

# The continuing impact of Covid-19

The Independent Cinema Office is the UK's national body that supports independent cinemas, film festivals and exhibitors of all forms. Our mission is to develop an open, challenging and thriving film sector. We want everyone to have access to cinema that nourishes the soul and changes lives.

We conducted a survey to help us understand the continuing impact of Covid-19 on the independent cinema sector.

47%  
ARE OPERATING  
AT A LOSS

38%  
NEED MORE  
SUPPORT

24%  
HAVE MADE  
REDUNDANCIES

REDUCED  
THEATRICAL  
WINDOW  
IMPACTING  
PROGRAMMES

# Our Summary

Nineteen months on since the first national lockdown, three further shutdowns, and a recovery package from the government, we checked in with the independent cinema sector to see how they are faring.

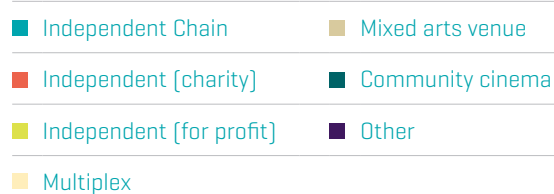
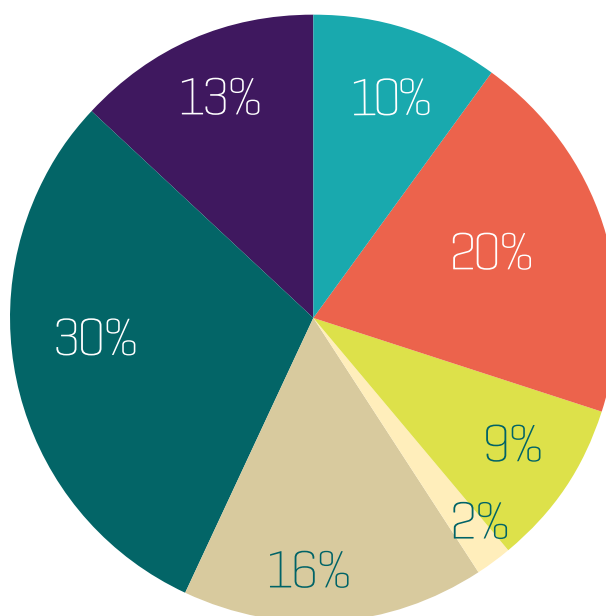
Although the majority of cinemas have now reopened and the regulations on social distancing measures have been removed, we found a strong picture of the continuing uncertainty and challenges faced by cinemas. It continues to be a very risky operating environment. Cinemas are trying to find a balance between safe facilities for audiences, including social distancing (55% of respondents are still operating with social distancing measures in place), and viable operation of the cinema (43% of respondents are operating with 50% or less capacity). The costs of film hire are being balanced against increased overheads and staffing costs. There are challenges in making venues both safe and welcoming again, as well as gaining access to a suitable range of content for different audiences. 47% of respondents say they are operating at a loss, unsure of when they will be profitable again, and 24% have had to make redundancies.

On the positive side, there seems to be a trend of cinemas showing more independently released films, of working more closely and supportively with independent distributors on terms and to develop their online programming offer.



