



Delegated by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland to distribute
Lottery film funding.

SHORT FILM GUIDELINES

Closing dates:

Individual Applications: Friday 27th June 2025

Company Applications: Friday 1st August 2025

In partnership with:



**** Please note – you should read the full Lottery, ACNI and Government Standard Conditions of Award before filling in an application.**

SHORT FILM

Northern Ireland Screen has been awarded Lottery Funds through the Arts Council of Northern Ireland and BFI NETWORK to support the production of Short Film at both Individual and Company level.

The aim of this funding is to:

- Encourage Northern Ireland resident producers to make a significant contribution to developing talent within the local industry.
- Develop Northern Ireland resident creative talent who intend to work professionally in factual or fiction genres.
- To help individuals and creative teams progress from new talent, through emerging talent and on to established talent.

By offering structured, merit based, opportunities Northern Ireland Screen intends to develop new and emerging creative talent to the point that it is of interest to the wider film, television and digital content industry.

Northern Ireland Screen will organise a minimum of two calls per annum to include a call for individuals and a call for companies in 2025/26.

The call for Individual Applications closes on Friday 27th June 2025.

The call for Company Applications closes on Friday 1st August 2025.

Northern Ireland Screen strongly encourages applicants that applied to a previous call and were rejected not to re-apply with the same project unless the script has substantially changed.

WHAT FUNDING IS AVAILABLE?

Funding is available at Individual and Production Company level to produce live action, factual and virtual reality short films normally up to 15 minutes in length.

Where Northern Ireland Screen is the sole funding body, it is our expectation that all productions will make maximum use of NI labour, locations, facilities and trainees (if applicable) including hiring all key Heads of Departments from within Northern Ireland (unless otherwise agreed in writing with Northern Ireland Screen).

All films must be shot digitally on location in Northern Ireland with post-production taking place in Northern Ireland. At Northern Ireland Screen's sole discretion factual shorts may be filmed outside of Northern Ireland with Northern Ireland creative talent and crew attached.

Funding Levels

- **Individuals** can apply for a funding award of **£6,000**.
- **Companies** can apply for a funding award of either **£12,500**, **£17,500** or **£22,500**. Companies must select which level of award they wish to apply for, subject to meeting the criteria for each level, from one of the follow award levels:

Level 1: Awards of **£12,500**

Level 2: Awards of **£17,500**

Level 3: Awards of **£22,500**

Companies are not permitted to apply to more than one award level with the same project.

The funding levels are laid out in steps intended to build the credibility and confidence of the individuals and creative teams that take part.

KEY BUDGET NOTES (all awards):

- Above the line creatives team must be paid at least Real Living Wage (currently £12.60 and likely to increase from September 2025) for the prep and shoot dates.
- Crew must be paid at least Real Living Wage (currently £12.60 and likely to increase from September 2025).
- Cast must be paid at least equity minimum rates.
- Insurance will be covered by Northern Ireland Screen's blanket policy. As such applicants do not need to list insurance costs as a budget line in their short film production budget.
- Budgets must include at least a 10% cash or in-kind contribution. This can be staff time or provision of equipment).
- Successful applicants must deliver:
 - Pro Res 4.2.2 HD Film on hard drive or pen drive.
 - A MPEG4 HD h.264 viewing file created from the above Master Pro-Res file. The file should be set for streaming at 5Mb/s.
 - An unencrypted DCP file on hard drive or pen drive.
 - 1 online viewing link (password protected).
 - at least 10 colour print quality to include key stills from the Film and behind the scenes photography featuring key talent in jpeg format (minimum 300 dpi).
 - A written publicity 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.
 - PDF copy of the final shooting script.
 - Closing reports:
 - BFI Shorts Metadata Form. (template supplied by Northern Ireland Screen)
 - Cost Report (template supplied by Northern Ireland Screen)
 - Post Project Report (template supplied by Northern Ireland Screen)
 - Final Unit List

- All completed films must be delivered with subtitles and audio description. This is a cost which should be factored into the budget. You will need to include both:
 - hearing impaired captions in .stl format or timed text format
 - visually impaired narrative [VI-N] audio track

Further information on these services can be found here:

<https://inclusivecinema.org/how-to-guides/subtitling-bsl-and-audio-description-services/>.

