For Immediate Release

**NURTURING INCLUSIVE CINEMA ACROSS THE UK**

**26 September 2018**In a bid to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to enjoy cinema, The BFI Film Audience Network (FAN) has today taken a “significant step”.

That’s according to Hana Lewis of Film Hub Wales which has played a leading role in the development of an online toolkit - [inclusivecinema.org](http://inclusivecinema.org) -which is dedicated to breaking down barriers facing diverse audiences.

The accessible website is designed to help cinema audiences, who might find cinema access tricky, or may not feel represented by the big screen. It will enable screen exhibitors, from cinemas, to film festivals and community halls, to create welcoming spaces, with skilled staff that are more approachable for diverse film communities.

During its launch phase, exhibitors will be able to find over 300 resources, including how-to-guides and first-hand stories to support audiences that identify with: migration, autism and neurodiversity, dementia, mental health, ethnicity, LGBTQ+, D/deaf or hard of hearing, visual impairment, disability, rural, women, young people, and lower-income. The website is a developing resource.

The site was created in response to a BFI FAN survey in 2017, across the 1500+ membership. Despite many operators running far-reaching and impactful access projects, many members felt there were barriers; from limited knowledge of partners, to programming, funds, staff confidence, a lack of time and lack of equipment or space.

The site showcases the wealth of knowledge already existing across UK screens and within BFI FAN, which celebrates its fifth birthday in 2018. It also benefits from collaborations with specialist organisations, such as the *UK Cinema Association, Alzheimer's Society, The New Black Film Collective, Scottish Queer International Film Festival,* and *Oska Bright Film Festival.* Over 150 key contacts can be found on the site.

[inclusivecinema.org](http://www.inclusivecinema.org) is designed to give the user an accessible experience. It aims to achieve Level AA conformance to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 throughout the site and AAA where possible.

Inclusive Cinema is led by Film Hub Wales (FHW) as part of the FAN UK-wide strategy to improve diversity and inclusion for all. The BFI FAN network of eight strategic partners is supported by the BFI with National Lottery funding to and enable new opportunities for audiences to see and enjoy a broader range of films.

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**Toki Allison, Film Audience Network Access Officer explains:**

*“The Inclusive Cinema project asks exhibitors to get into a dialogue with audiences through networking and training. We believe that the thriving indie cinema sector can position itself as a leader in this field. So much incredible work is already being done with audiences across the UK. Programmers are working closely with grassroots communities. From Glasgow Film Theatre’s Access Film Club, which offers relaxed screenings to support those with autism, Asperger’s Syndrome and learning disabilities, to Gentle/Radical Film Club, who work with migrant, refugee communities and women of colour in Cardiff.”*

**Hana Lewis, Film Hub Wales Strategic Manager says:**

*“Film exhibition specialists told us that there wasn’t one central space to learn about, or grow their awareness of inclusivity and the additional needs of audiences, meaning that excellent projects were happening but provision was fragmented and duplicated across the UK.*

*Inclusivecinema.org is a significant step on our journey to address this. Work began several years ago, with a simple round-table discussion of how we might work together to support film audiences living with dementia. This conversation opened a door and fundamentally changed the way we work.”*

**Priscilla Igwe, Director of The New Black Film Collective says:**

*“Inclusive Cinema is vital and extremely necessary. Finally, there is a resource supporting BAME exhibitors, educators and programmers - tapping into what’s out there, connecting organisations and building confidence. I look forward to accessing this portal, hearing new voices and having important peer-to-peer discussions about developing cinema for diverse audiences.”*

**Inclusive Cinema: inclusivecinema.org**

**Twitter: @inclusivecinema  
  
Please contact jennifer@filmhubwales.org for more information. Images for use can be downloaded**[**here**](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/jhms6iaad0cp6ha/AAD8_QX8nk9JDVz8xkK0bMLxa?dl=0)**.**

**ENDS**

**NOTES TO EDITORS:**

**ABOUT FILM HUB WALES:**

Film Hub Wales aims to bring more films, to more people, in more places around Wales. Along with its independent member venues, FHW regularly develops inventive ways for people in Wales to go to the cinema.