# The Survey

## Who we surveyed

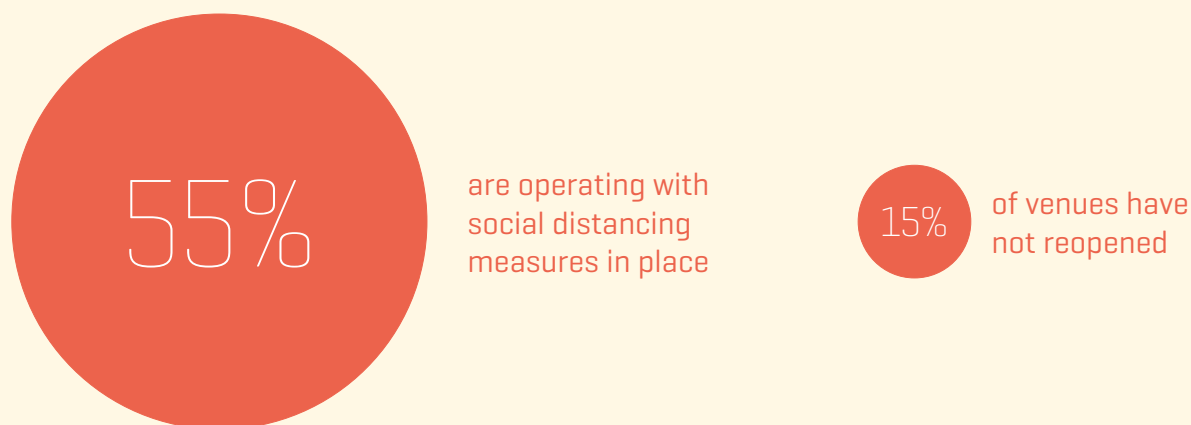


# CINEMA

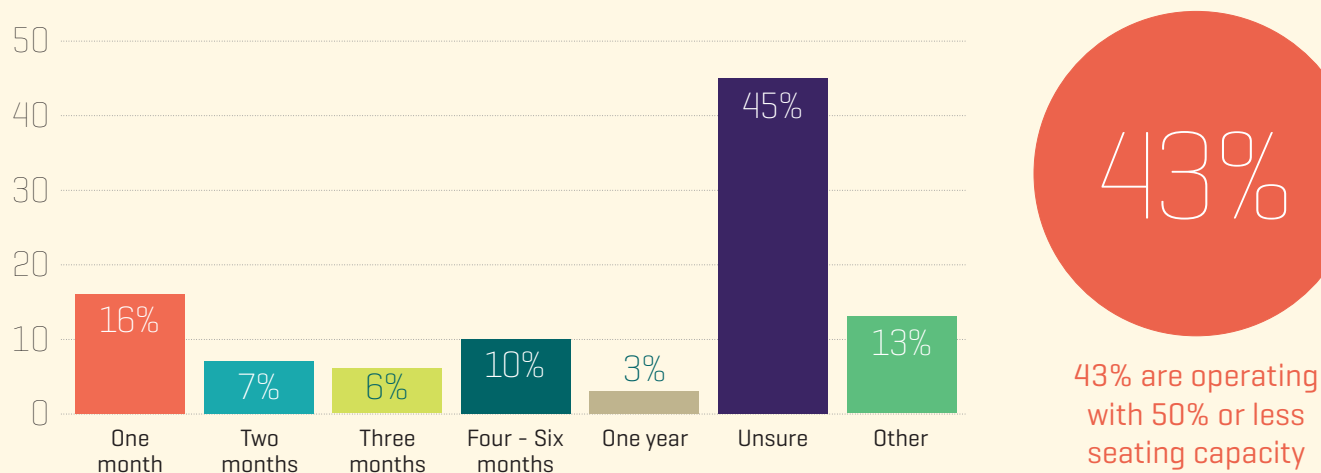


# Social distancing

We asked venues if they were still operating with social distancing measures in place.



We asked venues how long do you envisage operating with social distancing measures in place.