- Film must be cleared for festivals worldwide in perpetuity.

Rates of pay:

Equity minimum	£109.89 (correct as of May 2025) excluding overtime and meal allowances – for guidance please go to Pay Guide Ratecard The Casting Collective
Real living wage	https://www.livingwage.org.uk/what-real-living-wage

Access Costs

If any members of your core team, cast and/or crew have access needs that will incur additional costs during the production of your project, you can include these costs in your application. We define such needs as specific support required by people who are disabled (a disability which is substantial and long term i.e., more than 12 months) which will result in a verifiable additional cash cost to your production budget. For example, this might include a BSL interpreter to work with members of cast or crew; additional transport or accommodation costs for disabled team members; or the personal assistant of a team member who requires assistance during the production.

If you are unable to cover support costs within the budget available, you can apply for these **in addition to** the maximum award amount.

'Funded' definition

In relation to the eligibility criteria for company awards detailed below, there is reference to '**Funded**' projects. By '**Funded**' we mean short film projects that have received funding through an Irish, UK or international public body/broadcaster/distribution platform. Examples include, but are not limited to, the following:

Funding Body	Link to Website
BBC Films	https://www.bbc.co.uk/bbcfilm
BBC Northern Ireland	https://www.bbc.co.uk/northernireland
BFI NETWORK	https://network.bfi.org.uk/
Doc Society	https://docsociety.org
Film 4	https://www.film4productions.com/
Film Cymru	https://ffilmcymruwales.com/node/1
Guardian Docs	https://www.theguardian.com/documentaries
Northern Ireland Screen	https://www.northernirelandscreen.co.uk/
RTÉ	https://www.rte.ie/
RTÉ Storyland	https://www.rte.ie/tv/programmes/storyland/
Screen Ireland	https://www.screenireland.ie/
Screen Scotland	https://www.screen.scot/
Screen Yorkshire	https://www.screenyorkshire.co.uk/
Scottish Documentary Institute	https://www.scottishdocinstitute.com
TG4	https://www.tg4.ie/en/
The Uncertain Kingdom	https://theuncertainkingdom.co.uk/
The Washington Post	https://www.washingtonpost.com

Individual Production Awards:

Individual Production Awards are aimed at new and emerging **Northern Ireland resident Directors** who are over 18 and not currently undertaking further and higher education up to undergraduate level and have not previously directed a feature film. This intention is to give the filmmaker(s) an opportunity to show what they can do.

Individuals must have directed a minimum of **1 unfunded narrative or documentary short film** in the same genre they are applying for funding for, which is available to view online. This may include shorts directed by the applicant as part of a course. Applicants must not have previously received 3 or more individual short film awards through Northern Ireland Screen.

Applicants should be mindful of the feasibility of the script submitted against the budget level available, noting that it must be possible to successfully deliver the short film within the budget available, while adhering to the key budget notes. For example, for drama shorts it would be expected the budget could support 2 filming days across 1 filming location. **Northern Ireland screen will supply a budget template for Individual applications.**

Production Budget	Maximum amount available	Who is eligible to apply: (please note all the below criteria must be met):
Minimum production budget £6,700* <i>*Cash budget £6,000 Productions should also include a 10% / £700 in-kind contribution</i>	£6,000	Northern Ireland resident directors who: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• are over 18 and not currently undertaking further and higher education up to undergraduate level and have not previously directed a feature film; and• have directed a minimum of 1 unfunded short film in the same genre they are applying for funding and which is available to view online; and• have not previously received 3 or more individual short film awards through Northern Ireland Screen.

The call for Individual Applications closes on Friday 27th June 2025.

Production Company Awards:

Company Production Awards are available to **Northern Ireland based** legally incorporated / limited production companies that are working with **Northern Ireland resident directors** who are over 18 and not currently undertaking further and higher education up to undergraduate level and have not previously directed a feature film. The intention of these awards is to develop working relationships between Northern Ireland resident creative talent and production companies who need their talents. Companies can apply for a funding award of either **£12,500, £17,500 or £22,500**. Companies must select which level of award they wish to apply for, subject to meeting the criteria for each level, from one of the follow award levels:

Level 1: Awards of £12,500

Level 2: Awards of £17,500

Level 3: Awards of £22,500

All criteria (per the tables below) must be met to be eligible to apply. Companies are not permitted to apply to more than one award level with the same project.

