

## **SIX BFI NETWORK TALENT EXECUTIVES APPOINTED TO REACH AND DEVELOP NEW FILMMAKERS NATIONWIDE**

- **BFI extends its reach with talent development executives appointed in the English regions completing the UK-wide offer with partners in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales**
- **BFI National Lottery funding creates brand new roles to connect with and support local talent to find the next generation of filmmakers**
- **Executives appointed throughout England, based in leading film organisations and venues around the country**

**Monday 23 April 2018:** Six new **BFI NETWORK Talent Executives** have been appointed to work in the English regions to provide vital support to new and aspiring talent where they live, delivering on a commitment outlined in the BFI's five year strategy **BFI2022**. Supported by **National Lottery** funding, these new roles will ensure that everyone around the country is able to access expertise along with funding for short film and early development work, and sees decision making responsibility passed to the regions. The Executives will also create opportunities for talent to connect with the local industry, providing networks between established professionals and emerging creatives.

BFI NETWORK exists to discover and support talented writers, directors and producers at the start of their careers and these new Talent Executives will be based in leading film organisations and venues around the country. Joining the five English Film Hubs, which partly form the UK-wide BFI Film Audience Network (FAN), the Executives are **Thomas Wightman** for Film Hub South East (which spans from Chichester to Norwich and Canterbury), **Alice Cabanas** for Film Hub South West (which spans from Bristol to Southampton and Plymouth), **Jessica Loveland** and **Alice Ramsey** for Film Hub North (which spans from Liverpool to Hull and Berwick-upon-Tweed), **Alexandra Jackson** for Film Hub Midlands (which spans from Nottingham to Birmingham and Hereford) and **Josic Cadoret** for Film Hub London.

The new BFI NETWORK Talent Executives will work closely with BFI Talent Development Manager Matimba Kabalika, who was part of the Film Hubs' recruitment process. They join the existing talent development executives in Northern Ireland Screen, FfilmCymru Wales and the Scottish Film Talent Network who all help to deliver BFI NETWORK. Doc Society, who were recently appointed to run the BFI's documentary funds, are currently developing a programme for new and emerging documentary filmmakers, as part of BFI NETWORK.

**Matimba Kabalika, Talent Development Manager, BFI,** said: "We're really pleased to be extending the reach and accessibility of BFI NETWORK support through the appointment of these six Talent Executives in the regions. The range of expertise of the individuals involved, as well as the opportunities represented by them being embedded in leading film venues across the country is really exciting."

**Speaking on behalf of the English Hubs, Eleanor Thornley, Manager of Film Hub Midlands,** said: “The appointment of these six fantastic talent executives across England is hugely exciting for aspiring talent up and down the country. Having dedicated talent spotters based in the regions, with experience of helping filmmakers and storytellers develop their skills, is a positive and necessary development, and being part of our already well established Hubs will enable us to foster networks of creatives, audiences and industry professionals to benefit our local talent.”

In addition to providing access to BFI National Lottery funding, the Executives will offer editorial expertise on funded projects and professional development to help the progression from making shorts to developing long-form stories, including features. As regional Executives who are also part of a national framework, they will also offer signposting to the full scope of funding and training opportunities available to develop careers across the screen industries, and broker professional and creative relationships with peers.

As set out in the BFI’s five year strategy **BFI2022**, these appointments build on the success of BFI FAN which has an extensive reach across the UK, and BFI NETWORK’s growing track record of providing support to a wide range of talent, effectively developing filmmaker careers. It also recognises the strength of the Hubs as spaces for filmmakers and audiences to meet in a creative and cultural environment, and reflects the BFI NETWORK offer which already exists in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

### **The new BFI NETWORK Talent Executives**

#### **Thomas Wightman, Film Hub South East**

Thomas joins from the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) where he’s managed STOP PLAY RECORD, a London-wide commissioning programme for emerging filmmakers. STOP PLAY RECORD ran from 2015 to 2018 and during this time Thomas commissioned, developed and exec produced 72 short films made by filmmakers aged 16-24 for the Channel 4 Random Acts series. The programme also provided free monthly workshops for young people interested in all aspects of filmmaking. Prior to joining the ICA, Thomas worked for the BBC and gained independent commissions as a Producer and Director in film and visual arts.