# Face masks

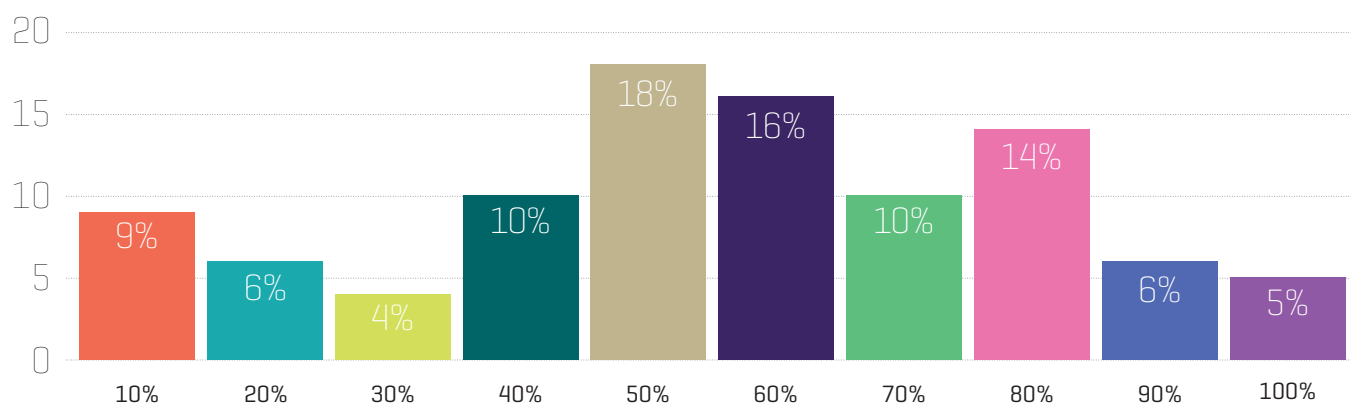
We asked venues are audience members continuing to wear masks in the auditoriums.

71%

of respondents said audience members are continuing to wear masks in the auditoriums

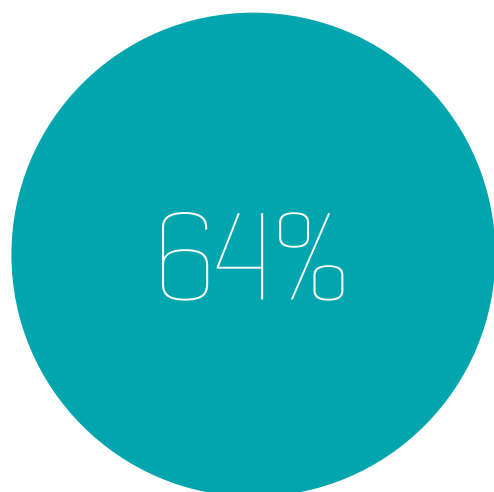
Photo by Maxim Tolchinskiy on Unsplash

What percentages are continuing to wear masks?

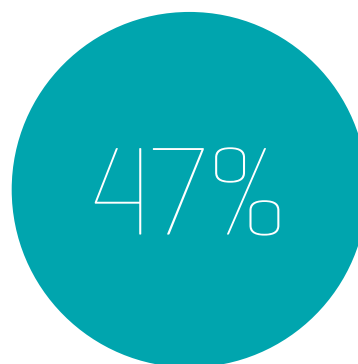


# Revenue

We asked venues what was their predicted loss on ticket sales and whether they were operating at a loss