Level 1: Awards of £12,500

Production Budget	Maximum amount available	Who is eligible to apply: (please note all the below criteria must be met):
Minimum production budget £14,000 <i>Productions should also include a £1,500 cash or in-kind contribution.</i>	£12,500	Northern Ireland based production companies who: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have produced a minimum of 1 short film (funded or unfunded) with a budget of over £6,000; and• Are working with Northern Ireland resident directors who:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ are over 18 and not currently undertaking further and higher education up to undergraduate level and have not previously directed a feature film; and○ Have directed a minimum of 2 short films, in the same genre they are applying for funding for, which are available to view online, of which at least 1 must have been funded through an Irish, UK or international public body/broadcaster/distribution platform.

Level 2: Awards of £17,500

Production Budget	Maximum amount available	Who is eligible to apply: (please note all the below criteria must be met):
<p>Minimum production budget</p> <p>£19,500</p> <p><i>Productions should also include a £2,000 cash or in-kind contribution.</i></p>	£17,500	<p>Northern Ireland based production companies who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have produced a minimum of 1 short film (funded or unfunded) with a budget of over £7,500; and • Are working with Northern Ireland resident directors who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ are over 18 and not currently undertaking further and higher education up to undergraduate level and have not previously directed a feature film; and ○ Have directed a minimum of 3 short films in the same genre they are applying for funding for, which are available to view online, of which at least 2 must have been funded through an Irish, UK or international public body/broadcaster/distribution platform.

Level 3: Awards of £22,500

Production Budget	Maximum amount available	Who is eligible to apply: (please note all the below criteria must be met):
<p>Minimum production budget</p> <p>£25,000</p> <p><i>Productions should also include a £2,500 cash or in-kind contribution.</i></p>	£22,500	<p>Northern Ireland based production companies who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have produced a minimum of 2 short films with a budget of at least £10,000, of which at least 1 must have been funded through an Irish, UK or international public body/broadcaster/distribution platform; and • Are working with Northern Ireland resident directors who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ are over 18 and not currently undertaking further and higher education up to undergraduate level and have not previously directed a feature film; and

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Have directed a minimum of 3 short films in the same genre they are applying for funding for, which are available to view online, of which at least 2 must have been funded through an Irish, UK or international public body/broadcaster/distribution platform; and ○ Have directed a short film that was selected in competition at an Oscar® or BAFTA qualifying film festival.
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For a list of Oscar and BAFTA qualifying film festivals please visit:

[96th ACADEMY AWARDS SHORT FILMS QUALIFYING FESTIVAL LIST](#)

[BAFTA QUALIFYING FESTIVALS LIST – BRITISH SHORT FILM](#)

The call for Company Applications closes on Friday 1st August 2025.

KEY ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

- The quality of the proposed script / project.
- The quality of the director's previous film(s).
- Viability of the project in terms of ambition against budget (please refer to the key budget notes on page 4).
- The extent to which the application meets the [BFI funding priorities | BFI](#):

1. Equity, diversity and inclusion

Addressing under-representation in perspective and representation, talent and recruitment, agency and opportunities, widening the range of voices and audiences served.

2. Impact and audience

Supporting projects with a strong cultural or progressive impact for audiences.

3. Talent development and progression

Supporting early career filmmakers (producers, writers and directors) and projects with a reasonable proportion of early career cast and crew.

4. Risk

Supporting projects that take creative risks.

5. UK-wide

Increasing the number of projects and filmmakers outside London and the South East, looking at location and representation. Northern Ireland Screen will also consider the geographical location of the applicant within Northern Ireland.

6. Environmental sustainability

Addressing sustainability both creatively and practically.

