

Film Screening and Licencing

Screening of films and licencing of these screenings is covered by the Licencing Act 2003, as amended in 2017. Section 182 relates to Community film screenings (and other entertainment activities). For film screenings the relevant paragraphs state:

- 1) “No licence is required for any entertainment provided by or on behalf of a local authority, health care provider, or school proprietor to the extent that it takes place on defined premises, between 08.00-23.00 on any day”
- 2) “the following are examples of activities that are not usually considered to be licensable under this exemption:
 - Any entertainment activity hosted by a local authority on their own premises, where there is a significant relationship between the local authority and the provider of the entertainment (e.g. principal and agent);
 - Any entertainment activity organised on a local authority’s behalf on that local authority’s premises by a cultural trust in discharge of a local authority’s discretionary power to arrange entertainment provision and support for the arts, including festivals and celebrations”
- 3) “Under this exemption, one condition is that the film entertainment is not being provided with a view to profit. An entry charge does not of itself make the film entertainment licensable; it is whether the organiser intended to make a profit (that includes raising money for charity). A charge or contribution that is made solely to cover the costs of the film screening is consistent with ‘not being provided with a view to profit’. The ‘not with a view to profit’ condition applies solely to the activity of exhibiting the film under this exemption. A charge with a view to making a profit may legitimately be levied for any other activity or event that is distinct from film admission, such as the provision of refreshments, film talks, or a social event.”
- 4) “This community film exemption is also conditional on those responsible having in place operating arrangements that ensure that the age rating for the film is implemented by means of a suitable child admission policy. How this is achieved is a matter for the organisation or social group exhibiting the film. “

Legal advice is that a film screening by Friends groups in a library still run by the Local Authority will fall into the licensable exemption as long as the group:

- A. Has an ‘open’ Constitution (anyone can join). Does having a membership fee breach this?
- B. Has made it clear that any payment for entry will not be for profit (including for Charity) and solely to cover costs.

- C. Has paid any other Rights fees relating to the film being shown. Specifically, paid the owner of the Copyright any fee they charge.
- D. Has a clear and verifiable age-rating policy.

Some other things to consider

- Where in the library will the screening take place? Is there enough space already? If not, is the library furniture movable to create space?
- What type of screen will be used? Wall, table top, freestanding, mounted/fixed? Can enough space be created between screen and projector?
- What projector? (The range of projector costs is huge. Will the cheapest produce a good enough picture quality? What works at home might not be right for the proposed screening area). Are replacement bulbs easy to get?
- All electrical equipment will need to be PAT tested.
- Where will any non-fixed equipment be stored?
- If any work is required to install equipment or enable working, it will have to be done by B.C.C. contractors.

Additional Resources

General advice and guidance

Independent Cinema Office (ICO)
www.independantcinemaoffice.org.uk

Identifying film licence holders

British Film Institute (BFI)
www.bfi.org.uk/distribution/film_format/dvd

Filmbankmedia
www.filmbankmedia.com/licences/

Motion Picture Licencing Company (MPLC)
www.themplc.co.uk/

Some smaller, independent films may not be handled by these large distributors. A list of smaller UK distributors can be found at: www.independentcinemaoffice.org.uk/advice-support/list-of-distributors/