on UK venues
- Show and Share – allowing members the opportunity to discuss new ideas and innovations
- Network Shorts – screening short films from around the UK and world to FAN members

“I think TWU has changed the entire conversation - it is a non-London based industry discussion that highlights the work of many different organisations and provides a vital networking and sharing opportunity.”

FAN member





REFLECTIONS

APRIL 2018 - MARCH 2022



For more insights on
how UK film exhibitors
are making a difference
in their communities, visit:
the-bigger-picture.com

To find out more about
BFI FAN and your local
Film Hub:
bfi.org.uk/FAN

The data in this document
covers the period of
**1 April 2018 to 31 March
2022** and is accurate as
of July 2022.