



**NEW SHORTS FOCUS
DEVELOPMENT
2025-26**

**Closing date:
12 NOON Friday 29th August 2025**

In partnership with:



THE SCHEME

NEW SHORTS FOCUS is a **fiction development** scheme specifically for under-represented new and emerging Northern Ireland resident writer and writer/director talent. New Shorts Focus is the only short film fiction development scheme which Northern Ireland Screen currently operates. Please note - the Scheme is **not** open to animation or factual creative talent and participants from previous years **cannot** re-apply to the Scheme.

The development process is a writer-led initiative. It will be facilitated by a development producer over a six-month period from October 2025 to March 2026 and delivered online with monthly development meetings. Selected participants must be available to attend each online monthly development session and will be asked to deliver projects drafts monthly, normally a week prior to each monthly meeting. Participants are supplied with script coverage to assist in the re-drafting process each month.

It is anticipated that up to six projects will be selected to participate in the development process, with the hope that up to three projects may be selected to receive a production award of up to £12,500. Any potential production award will be subject to the attachment of a Northern Ireland resident production company, meeting the eligibility criteria, successful application, contract and the continued availability of funds.

ELIGIBILITY:

The scheme is open to New and Emerging Northern Ireland resident writers or writer/directors from groups that are underrepresented within the film and television industry who have a previous credit at short film level and wish to develop a **new** original idea into a fiction short film script.

In order to be eligible to apply, applicants must:

- Be resident in Northern Ireland. Please note, Northern Ireland Screen reserves the right to request proof of residency.
- Be from an underrepresented group within the film and television industry. The following groups are considered as underrepresented:
 - Ethnic minority filmmakers.
 - Female, female identifying, trans and non-binary filmmakers.
 - LGBTQIA+ filmmakers.
 - D/deaf filmmakers.
 - Disabled filmmakers (including filmmakers who are neurodivergent and/or filmmakers with a mental health condition or learning disability. An

individual's disability can be defined as a physical and/or mental impairment).

- Filmmakers from low socio-economic backgrounds.
- Have *at least* one previous independently made or funded writer or writer/director credit at short film level in the fiction genre;
- Must not have participated in the New Shorts Focus scheme in any previous years; and
- Wish to develop a **new** original idea into a fiction short film script. The submitted idea(s) must be able to stand alone as a short. It must not be an extended trailer for a potential feature project. Projects that have already been developed or produced are not eligible to apply.

Please note, in order to be eligible applicants must meet all the above criteria.

SELECTION CRITERIA:

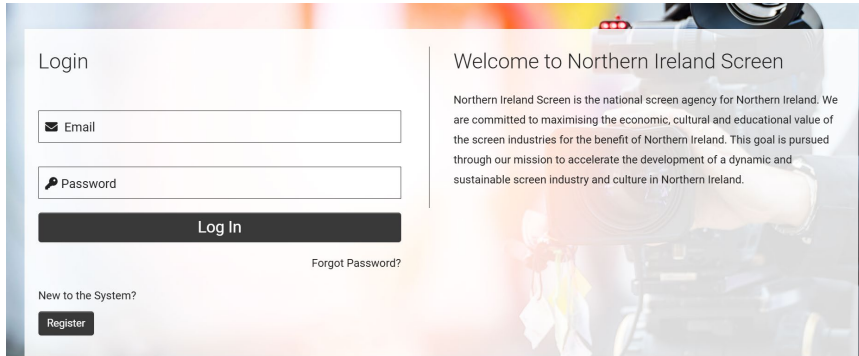
In addition to meeting the eligibility criteria, the following criteria will also be considered:

- The quality of the proposed outline(s) submitted.
- The quality of the writer or writer/director's previous film(s).
- The applicant's experience working in the industry.

APPLICATION:

Applicants must apply online through Northern Ireland Screen's application portal which can be accessed using the following link:

https://northernirelandscreen.smartsimpleuk.com/s_Login.jsp

The screenshot shows the login and registration interface for Northern Ireland Screen. On the left, there is a 'Login' section with fields for 'Email' and 'Password', a 'Log In' button, and a 'Forgot Password?' link. Below this is a 'New to the System?' section with a 'Register' button. On the right, there is a 'Welcome to Northern Ireland Screen' message, followed by a paragraph stating: 'Northern Ireland Screen is the national screen agency for Northern Ireland. We are committed to maximising the economic, cultural and educational value of the screen industries for the benefit of Northern Ireland. This goal is pursued through our mission to accelerate the development of a dynamic and sustainable screen industry and culture in Northern Ireland.'

Applicants will need to click **“Register”** and select **“Individual”** from the available options on the registration page.

Once registered, applicants will need to login to the application portal and click on **“Funding Opportunities”**, then select **“Funding Opportunities – Lottery Fund”** before choosing **“New Shorts Focus 2025”** from the available options.

Applicants are only required to complete a brief pre-application form. Applicants will need to outline how they meet each point of the eligibility criteria and submit the required supporting documentation as listed below.

Please note, this is a non-monetary development scheme. Northern Ireland Screen contribute the costs towards a development producer.

The closing date for applications is **Friday 29th August 2025 at 12 noon**. Applicants will be unable to submit their application after this time.

REQUIRED SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION:

- A maximum of two one-page outlines for initial consideration. **Completed scripts are not accepted at the application stage.**
- A copy of the applicant's CV.
- An online link to view the applicant's previous short film.

Any scheme queries should be directed to christine@northernirelandscreen.co.uk. Any queries regarding the application or application portal should be directed to funding@northernirelandscreen.co.uk.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

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 in respect of industry access. We want to see films that are authentically and mindfully cast with d/Deaf and disabled actors and see more non-specific casting, creating roles and visibility for d/Deaf and 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 featuring villains with visible differences.

Northern Ireland Screen supports authentic writing. If you intend to write about issues that you have not directly experienced (e.g., disability, neurodiversity, racism, poverty etc) we would urge you to consult an organisation or group that helps people who have experienced these issues to ensure that you accurately represent the issue. 'Nothing about us without us' is a key element of the Press Reset campaign [Press Reset](#).

*Northern Ireland Screen and the BFI uses identity-based language when referring to disabled people and we are inclusive of the d/Deaf community, neuro-diverse people, and people with mental health conditions when we are using the term disability.

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.