Film Access Scotland

Strategic Plan

&

Action Plan

2019- 2021

Film Access Scotland Strategic Plan & Action Plan

1.   Introduction

Film Access Scotland is a consortium of leading moving image and media access organisations from across Scotland. Its predecessor organisation, Film Access Network Scotland (FANS) was founded in November 2013 to facilitate consultation and representation at strategic level in Scotland.

Members who have been involved in the preparation of this strategic plan include GMAC Film, Screen Education Edinburgh (SEE), Station House Media Unit (SHMU), Voice of My Own (VOMO), Media Education and Plantation Productions.

The Film Access Scotland member organisations have a rich, long and diverse history of engaging with people at all stages of their learning journey as well as using film and media for community development purposes. This has included experiential tasters, long term personal and artistic development programmes, and supporting new talent into the creative industries.

Member organisations provide quality learning experiences both within the formal and informal education sector. The Film Access Scotland members' combined years of experience and established networks of connections to local, youth and community organisations provide unrivalled access to prioritised groups in Scotland.

Film Access Scotland is a powerful umbrella organisation that engages with marginalised and hard to reach communities, children, young people, adult learners, service providers and decision makers across Scotland.

This strategic plan reflects on the initial 5 years of activity for the organisation and sets out a strategic direction for the next stage of its development. In doing so there is a recognised need to increase the understanding of its function and purpose in order to satisfactorily deliver its vision and aims.

2.   The Ambition

Vision
Everyone in Scotland, but especially those experiencing inequality or exclusion, will have the opportunity to participate in film related activity.

Mission
To ensure that the film access sector receives the recognition and resources it needs to deliver film access and participation for all, regardless of ability, gender, age, socio-economic background or ethnicity.

Values
Diversity | Inclusion |Opportunity | Change | Collaboration | Creativity

Aims
- To champion and be the advocate for the Film Access sector.
- To promote the use of film, media training and production as tools for lifelong learning and community development.
- To support the development of a diverse and inclusive screen sector through the provision of targeted education, training and production including the opportunity to gain formalised qualifications in film and media
- To establish local, national and international partnerships.
- To have meaningful collaboration with all relevant service providers in associated sectors.
- To provide opportunities for engagement in innovative and transformational moving image and film initiatives across Scotland.
- To develop awareness of the transformational power of collaborative film making.
- To advise and support all organisations in Scotland with an interest in and commitment to the film access sector.
- To raise the profile and recognition of the work of Film Access providers
- To expand the reach of agencies involved in the Film Access sector
- To provide a national platform through which to promote the work of the Film Access sector
- To develop and introduce best practice standards through which the Film Access sector can grow and develop.

- To create an effective infrastructure for the Film Access sector in Scotland within which the sector and constituent organisations can be sustained and thrive.

Film Access in Action

Film Access Scotland is a sector development organisation acting as the representative body for Film Access organisations and professionals working in Scotland. It will deliver this strategic plan by working closely with the Scottish Government and leading national film and screen agencies in order to:

1. Influence policy development nationally
2. Increase the profile of the sector nationally and internationally
3. Develop understanding about the impacts and benefits to be derived from the sector
4. Bring people together and forge new partnerships
5. Be at the forefront of new ways of working and innovative practice
6. Exchange news, views and information
7. Deliver national consortia projects to showcase participants' work

Film Access Scotland will act as the hub for organisations and professionals with an involvement in and commitment to all aspects of moving image and film education work. We have a key role in addressing inequalities and for working closely with partners across public service provision to improve participation and inclusion. Through our contacts with organisations and professionals from the film and allied sectors we will provide unique access to the experience and knowledge of influential individuals working in the field. As a result, we will establish best practice standards and demonstrate what can be achieved by the sector working in unison. It will act as a vehicle for the cross-fertilisation of ideas, reaching out to new practitioners and those involved in the wider delivery of film projects.

As such, Film Access Scotland will draw together and articulate the broad ways in which film can and does contribute to quality of life across Scotland.

Combined Impact

Through collaboration at a local and national level, Film Access Members and member organisations will collectively deliver the following ambition:

To help transform the lives of those we work with by contributing towards increased skills, confidence, communication and resilience through a committed, high quality, creative and engaging participatory approach.

3.   Context

This strategic plan takes account of the following context.