Please note:

- Northern Ireland Screen will also review the application to confirm that it would qualify for certification as a British film. Read more information on [British certification](#).
- Applicants must have secured, or have a contractual right to secure, the rights (including any underlying rights) in the idea they are proposing.

APPLICATION

Please read our FAQs (available at the end of this document) before requesting an application link. If the FAQs do not answer your question, then please contact Christine Morrow, Talent Executive, (christine@northernirelandscreen.co.uk) for further information.

If you have read the FAQs and these guidelines and wish to apply for funding then please contact Tory Killen, Funding Executive, (tory@northernirelandscreen.co.uk) to request a link to an online application form. Please state the level you wish to apply for in your email.

Please note, applicants will be required to complete a pre-application stage where they will need to detail how they meet the eligibility criteria for the level of funding being applied for. Applicants should refer to the specific eligibility criteria listed on pages 7-10 and detail how they meet each point of the specific criteria. Northern Ireland Screen will then review this and only eligible applicants will be granted access to complete and submit the full application form alongside the requested supporting documentation.

REQUIRED SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Please ensure that all supporting documentation is submitted online with your application. Failure to provide the requested supporting documentation will result in your application being eliminated from the current short film call.

The following documents should be submitted with your full application form (these are not required at the pre-application stage):

- Either the latest draft script (required for all narrative short films) or an outline treatment (for factual shorts/VR shorts only).
- Production budget (this should be submitted on the short film budget template).
- Evidence of acquisition of any options and/or underlying rights (if applicable).
- Up to date letters of intent from each of the financiers named on the finance plan (if applicable)

For company applications, the following documents should also be uploaded to your company profile:

- Company documents including your certificate of incorporation, constitution/memorandum and articles of association, which describe your legally constituted status.
- Latest set of company accounts (audited if applicable).

TIMEFRAME

If an award is made all successful applicants must be in a position to finalise the contract before 31st December 2025. Delivery of the project is intended to be within 6 months of receipt of the award, however if there is compelling rationale this may be extended to 12 months, subject to approval by Northern Ireland Screen.

Key dates:

Individual applications:

All individual applications including required supporting documentation must be received by **Friday 27th June 2025**. All individual applications will be assessed with decisions intended to be made by **29th August 2025** provided that all relevant documentation is provided and that all eligibility checks and other queries are promptly responded to.

Company applications:

All company applications including required supporting documentation must be received by **Friday 1st August 2025**. All company applications will be assessed with decisions intended to be made by **3rd October 2025** provided that all relevant documentation is provided and that all eligibility checks and other queries are promptly responded to.

Timelines may be extended depending on the demand and number of applications received.

COMMITMENT TO GOOD PRACTICE

- Northern Ireland Screen and the BFI are committed to ensuring that we consult with active practitioners within the disabled filmmaking community about current and future projects where there is a portrayal of disability and also in respect of industry access. We want to see films that are authentically and mindfully cast with disabled actors and also see more non-specific casting, creating roles and visibility for disabled actors which do not reference disability as part of the theme or narrative. In support of this and to avoid reinforcing negative stereotypes, we will no longer support work gratuitously featuring facially scarred villains. Supporting equal pay for disabled actors and filmmakers means that Northern Ireland Screen will now consider applications that include project costs related to access requirements for disabled practitioners and will have the ability to provide funding for such elements in addition to a scheme's normal funding cap.
- All productions supported by Northern Ireland Screen must commit to, and adhere to, **The Code of Practice for the Screen Industry in Northern Ireland** published by Northern Ireland Screen. A copy of this code is available on the application website.
- Northern Ireland Screen is committed to sustainable filming practices and as such will no longer accept Short Film applications that propose to shoot on film. All filmmakers have a responsibility to promote environmental sustainability and need to plan their project, from development stage onwards, with the environment and the climate crisis in mind. Successful filmmakers must complete carbon footprinting via BAFTA albert, submitting pre- and post-production carbon footprint calculations.
- All productions are required to adhere to and promote the set of principles aimed at tackling and preventing **bullying, harassment and racism** in the screen industries (the "Principles") and related guidance (the "Guidance") commissioned by the BFI in partnership with BAFTA, with the input of leading screen sector industry organisations, Challenge Consultants (specialists in equality, diversity and inclusion training and

policy development) and in line with advice from workplace experts Acas. The Principles and Guidance are available on the BFI website and will be regularly reviewed and updated.
<https://www.bfi.org.uk/inclusion-film-industry/bullying-harassment-racism-prevention-screen-industries/set-principles>