#### **Alice Cabanas for Film Hub South West**

Alice Cabañas joins from British Council's Film Team, where she was the Film Programme Manager, managing the short film and new talent support offer, including the Travel Grant scheme and an annual calendar of events for new and emerging UK filmmakers. Working closely with international programmers and buyers, Alice promoted UK short films across the globe. Alongside working with UK filmmakers, she looked after Global exhibition projects including running the EU Film Festival offer internationally, alongside British Council film projects and exhibition initiatives across Europe.

Alice joined the British Council after three years with Encounters Festival, based in Bristol, where she headed up communications, strategy and development for the Festival, running several year-round training and development initiatives for new and emerging filmmakers. She began as marketing manager in 2014 and then led the Festival as Co-director between 2015-17.

Alice has also been a mentor for several new talent schemes within the creative sector including Guiding Lights and Re:Present.

**Jessica Loveland for Film Hub North**

Jess joins from Dublin-based Blinder Films where she worked as Development Executive across their feature film and television slate. She previously worked for Creative England and BFI NETWORK as Development and Production Executive finding and developing new and emerging filmmaking talent and supporting filmmakers through the development and production of shorts and feature film projects. Jess was a freelance script reader and editor for five years working with companies such as BBC Drama, Northern Ireland Screen, the Bush Theatre and New Writing South and programmes the comedy strand for the Aesthetica Short Film Festival.

**Alice Ramsey for Film Hub North**

Alice previously worked as Development and Production Executive at Creative England as part of the BFI NETWORK. Working with new and emerging writers, directors and producers across England on short films, first feature development and professional development support. Prior to this, she worked at international sales and film finance company Bankside Films, working on the films by acclaimed directors Amma Asante, Michael Winterbottom and David Mackenzie.

**Alexandra Jackson for Film Hub Midlands**

Before taking post as BFI NETWORK Talent Executive for the Midlands, Alexandra managed Phoenix Cinema and Art Centre's learning and talent programme and has lead on other national projects, including Access Cinema, which works to establish comfortable and enjoyable cinema environments for people with disabilities and Reel India, a programme designed to introduce specialised Indian family cinema to new audiences. From 2014 to 2018 Alexandra also lectured in Professional Practice in the UK Film Industry for De Montfort University.

In addition, she serves as Festival Director of Leicester's international short film festival. Though the festival has grown exponentially in size, it retains its grassroots approach and its core values: to celebrate short film in all its forms and to foster a creative environment, in which filmmaking in the Midlands and beyond can thrive. Her career focus is diversity, equality and inclusion, celebrating talent and closing the gap between filmmaking and exhibition.

**Josic Cadoret for Film Hub London**

Jo has managed the delivery of Film London's award-winning short film schemes London Calling, London Calling Plus and other short film related projects since 2003. In that time, he has developed and delivered 100s of ground breaking and international award-winning shorts, including four BAFTA nominees – most recently *Wren Boys*, and the BAFTA-winning *I Do Air*.

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## NOTES TO EDITORS

### About BFI NETWORK

Made possible through National Lottery funding, BFI NETWORK exists to discover and support talented writers, directors and producers at the start of their careers. We collaborate with film organisations and leading cultural venues across the UK to provide funding for short films, support for the development of first features, as well as a range of professional and creative development programmes.

Find out more and watch supported work: [www.bfinetwork.org.uk](http://www.bfinetwork.org.uk) @bfinetwork

### 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, HOME Manchester and Tyneside Cinema, Newcastle
- Film Hub South East is led by the Independent Cinema Office in collaboration with Saffron Screen in Saffron Walden and The Depot in Lewes
- 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

### 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:

- Connecting audiences to the widest choice of British and World cinema
- Preserving and restoring the most significant film collection in the world for today and future generations
- Championing emerging and world class film makers in the UK - investing in creative, distinctive and entertaining work



**PRESS  
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- Promoting British film and talent to the world
- Growing the next generation of film makers 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:

- As the UK-wide organisation for film, a charity core funded by Government
- By providing Lottery and Government funds for film across the UK
- 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.