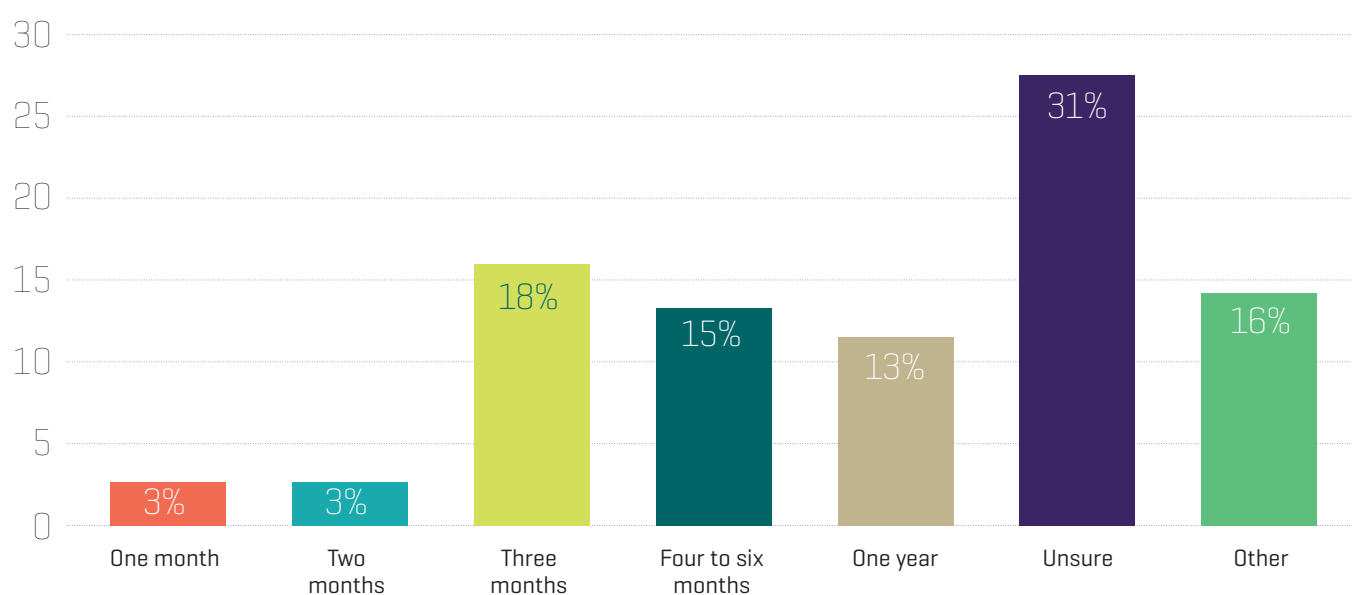


of respondents predict a  
50%+ loss on ticket sales



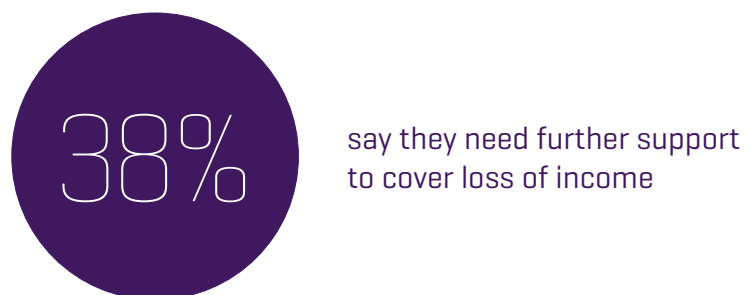
of respondents are  
operating at a loss

How long do you forecast being able to operate with this loss?

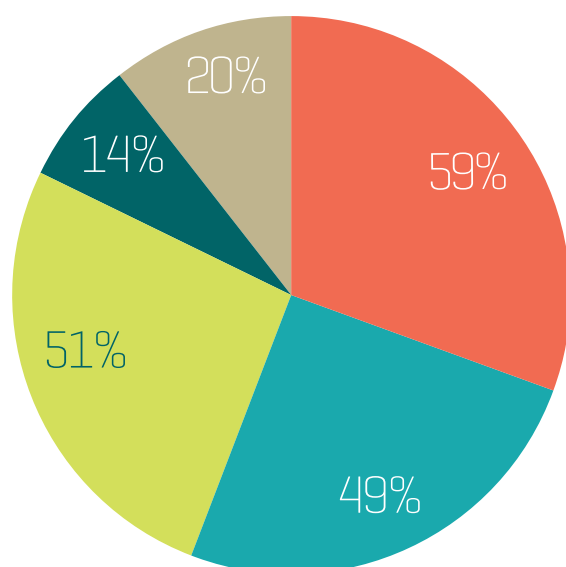


## Financial support

We asked venues do you need further financial support to cover loss of income?



We asked venues what format would you like this support to take



- Grant for operating costs
- Funding for screening activity e.g. minimum guarantees
- Reduced distributor terms
- Extension of the furlough scheme
- Other e.g. extending the 5% VAT rate

"We would like to raise issues with the % terms. The operational "real" costs of running the venue has increased substantially, yet the income has been reduced ... exhibition / distribution need to work together!"