MONITORING

Applicants will be asked to complete an equality monitoring form when submitting the pre-application form by clicking on a link which will take them to the monitoring form. A unique reference number will appear at the top of the page once an applicant clicks save, which will need to be entered on the monitoring form. The data that you submit on this form will be confidential and anonymous and will not be seen by the staff assessing your application. This collects data to help measure how effective Northern Ireland Screen is in attracting a diverse range of applicants for funding. It enables us to ensure that we are meeting the BFI Core priorities, in particular addressing under-representation in perspective and representation, talent and recruitment, agency and opportunities, widening the range of voices and audiences served.

CONDITIONS OF FUNDING:

- The award will take the form of a non-recoupable grant.
- Where applying as an individual, the applicant will own the rights in the completed project. If applying through a production company, the company will own the rights in the completed project.
- You will be required to include specific credits for Northern Ireland Screen, the Arts Council of Northern Ireland and the BFI NETWORK in the opening and closing credits for the project, in any promotional material and on all copies of any work based upon the Project.
- The funding contract will include a clause confirming that a permanent, non-exclusive license is granted to Northern Ireland Screen and the BFI to copy, reproduce and / or exhibit the project: (a) non-theatrically including, without limitation, in educational establishments (including the BFI Mediatheque) or online on the BFI websites (including BFI Player) throughout the world; and (b) the right to use clips from the project for promotional purposes in relation to the project or in relation to promoting BFI National Lottery funding. Northern Ireland Screen and the BFI will own the delivery materials provided to us and may choose to deposit, preserve and permit access to such materials through standard terms applied by the BFI National Archive and Northern Ireland Screen's Digital Film Archive.
- Filmmakers will be required to complete carbon footprinting via BAFTA albert, submitting pre- and post-production carbon footprint calculations. Certification is not required.
- Northern Ireland Screen will have rights of approval during the production of the project and a right of approval of the picture lock cut of the film.
- Filmmakers must arrange a pre-production meeting with Northern Ireland Screen's Talent Executive, Christine Morrow and Funding Executive, Tory Killen prior to filming commencing. To arrange a meeting, please contact tory@northernirelandscreen.co.uk.

- Northern Ireland Screen operates a blanket insurance policy that projects awarded funding through the short film call can be insured under. Producers are expected to liaise directly with the insurance company and provide Northern Ireland Screen with the cover note issued by the insurance company.
- All Productions supported by Northern Ireland Screen and the BFI NETWORK are required to create an IMDB page for the production listing all cast and crew and crediting BFI NETWORK [gb] and NORTHERN IRELAND SCREEN [gb] as a Production Company.
- Northern Ireland Screen's Talent Executive and Funding Executive should be kept updated throughout the production process.
- Filmmakers will be required to provide the follow items (these should be forwarded to the New and Emerging Talent Executive and Funding Executive ahead of filming commencing):
 - An insurance cover note.
 - An overall production schedule.
 - Shooting schedule.
 - Call sheets (drama shorts).
 - Full unit list (detailing cast and crew to be approved by Northern Ireland Screen).
 - Risk assessment.

SHORT FILM CALL 2025/26 – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Please ensure you have read the SHORT FILM guidelines before completing an application.

I applied to a previous short film call and my application was rejected. Can I apply to this call with the same project?

Northern Ireland Screen strongly encourages applicants that applied to a previous Short Film call and were rejected not to re-apply with the same project unless the script has substantially changed.

What type of short film does Northern Ireland Screen fund?

Northern Ireland is not prescriptive about the genre of short film content. It funds both standalone material and proof of concept shorts depending on the experience and career trajectory of the filmmaker. Funding is available for live action fiction, factual and virtual reality short film. If seeking funding for a virtual reality short, please speak to Northern Ireland Screen's Interactive Manager prior to applying.

Is funding available for animation short film?