The underlying context within which this strategic plan has been developed is both societal and political. There are significant inequality issues combined with a diversity crisis, both in society generally and in the film sector specifically. In addition, the drive for attainment has created a worsening position for those who fail to achieve in traditional educational terms leaving large numbers of young people without an appropriate medium for personal development, educational attainment, and fulfilment. It is considered imperative that the role that the Film Access sector can play in these areas is fully understood and appropriately articulated in the emerging national cultural strategy.

Film Access organisations are at the forefront of some of the most pioneering screen education activity in the country, playing a pivotal role in film education, child, youth and adult development and engagement with the screen industries in Scotland. This includes skills and talent development initiatives for people from under-represented groups that will help to diversify the talent pool and support the growth of Scotland's screen industries. They also play a significant role as community development facilitators for young people and the wider community, but these transformative programmes largely go unnoticed or are misunderstood, being mistaken, in many cases, as frivolous past-times.

The existing Film Access organisations operate within a constrained financial context and are constantly seeking financial support to continue to operate year on year. As a result, they are acutely aware that the need to develop a sustainable future for the sector and its constituent members is a top priority. In order for this to happen there is a need to raise awareness among policy makers and the wider screen sector of the broad scope of delivery of the work within the Film Access sector. Film Access providers are at the vanguard of film education and engagement in Scotland and it is imperative that the significance of their work is promoted and appropriately acknowledged.

One of the main priorities of the Film Access sector is engagement with marginalised and hard to reach communities. Providers are uniquely placed to deliver high quality, inclusive film-making activities with groups who are currently under-represented and have little access to the creative industries or lack the opportunity to develop the skills required for progression in terms of education and jobs opportunities. An important element for the success of this work is an in-depth understanding of how creative learning and participation can build learners into successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. The wide-ranging skills and qualifications that participants gain from involvement in high-quality film education activity, including communication, self-confidence, collaboration and focus, contribute markedly to their social mobility and self-determination. This has a specific and demonstrable benefit in relation to the transition of young people not only into the film industry but into adulthood.

A key strength of the Film Access organisations is the calibre of practitioners involved from professional film-makers, film tutors, community development professionals and many more involved in the development and delivery of pre-eminent film-making activities with diverse groups, nationwide. This level of expertise enables in-depth learning alongside a transformative process where individuals feel empowered to share their own experiences and use film as a tool to tell their stories. It places the organisation in an ideal position to determine what best practice looks like and to ensure that the highest standards are consistently achieved across the sector.

There are considerable gaps in the provision of high-quality film activity in many local authority areas across the country which Film Access organisations are helping to bridge. This includes remote areas such as the Highlands, Argyll & Bute and the Borders but also other more well populated areas such as Stirling and Fife. An in-depth mapping exercise of film education activity across Scotland is required to obtain a clearer understanding of how Film Access Scotland and other organisations can address these disparities and ensure that the contribution to be made by the sector is available more widely.

Film education and the wider understanding of the potential of film does not take place in isolation and it is crucial that partnership working is enhanced with a range of organisations including the specialist cinema sector, Creative Scotland, Screen Scotland, Into Film, Education Scotland and the BFI. It is essential that all of these organisations develop a meaningful dialogue in order to enhance the impact and value of the work, avoid duplication of delivery, help disseminate knowledge, and build upon distinct strengths and expertise in order for high-quality film experiences to prevail throughout Scotland. The aim of the sector and of this strategic plan is the delivery of an outstanding programme of national moving image education that ranks alongside the very best internationally.

4.   Key Issues

In developing this strategic plan, a number of issues have emerged which require to be further developed as part of the refinement of the plan.

It is considered that these will form key sections of the initial Action Plan.
- Developing sectoral identity
- Role clarification
- Resources and infrastructure
- Governance
- Branding

4.1   Developing sectoral identity for the Film Access sector

During the preparation of this document there has been some debate about a perceived lack of clarity of the Film Access sector. Views about the role of the organisation range from 'confusing' to 'not known'. Internally, it is considered that the impacts, in terms of equality and diversity, have been given tokenistic acceptance; that the Film Access Network is not generally thought of highly enough; and it is currently largely unknown in the education sector.

In order for these perceptions to be overcome and for Film Access Scotland to deliver its intended strategic impact, it is imperative that there is absolute clarity about the impact of the sector across all roles; and that the work that it does in relation to equality and diversity is fully understood and appreciated.

It is considered that the sectoral connections are best described in the form of a Venn diagram as displayed opposite.

The potential for cross collaboration with other sectors is clear from the simple diagram although it does not assist with clarification in terms of the identification of its primary sector. Herein lies one of the identified weaknesses from the initial work of the organisation, in that it is perceived as lacking clarity in relation to its primary purpose – with the danger of trying to do too many things.