Film Hub Wales (FHW) is one of eight UK wide ‘hubs’ funded by the BFI (British Film Institute) to form the Film Audience Network (FAN), with Chapter appointed as the Film Hub Lead Organisation (FHLO) in Wales. We aim to develop the exhibition sector through dedicated research, training and audience development project support. Since Film Hub Wales set up in 2013, we’ve supported over 160 exciting cinema projects, reaching over 302,500 audience members.

In partnership with our member cinemas, arts centres, community venues, societies, festivals and wider film practitioners, FHW aims to celebrate and support the vibrant cultural film sector here in Wales, working together to expand and increase choice for audiences, regardless of where they live.

[filmhubwales.org](http://www.filmhubwales.org/)  
[twitter.com/FilmHubWales](http://twitter.com/FilmHubWales)    
[facebook.com/filmhubwales](https://www.facebook.com/FilmHubWales/)

**ABOUT THE BFI**

The BFI is the lead body for film in the UK with the ambition to create a flourishing film environment in which innovation, opportunity and creativity can thrive by:

1. Connecting audiences to the widest choice of British and World cinema
2. Preserving and restoring the most significant film collection in the world for today and future generations
3. Championing emerging and world class film makers in the UK - investing in creative, distinctive and entertaining work
4. Promoting British film and talent to the world
5. Growing the next generation of filmmakers and audiences

The BFI is a Government arm’s-length body and distributor of Lottery funds for film. The BFI serves a public role which covers the cultural, creative and economic aspects of film in the UK. It delivers this role:

1. As the UK-wide organisation for film, a charity core funded by Government
2. By providing Lottery and Government funds for film across the UK
3. By working with partners to advance the position of film in the UK.

Founded in 1933, the BFI is a registered charity governed by Royal Charter.

The BFI Board of Governors is chaired by Josh Berger CBE.

**ABOUT THE BFI FILM AUDIENCE NETWORK**

Film Hub Wales is a lead film hub partner in the BFI Film Audience Network.

The BFI Film Audience Network (FAN) is a ground-breaking initiative that gives audiences across the UK the opportunity to see a broader range of films in a cinema setting. For filmmakers, getting films onto cinema screens is a highly competitive business, particularly for specialised films which includes archive, documentary, independent and foreign language films.

With £12 million of Lottery funding over four years (2018-22) the BFI FAN works with cinema exhibitors, film festivals, educators, film societies, community venues, film archives and other organisations in their regions or nations to boost audiences for film across the UK.

The film hub partners which drive audience engagement across the UK comprise: Broadway Cinema, Nottingham with Flatpack, Birmingham; Chapter, Cardiff;; Film London; Queen’s Film Theatre, Belfast; GlasgowFilm; the Independent Cinema Office (for the South East); Showroom Sheffield in partnership with HOME, Manchester & Tyneside Cinema; and Watershed, Bristol.

**ABOUT BFI DIVERSITY STANDARD**

As part of the BFI 2022 strategy the BFI made a commitment to increase diversity in UK cinema audiences, creating a BFI Diversity Standard.

The Standards focus on disability, gender, race, age and sexual orientation (as they pertain to the Equality Act 2010), because there continues to be significant under-representation in these areas. The BFI and FAN also seek to ensure that people from lower socio-economic groups are better represented. For more information, [see the BFI’s leaflet](https://www.bfi.org.uk/sites/bfi.org.uk/files/downloads/bfi-diversity-standards-leaflet-2016-05-11.pdf).

**ABOUT BFI FAN DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION LEAD**

Inclusive Cinema is led by Film Hub Wales (FHW), on behalf of BFI FAN, as part of the network’s UK wide Diversity & Inclusion strategy. This work includes:

* A Dementia-friendly screenings guide launched in 2017, in collaboration with the UKCA and Alzheimer’s Society. Over 500 digital downloads and 500 printed guides were distributed,
* An Autism-friendly screenings guide in development with the UKCA and Dimensions for release in 2019, to include a training video and supporting materials,
* Development of film exhibition projects with partners for minority audiences, including disabled, neurodiverse, people of colour, refugees, those with mental health issues, isolated or lower-income groups and LGBTQ+ (such as the [Queer FIlm Network](http://queerfilmnetwork.org/about/)).

[For more information on Film Hub Wales’ Access for All strategy for BFI FAN, visit the website.](http://www.filmhubwales.org/projects/access)