



Media Release
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For immediate release

Welsh Cinemas to Develop D/deaf led Film Screenings for Audiences with Hearing Loss

Film Hub Wales (FHW) and the Wales Council for Deaf People (WCDP) are working with seven Welsh cinemas, to establish D/deaf volunteer groups who will help to improve cinema experiences for audiences with hearing loss, in their local communities.

The seven venues include The Torch Theatre (Milford Haven), The Maxime (Blackwood), Galeri (Caernarfon), Magic Lantern (Tywyn) Neuadd Dwyfor (Pwllheli), Chapter (Cardiff), and Theatr Gwaun (Fishguard). After participating in training with the WCDP, to explore how to meet the needs of cinema audiences with hearing loss, the organisations are putting exciting new activities in place.

With funding support from FHW, each venue will work with WCDP to connect with local D/deaf audiences, to form volunteer groups who can share their personal experiences of visiting the cinema and help to shape future activities.

Louise Sweeney from the Wales Council for Deaf People explains:

“D/deaf, Deafblind and Hard of Hearing people face accessibility issues and are often reluctant to visit cinemas because of this. Knowing that their experience will be improved at cinemas involved in this programme, with staff receiving D/deaf and Deafblind awareness training, Sign language training and venues becoming more Deaf friendly is a welcome and encouraging sign to the D/deaf and Hard of Hearing communities.”

At Galeri, Caernarfon, in addition to working with the North Wales Deaf Association and Gwynedd Deaf Club, a 16-year-old Deaf student will work with the venue to create more accessible BSL marketing materials.

Galeri Caernarfon explain:

“We strive to make Galeri a diverse, welcoming environment by programming subtitled screenings, and investing in Makaton training and BSL qualifications for our staff. We are also thrilled to be working with a young, local Deaf person to create BSL video content for our venue, not only to ensure that Galeri is an inclusive venue for all audiences, but also encourage and inspire others to do the same.”

In Tywyn, The Magic Lantern are inviting local Deafblind people and their families into the cinema for an open day, to explore the spaces and meet the staff, who will also be taking part in BSL training.

Annie Grundy from the Magic Lantern explains:

“Our team prides itself on the welcome we give our audience, both local and visiting, so being able to convey that welcome to all visitors is really important to us. We know that we have a lot more to learn. We want to continue with BSL training and we need to explore more in terms of technologies to help us be more accessible, so step by step... we'll keep going. After all, building and expanding audiences is always going to be key to our long-term survival.”

The project was set up by Film Hub Wales as a result of feedback from cinemas, D/deaf creatives and audiences themselves. Through the Inclusive Cinema project, which FHW lead on behalf of the BFI FAN network, the Film Distributor's Association (FDA) will offer a selection of key films with suitable formats, which the eight venues will be able to access.

Hana Lewis, Film Hub Wales' Strategic Manager, explains:

"Cinemas offering film screenings for D/deaf communities can encounter barriers such as funding to update kit, lack of films with accessible formats, or enough notice to market the film. Our partnership with the FDA and WCDP aims to support cinemas, whilst also ensuring that D/deaf cinemagoers can access the latest independent films and offer direct feedback about their experiences."

This project is made possible thanks National Lottery funding from the BFI (British Film Institute), via its Film Audience Network (FAN). Film Hub Wales develop audiences for British independent and international film year-round, funds in Wales are administered by FHW via Chapter as the Film Hub Lead Organisation.

More than £30M is raised each week for good causes across the UK by the National Lottery.

Screening Information

1. The [Torch Theatre](#) in Milford Haven will build on their existing relationships in the county with community support groups: Sign and Share and PAVS. They plan to offer front of house volunteers training to support accessibility for audiences and work with WCDP to seek out further D/deaf communities.

They run two subtitled screenings each week, coming up next is *Cyrano* on Wednesday 30th March and *The Phantom of the Open* on Thursday 7th April.

2. The [Maxime](#) in Blackwood currently screen subtitled performances twice a week, each Sunday and Wednesday. They want to build on the success of their supportive environment screenings by reaching out to local community groups.

Their next subtitled screening will be *The Phantom of the Open* on Wednesday 30th March.

3. [Galeri, Caernarfon](#) run 3 films per week, on Monday evenings, a Thursday matinee and relaxed screenings with subtitles on Saturday mornings for family audiences.

They are working with a 16 year old Deaf student, to create BSL marketing videos, including welcome and introductory messages for use in the building and online. They also hope to work with the North Wales Deaf Association and the Gwynedd Deaf Club, meeting groups in person where possible, really getting to know their audiences.

Upcoming screenings include *The Phantom of the Open* running from 28th - 31st March.

4. The [Magic Lantern](#) in Tywyn will run at least two screening per month with additional films for families during the summer holidays. Special events will include an open day on May 7th, inviting deafblind audiences and their families to explore the cinema and meet the staff, who will also be taking part in BS training. From this they plan to form a volunteer group to help shape a further two special events and update their website.

Their next screening is *The Duke* 28th and 31st March.

5. [Neuadd Dwyfor, Pwllheli](#) - Following significant renovations to the building, including a new accessible ground floor toilet, seating in the balcony and auditorium and coffee bar in the foyer, the cinema reopened on the 10th March.