## Redundancies

We asked venues have you made redundancies due to the pandemic



241 241 roles made redundant



# Audiences

**We asked venues are audiences returning**

69%

of respondents say audiences are returning to their venue but in lower numbers [30% of which is due to social distancing measures and reduced capacity]

**We asked venues have you noticed any changes to the demographics of audiences returning to your venue, especially those that might be more vulnerable to Covid-19**

24%

of respondents have noticed less older audiences returning to their venues

14%

have noticed more younger audiences attending





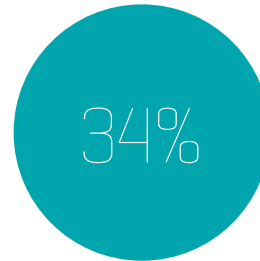
# Content

We asked venues has your film programme changed since reopening



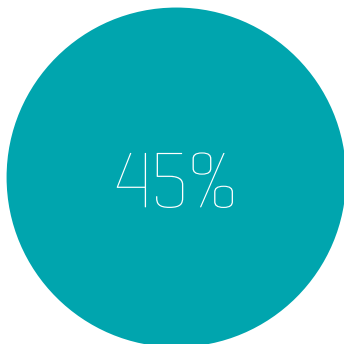
of respondents are playing more independent titles

We asked venues have you struggled to acquire film content for your programme



of respondents have struggled to acquire film content for their programme

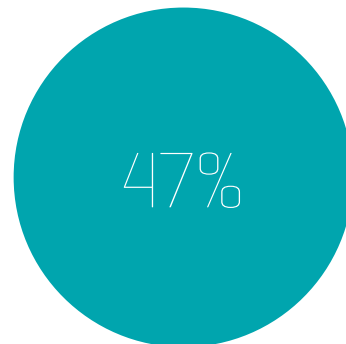
We asked venues has the reduced theatrical window impacted your programme



*"Have taken mainstream titles off-date due to VOD - we would have taken these titles on release pre-pandemic."*

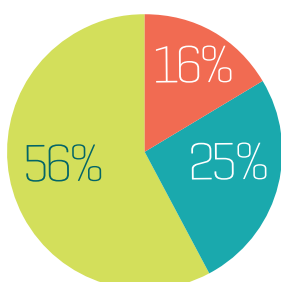
of respondents say the reduced theatrical window has impacted their programmes.

We asked venues are you offering event cinema



of respondents say they are offering event cinema at lower levels than before the pandemic

We asked venues have you provided your audience with online content during the pandemic

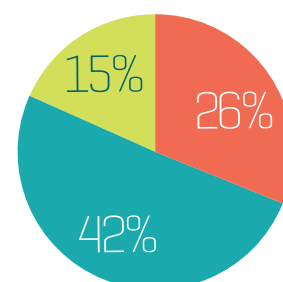


■ Yes - through our own online platform

■ Yes - through film distributor platforms

■ No

We asked venues will you continue with your online offer now venues are open?