The diagram is considered to be fundamental in understanding the role of the Film Access Sector. Rather than being regarded as contributing to each of the associated sectors in some way, Film Access has the potential to fulfil a crucial role right at the centre of these associated sectors.

The challenge, as recognised by the founding group, is how to create a unique identity and avoid being incorrectly perceived, misunderstood or subsumed into the work of another
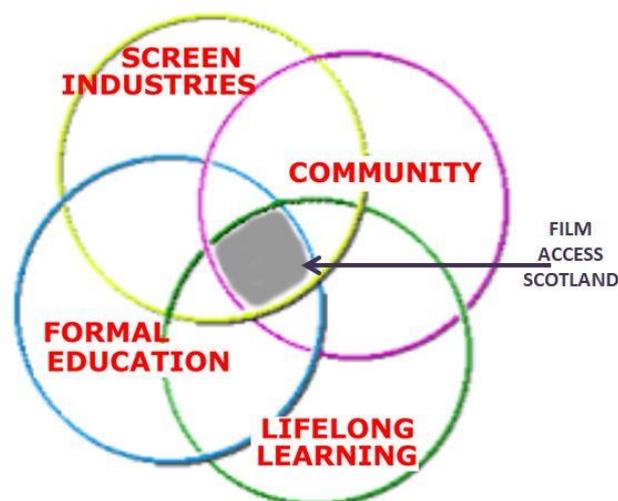
sector. It is anticipated that the development of this strategic plan and the activities that emerge from it will seek to clarify the role together with its potential and impact.

The clear intention is to establish the rationale for and the basis of a sector referred to as "**the Film Access sector**".

The key attributes of this sector are:
- Facilitating and encouraging access for all to make their own films, learn about film and progress into a film related career opportunity.
- Increasing knowledge by understanding and appreciating all aspects of film.
- Increasing confidence to express ideas through and by being active consumers of film.
- Using film as a tool to develop other skills – a unique and invaluable medium for teaching and building core skills, people skills and life skills.
- Using film as a powerful medium for personal and community development including for advocacy and active citizenship outcomes.
- Delivering real equality of opportunity and inclusion, especially for groups that are often marginalised in terms of learning activities.
- Developing skills, educational attainment, and talent from under-represented groups to support the growth of a diverse and inclusive screen industry in Scotland

There is a danger that the term "Film Access" doesn't do justice to the significance and breadth of the work undertaken and the impact provided. Our role focuses on tackling inequality and enabling meaningful participation and inclusion in society, decision making and cultural life. The impact of the service is inextricably linked to community development, lifelong learning and wellbeing, with the learning impacts making a significantly positive impact on our communities.

There is also a danger that the term "Film Access" can be considered as frivolous, non-vocational, recreational activity, misunderstood as "play time", entertainment or equipment hire. Unless case studies are referenced through structured, purposeful activity, it is feasible that the true impacts will not be realised. The terminology doesn't convey the complexity and significance of the work undertaken by Film Access Scotland and it is therefore essential to ensure that well-presented case-studies contribute to the body of knowledge used to promote the work and its impact. It is considered imperative that these approaches are linked to best practice standards in order to ensure consistency across all agencies and maintain credibility.

"Film Access" should be recognised as a key element of the film industry, educational provision in Scotland, and the media education service which has well recognised and structured funding sources. Film Access Scotland considers its role as the "space in the middle" that requires to be appropriately recognised, celebrated and supported.

Film Access Scotland is playing a major part in talent identification and talent development for the film sector. The film sector is under pressure to include the values promoted in this

document and requires support to improve delivery of diversity, inclusion and equality of opportunity. Film Access Scotland could make a considerable contribution to this and is keen to do so.

It is clear to those involved that the Film Access sector can add additional value and enhance the reputation of the other related sectors. It is intended that this strategic plan will create the foundation for this.

4.2   Role Clarification

Film Access Scotland currently undertakes a number of different roles at both a strategic level - *Lobbyist, Advocate, Influencer* - and at an operational level as *Facilitator* and *Programme deliverer.*

Strategic roles

It is recognised within the organisation that there needs to be a more structured approach to the delivery of the 'senior' roles of lobbyist, advocate and influencer if the organisation is to effectively deliver its aims.