Keep an eye on the cinema's website for details on their upcoming film screenings for D/deaf audiences.

6. [Chapter](#) in Cardiff are working with Cardiff Deaf Club to form a committee of D/deaf people for a new programme of monthly film screenings in 2022. The film will be followed by an interpreted discussion in the Cinema Foyer. They are also working Deaf artist, Jonny Cotsen on 'Hear We

Are' a new two-year R&D project that will address access to creative production for Deaf artists and communities.

Upcoming screenings include *The Phantom of the Open* which is running until Thursday 31st March.

7. [Theatr Gwaun](#) in Fishguard will run a monthly screening, working to establish a group led by local deaf / HOH people interested in helping to develop cinema at the Theatr. They will also explore new partnerships with organisations such as Pembrokeshire based Sign and Share.

Keep an eye on the cinema's website for details on their upcoming film screenings for D/deaf audiences.

-ENDS-

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About Film Hub Wales

Film Hub Wales (FWW) celebrates cinema. We support organisations that screen film, from film festivals, to societies and mixed arts centres. Working with over [315 Welsh exhibitors](#), we aim to bring the best British and international film to all audiences across Wales and the UK. Since Film Hub Wales set up in 2013, we've supported over 250 exciting cinema projects, reaching over 480,000 audience members.

We're part of a UK wide network of eight hubs funded by the BFI (British Film Institute) which form the [Film Audience Network \(FAN\)](#), with [Chapter](#) appointed as the 'Film Hub Lead Organisation' (FHLO) in Wales.

We are also proud to lead on the UK [inclusive cinema](#) strategy on behalf of BFI FAN.

[Website](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#)

About the BFI Film Audience Network

Supported by National Lottery funding, the BFI Film Audience Network (FAN), is central to the BFI's aim to ensure the greatest choice of film is available for everyone. Established in 2012 to build wider and more diverse UK cinema audiences for British and international film, FAN is a unique, UK-wide collaboration made up of eight Hubs managed by leading film organisations and venues strategically placed around the country. FAN also supports talent development with BFI NETWORK Talent Executives in each of the English Hubs, with a mission to discover and support talented writers, directors and producers at the start of their careers.

BFI FAN Film Hubs are:

- Film Hub Midlands is led by Broadway, Nottingham working in partnership with the Birmingham-based Flatpack
- Film Hub North is led collectively by Showroom Workstation, Sheffield and HOME Manchester
- Film Hub South East is led by the Independent Cinema Office
- Film Hub South West is led by Watershed in Bristol
- Film Hub Scotland is led by Glasgow Film Theatre
- Film Hub Northern Ireland is led by Queen's University Belfast
- Film Hub Wales is led by Chapter in Cardiff
- Film Hub London is led by Film London

[BFI FAN website](#)

About the BFI

We are a cultural charity, a National Lottery distributor, and the UK's lead organisation for film and the moving image. Our mission is:

- To support creativity and actively seek out the next generation of UK storytellers
- To grow and care for the BFI National Archive, the world's largest film and television archive
- To offer the widest range of UK and international moving image culture through our programmes and festivals - delivered online and in venue
- To use our knowledge to educate and deepen public appreciation and understanding
- To work with Government and industry to ensure the continued growth of the UK's screen industries

Founded in 1933, the BFI is a registered charity governed by Royal Charter. The BFI Board of Governors is chaired by Tim Richards.

About Chapter

Chapter is one of Europe's largest and most dynamic arts centres with cinemas, theatres, exhibition spaces, studios, a café, award-winning bars, over 60 cultural workspaces and more. Chapter has an international reputation for excellence, innovation and collaboration. It offers an ever-changing programme of the best performance, films and exhibitions from Wales and from around the world.

[Website](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#)

Wales Council for Deaf People (WCDP)

WCDP is the Welsh national charitable organisation for people who are Deaf, Deafened, Deafblind and hard of hearing, founded in 1950, we are an umbrella association of organisations. We believe there should be equal access for all and are constantly striving to improve the lives of the D/deaf community. Providing support, advice, communication and services which helps enable them to lead independent and fulfilling lives. As such, we carry out activities which contribute to developing services in the area of education, employment, campaigning, relief of social isolation and associated medical issues. We operate a list of core activities as determined by our members, including voluntary group development and support, communication support services, information and advice, hearing related training initiatives (BSL, Deaf awareness & Lip-reading courses) and BSL Media production.

[Website](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#)

About Inclusive Cinema

Inclusive Cinema is the BFI Film Audience Network (FAN)'s UK-wide project to support exhibitors in welcoming everyone to participate in cinema, by countering cultural, systemic or physical barriers.

Led by Film Hub Wales on behalf of BFI FAN, the project champions the network's aims to bring British, international and independent film to audiences. With a focus on young audiences (16-30) and a skilled, confident, exhibition sector, access is at the heart of FAN's strategy. In partnership with our creative network of exhibitors, we celebrate meaningful representations of diversity behind the camera, on screen and in our audiences, working towards the BFI Diversity Standards.

[Website](#), [Twitter](#)