

A Simple Guide To: New Release Support for Distributors

Welcome to [BFI Film Audience Network \(FAN\)](#)'s New Release Support scheme set up in 2018 with support from the National Lottery to back four new releases each year.

As part of our commitment to supporting venues across the UK, we now have [a pool of regional and national film marketers](#) that work on film campaigns. Their focus is on increasing the profile of titles and their visibility within their area as well as assist with in-venue marketing and event opportunities.

Rest assured that we work closely with distributors involved to generate more bookings in FAN venues around the UK and amplify their campaigns with a focus on young audiences 16-30 years old, strategic venues, working on releases across their life-span.

Rebecca Burns from Thunderbird Releasing (*Shoplifters* and *Burning*) stated:

“The support on both releases was great. It was useful to get early feedback on which marketing ideas would work best and where and the weekly call was really useful as it gave a live status update on the roll out across different hubs... It was great to feel like after each call there would be this team helping to put so much more in place than we could ever achieve in our small team alone.”

Here are a few tips for distributors based on what we have learnt so far:

REMEMBER TO SUBMIT YOUR FILMS EARLY

Anyone can submit a film for consideration and we particularly welcome submissions from film distributors. Submissions are open on a rolling basis. Films are selected by representatives from the BFI Film Audience Network, BFI, Into Film and the Independent Cinema Office. Find out more about [the process and criteria](#).

Remember many of the FAN venues still use printed schedules and therefore need plenty of notice to book your films. Aim to confirm titles at least three months ahead of releases to maximise your reach.

MAKE SURE YOUR BOOKERS ARE BRIEFED

While most distributors handle bookings internally, some outsource the task to freelance booking agents or other companies. Make sure they are aware of the New Release Support that your title is receiving so that they can forward the venues any and all relevant information, such as the bespoke marketing pack and the information that budget exists for social media advertising, guest speakers, competition prizes and more!

LET US KNOW ABOUT YOUR CAMPAIGN PLANS

Selected titles will be promoted in the BFI's Film Audience Network email BOOKING NOW which goes out to all FAN members with the latest booking opportunities and be supported by our pool of freelancers. Sharing your thinking around positioning, eventisation, competitions and merchandise is key. If you have plans for touring talent or guest speakers or are able to offer social media support and some exciting marketing assets, let us know so we can invite feedback, help spread the word amongst exhibitors across the UK and add value to your campaign plans.

EDITABLE SOCIAL MEDIA ASSETS

Speaking of marketing assets, trailers, posters and film stills are great, but venues have found that if they have editable assets that they can customise for their screenings, they are more likely to use them.

As such, please consider sending files that venues can easily tweak for their particular events, such as dynamic stills, film posters and even gifs for social media channels.

Oh, and make sure you send them in plenty of time (ideally two months before the screenings take place) and not a few days before the screening!

Also, if your title is available 'Online and in cinemas', please make sure you have assets that only mention 'In Cinemas' as the on-going dispute between theatrical venues and streaming services means that many cinemas won't use or share assets that mention it's available online.

Many venues also book titles off-date, so assets with the theatrical date on are often useless to them. If possible, please provide posters/images/merchandise that don't have a release date on.

MERCHANDISE

Everyone loves a badge!

If you're providing merchandise, please think about the environmental impact, such as fast-fashion t-shirts that might be disposed of, or postcards that aren't dynamic and won't be picked up by audience members.

PHYSICAL ASSETS THAT FIT IN

If you are producing physical assets such as standees or merchandise, make sure that they are a good fit for the venues you are targeting. Many of the FAN venues have relatively small foyer spaces and social spaces such as café/bars. Some are also taking steps to reduce the impact they have on the environment.

Consider this in your plans and make the time to consult with venues to make the most of your assets used.

SPREAD THE WORD

Make it easy for venues to let people know where they can see your film across the UK! Some distributors set up dedicated geolocated pages or pages with an option for audiences to enter their postcode to find out the nearest venue showing their film. Others on a tighter budget, do this manually once they receive a booking, creating a web page with a list of venues with dates/times and ticketing links and/or Facebook event page to spread the word. Anything you can do to spread the word about screenings, whether it's a tweet, tagging the venues in a Facebook post or putting information on your website is always appreciated by venues. This also encourages peer sharing across FAN venues and partners to amplify your messages.

BFI FAN offers budget to venues for the titles selected so that they can augment any social media messaging and advertising that they create.

OFFERINGS FOR RURAL / SMALL TOWN COMMUNITY VENUES

FAN support for new releases



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Not everywhere is London and some smaller venues often feel left out when key first run exhibitors in large urban centres are exclusively and consistently offered previews, talent Q&As, merchandise and guest speakers. Consider an offering for rural/community venues, whether it's talent, guests, exclusive merchandise, a shout-out on social media or bespoke advertising assets even if their bookings are one offs and off date.

The impact and value of wider regional sites and festivals across BFI FAN is not to be underestimated.

BOOKING NOW

If you have a concrete offer for FAN member exhibitors (e.g. talent available for Q&As, a touring programme or access to regional marketing support), Booking Now is the place to share it. It is a monthly newsletter that is delivered to all FAN members including booking opportunities for new releases (including all the FAN backed titles) as well as nationwide seasons and touring programmes. Submit an item for our consideration at <https://fannewreleases.co.uk/#section-2>

BFI FAN can also work with you to create more bespoke marketing packages for your films beyond FAN New Release Support. For more information, please contact Timon Singh at Film Hub South West at website@fannewreleases.co.uk