In similar organisations this type of role is typically undertaken by the organisation's senior office bearers [Chair, Vice Chair etc.] or through the 'appointment' of or associations with relevant third parties. It is recognised that this can place pressure on the host organisations to 'carry' the time commitments of the office bearers in such circumstances. Whilst it is normally considered that the benefits outweigh the difficulties in such situations this approach is not considered feasible for Film Access Scotland since in most cases the host organisations are already extremely stretched, both financially and in terms of time availability to undertake such a role.

If the organisation is to be successful in the delivery of the strategic roles it is imperative that the organisation has the capacity to deliver these functions.

Event and programme delivery

It could be argued that if the primary purpose of the organisation is to lobby and be an advocate for the sector then the programme delivery role is of secondary importance.

However, given the previously identified need to ensure that impacts and benefits from the programmes are properly articulated and understood there is a need to have appropriate case studies and evidence to support such arguments. It is considered appropriate that Film Access Scotland should undertake this by "walking the talk". Delivery is important in order to prove, by example, how a national network/organisation can demonstrate and evidence impact.

A year-long programme of events and activities will be introduced, culminating in an annual national conference that celebrates the work of the sector.

These events will be developed with the cooperation and support of the sector's key partners and will range from seminars and workshops that explore the impact that Film Access sector plays in society (for example in health, education, the creative industries); to longer-term programmes of work delivered by a consortia of Film Access partners (Film Education programmes, employability programmes, festivals etc). We also envisage that there will be opportunities to create international programmes of work by reaching out to partners in other countries who have shared approaches and methodology.

It is therefore considered essential that the organisation has the operational capacity to undertake such roles.

4.3   Governance

The preparation of this Strategic Plan has endeavoured to address and clarify the fundamental question of the organisation - is it a membership organisation or a network? The conclusion from the discussion and engagement with founder members is that it ought to be both but that there is a need to develop the membership base in order to ensure that the network operates optimally both at a strategic and operational level.

There are a number of scenarios that require to be worked up and 'tested' in order to determine an appropriate membership structure. Consideration should be given to other similar organisations to determine how their membership structures and approach could be applied to Film Access Scotland.

An outline of the membership criteria requires to be created for consultation in order to determine the level of interest from potential members in such an approach.

- Levels of membership
- Governing structure/committee.
- Membership organisations?
- Management committee?
- Steering group?
- Structure of who can apply and the creation of membership charter

Following the above consultation, a governance structure should be developed and implemented including a range of 'best in class' processes. A code of good practice has been discussed and initial consideration has been given to the Moving Image Training Alliance code of good practice and the Community Media Charter to help inform a code that meets the needs of the Film Access sector. The structure should be constructed in such a way as to permit Film Access Scotland to be able to apply for resources to deliver both its core functions and an appropriate events/activity programme.

4.4   Resources & Infrastructure

Resourcing the organisation is key to what and how much progress can be made, and it is essential that a sustainable framework and organisational infrastructure is created.

Funding for an initial two-year period has been secured through Creative Scotland, with the potential for additional funding beyond this period, albeit at a reduced rate. This funding will allow Film Access Scotland to recruit a dedicated staff team for the organisation and run a dedicated annual programme of activity.

This team will include a Director and a Development Officer on a full-time basis. This resource will be supported by a part-time administrator together with some financial admin input and freelance trainers. In addition, a flexible budget has been secured to meet the costs of input from Film Access Scotland members over the initial operating period.

The outline budget for the initial two years is attached as appendix 1.

4.5   Branding

In developing this Strategic Plan it has been determined that the previous name of the organisation, Film Access Network Scotland abbreviated in most cases to FANS, did not do justice to the scope of the work of the organisation.

It has also been considered that the use of and reliance on the acronym of the previous name [FANS] understated the impact. On that basis it has been agreed to rename the organisation **Film Access Scotland**

It has also been agreed that a strapline **"Transforming Lives Through Access to Film"** would be useful to adopt in order to emphasise the key purpose.

5.   Strategic Aims and Aspirations

Reflections on the last five years have identified a range of achievements, shortcomings and renewed aspirations. The initial achievements have set the framework within which Film Access organisations can operate but it is recognised that the initial period of work by the Film Access Network has also identified the scale of the challenge.

This plan has endeavoured to put this work and further requirement into a strategic context with a work plan for the initial period of the plan. Given the stage of development of the sector and the work perceived to galvanise the current players, it is considered that the initial period of this plan should be until March 2021.

The strategic aims for Film Access Scotland as set out in this strategic plan are:

- Governance and membership engagement
- Strategic presence and partnership
- Infrastructure and sectoral development
- Communications and image

The outcomes that we believe will be achieved are set out in section 6, with the actions recommended to deliver these strategic aims set out in section 7 of this plan.