■ Yes

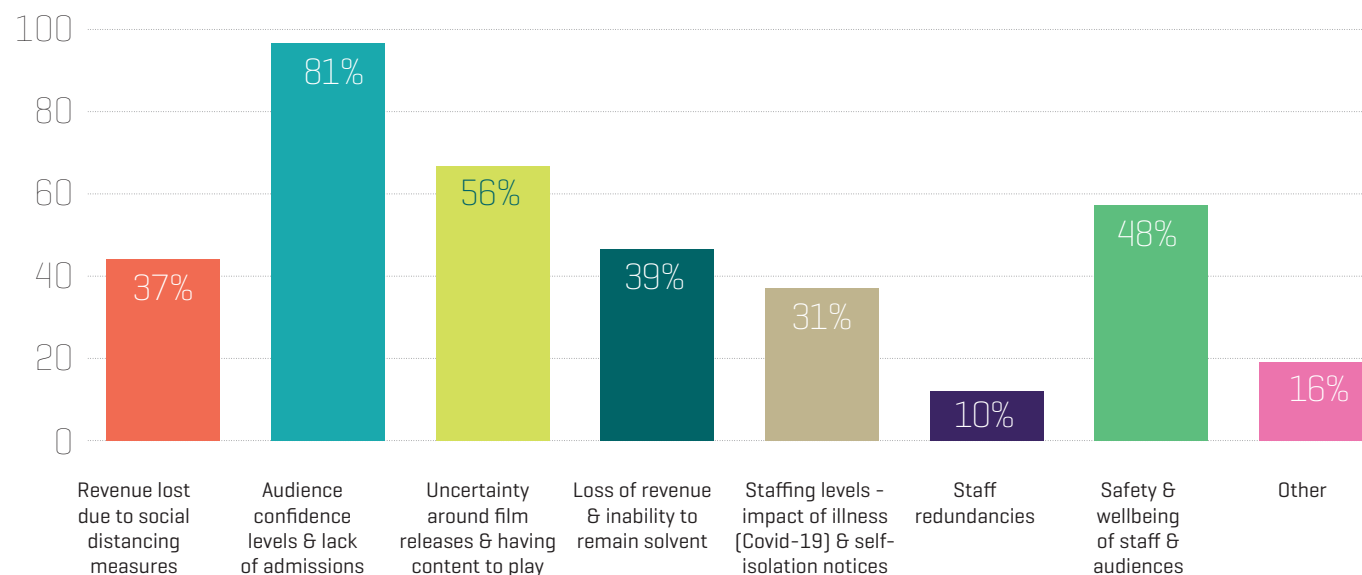
■ No

■ Unsure

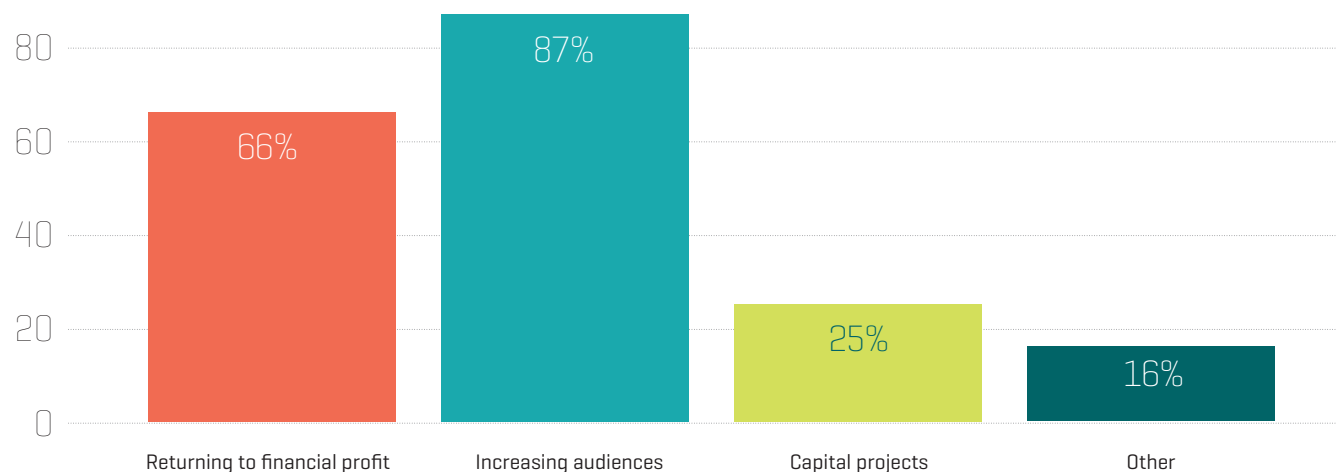
# Concerns and support

*"I think we will need to survive until 2023 to see audience numbers hopefully back to levels of 2019 it's going to be a long haul."*

**We asked venues what are your main concerns for the coming months**



**We asked venues what are your priorities for the next 1-3 years**



**We asked venues which audiences are you especially seeking to increase**