Funding is not available for animation shorts via the Short Film call however Northern Ireland Screen does run a Creative Animation scheme. For further information please visit the Northern Ireland Screen website.

Can I shoot using Film?

No, Northern Ireland Screen funded short films must be filmed on HD. We no longer fund shorts shot on film primarily due to the environmental impact but also the cost implications.

I have never written, directed or produced a film before. Am I eligible to apply?

No, Northern Ireland Screen does not fund first time filmmakers. Please refer to the specific eligibility criteria depending on the level of funding you are applying for.

I am not resident in Northern Ireland. Am I eligible to apply?

No, Northern Ireland Screen only accepts applications from new and emerging Northern Ireland resident directors at an individual level and Northern Ireland based legally incorporated / limited production companies that are working with Northern Ireland resident directors at a company level.

I am a filmmaker from Northern Ireland but no longer resident there, Am I eligible to apply?

No, filmmakers must be resident in Northern Ireland. 'Resident' means primary residence for tax purposes. Please contact your local funding agency to discuss funding opportunities.

I am a director who currently has a live short film project that has received funding from Northern Ireland Screen. Can I apply for funding for another short film project that I am directing?

We would expect a director that currently has a live short film project in receipt of Northern Ireland Screen support to have submitted a picture lock cut of the film to Northern Ireland Screen's Talent Executive before applying for funding for another project.

I am in full time education. Am I eligible to apply?

Students currently undertaking further and higher education up to undergraduate level are not eligible to apply to the Short Film call.

What is the maximum amount available through the Short Film Call?

Individuals can apply for an award of £6,000. Production Companies can apply for funding from one of three levels: level 1 - £12,500; level 2 - £17,500 and level 3 - £22,500. Each level has its own specific eligibility criteria. Please refer to the specific eligibility criteria depending on the level of funding you are applying for.

Can my script be read before I apply to the fund?

No, the script submitted with your application is the only draft it is possible to read.

Can I have a meeting to discuss my project?

It is normal practice for funded filmmakers to meet with the Talent Executive on receipt of their award to discuss their projects, however applicants may request a meeting with the Funding Executive to discuss the application process and address any specific questions related to the application. Please email Tory Killen, Funding Executive, (tory@northernirelandscreen.co.uk) to request a meeting.

Do I have to know who my cast and crew will be at application stage?

It is an advantage if you know who you intend to work with at application stage, although not compulsory to detail.

How are decisions made?

Scripts are read internally and externally by an independent reader. Decisions are made by panel selection by a Committee.

How do I send my previous work to Northern Ireland Screen?

Please send links to previous work via an online link (with password if required).

What happens if I am unable to provide the requested supporting documentation with the application?

In order for an application to be considered all required supporting documentation must be submitted with the online application. Failure to provide the documentation requested will result in the application being excluded from the short film call.

I am trying to upload a large document via the online application form but I am receiving an error message. What should I do?

If you are having difficulty submitting the application form or supporting documents via the online system, please contact Tory Killen, Funding Executive, tory@northernirelandscreen.co.uk.

When will I hear if my application has been successful?

All eligible applications will be assessed following closure of the calls. All individual applications will be assessed with decisions intended to be made **29th August 2025**. All company applications will be assessed with decisions intended to be made by **3rd October 2025** provided that all relevant documentation is provided and that all eligibility checks and other queries are promptly responded to.

How long do I have to make my film if I receive funding?

We would expect the completed film to be delivered alongside the required financial and post project reports within 6 months of receipt of the award, however if there is compelling rationale this may be extended to 12 months, subject to approval by Northern Ireland Screen.

If I am successful in receiving funding will the decision be publicised?

Yes, it will. All the awards made across our funds are listed on our website.

If I am successful in receiving funding, do I need to get Production Insurance?

Northern Ireland Screen operates a blanket insurance policy that projects awarded funding through the short film call can be insured under. As such, applicants do not need to list insurance costs as a budget line in their short film production budget.

I have a question that isn't answered in these FAQs or via the guidelines. What should I do?

Please contact Christine Morrow, Talent Executive, (christine@northernirelandscreen.co.uk) regarding any further queries.