6.   Outcomes Achieved 2019-2021

Looking ahead to the end of the initial period of work for Film Access Scotland, it is envisaged that the following outcomes will have been achieved by March 2021:

Governance and membership engagement
- There is a clear understanding of the vision of the organisation and the role that each stakeholder can play in supporting and delivering it.
- Film Access Scotland has an effective governance structure.
- Film Access Scotland's membership has grown across Scotland with members in all regions.
- Support for member organisations has been delivered resulting in a more resilient sector committed to developing and delivering best practice.

Strategic presence and partnership
- 'Film Access' is recognised as a sector and valued widely throughout Scotland for the value of the impact that it makes.
- The Film Access Scotland values are understood and shared by others nationally.
- Sectoral debates have been initiated at 'senior' [political & strategic] levels, regionally and nationally and Film Access Scotland is recognised as a key consultee on all matters related to the screen industries.
- Tangible partnership work with other relevant sectors has been delivered in order to further increase the reach and impact.
- The potential of Film Access in Scotland has been recognised through the delivery of international collaborations.

Infrastructure and sectoral development
- 'Film Access' opportunities have broadened in both scale and reach with increasing participation opportunities for under-represented groups.
- A year-long engagement programme of events and programmes has been introduced through a consortium approach.
- Members and member organisations are able to support each other with development opportunities and resourcing.
- Funding for the sector has increased and it has become more sustainable.

Communications and image
- The organisation's on-line presence acts as a foundation for advocacy and promotion.
- Film Access Scotland has a reputation for the successful delivery of film festivals, events and programmes.
- An annual conference/celebration to showcase and increase the profile of Film Access Scotland and film access work has been successfully staged.

7. Action Plan

What follows is an outline action plan which will be delivered between October 2019 and September 2021. This will be delivered by a Film Access Scotland staff team who will ensure that the strategy, operational and administrative functions of the organisation can be appropriately discharged.

Film Access Scotland Action Plan

Plan Duration

ACTIVITY	PLAN START	PLAN DURATION
Consultation to develop governance and membership structure	1	3
Undertake an audit of the film access sector	1	3
Create and agree governing documents	1	3
Create brand identity	2	2
Initial promotional activity to promote organisational formation	3	3
Refine website	1	3
Develop and initiate social media platforms	1	3
Populate social media platforms	1	24
Introduce agreed governance structure	4	6
Introduce quarterly sector meetings at Regional level	2	23
Undertake membership campaign	3	22
Stage quarterly seminars/workshops to celebrate and promote work	4	22
Organise a National conference	6	1
Organise a National conference year 2	18	1
Organise an annual film festival as a showcase of achievements	10	1
Organise an annual film festival as a showcase of achievements [year 2]	22	1
Convene regular strategic meetings with Ministers, National agencies	3	22

PERIODS: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24

Commencing Month 1

- Undertake consultation to determine an appropriate governance and membership structure for Film Access Scotland together with an appropriate range of governing documents.

- Undertake a 'mapping exercise' throughout Scotland to develop a clear understanding of the current extent of the film access sector. The audit to identify organisations and professionals that are active in the sector and an outline of the work undertaken.

- Create appropriate brand identity for the organisation and promote this widely together with some initial awareness raising promotional material. A 'position statement' has been prepared which briefly outlines the background to Film Access Scotland, the rationale for change and an outline of the aims and aspirations.

- Ensure that the Film Access Scotland website and social media platforms have been commissioned as a means of promotion, engagement and support.

- To introduce an effective governance structure for Film Access Scotland.

Commencing Month 2

- To convene regular [quarterly] meetings at a Regional level, with Film Access professionals and organisations.

Commencing Month 3

- To undertake a membership campaign to recruit Film Access professionals and organisations into membership of Film Access Scotland.

- To stage a seminar and workshop programme to celebrate the work within the sector and disseminate ideas for new projects and programme expansion.

Commencing Month 6

- Organise an annual conference to highlight the work of the Film Access sector, Nationally and Internationally, in order to showcase examples of good practice and stimulate discussion on the potential role of the sector.

Commencing Month 10

- Present an annual film festival to act as a show case for all the Film Access work undertaken in the year.

Commencing Month 11

- Convene regular strategic meetings with relevant Ministers, MSPs, senior officials at Creative Scotland, Scottish Screen and allied services to raise awareness of the sector and identify ways in which the sector can assist with policy formulation in all relevant associated sectors.

APPENDIX 1

See attached spreadsheet