



**FILM INDUSTRY
COMPANIES**

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FACTS IN FOCUS

In the UK, the majority of film industry companies are in the production and post-production sectors, although the largest companies are found in distribution and exhibition.

- In 2021, there were over 8,700 film production companies and over 3,000 post-production companies in the UK.
 - There were 375 film distributors and 290 film exhibitors.
 - The majority of companies were small (turnover under £250,000).
 - The production, post-production and distribution sectors were concentrated in London and the South East, while the exhibition sector was more dispersed.
- Outside London and the South East there were significant production and post-production clusters in the East of England, the South West and the North West.
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Film industry companies

Number of companies in the film industry

The number of companies involved in the film industry in the UK increased by 16% between 2017 and 2021, compared with the all-industries average of 4% (Table 1). This growth is primarily the result of an expansion in the number of companies working in the production sector: the number of video production companies increased by 49%, while there was an 8% increase in the number of film production companies. Increases in video

production numbers may partly be explained by the rise in demand for online audiovisual content over the period, while growth in film production numbers may reflect the number of special purpose vehicles (SPVs) created for specific productions but which remain in existence as companies after the completion of those titles. (These SPVs will usually only be involved in the production of one film.)

In 2021, there were over 8,700 film production companies, over 3,000 post-production companies, 375 film distributors and 290 film exhibitors.

Table 1 Number of companies by sub-sector, 2017-2021

| Sub-sector | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | Growth 2017-2021 (%) |
|------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------------|
| Film production | 8,115 | 8,165 | 8,415 | 8,660 | 8,740 | 7.7 |
| Video production | 3,390 | 3,735 | 4,185 | 4,570 | 5,050 | 49.0 |
| Film, video and TV post-production | 2,965 | 2,915 | 2,970 | 3,005 | 3,040 | 2.5 |
| Film distribution | 395 | 420 | 430 | 405 | 375 | -5.1 |
| Video distribution | 80 | 90 | 105 | 110 | 120 | 50.0 |
| Film exhibition | 255 | 270 | 275 | 270 | 290 | 13.7 |
| Total | 15,200 | 15,595 | 16,380 | 17,020 | 17,615 | 15.9 |
| UK all industries | 2,668,810 | 2,669,440 | 2,718,435 | 2,749,700 | 2,765,150 | 3.6 |

Source: Office for National Statistics Inter-Departmental Business Register

Notes:

Data as at March 2021.

All figures are rounded to the nearest 5 to avoid disclosure.

Companies in the post-production sector usually work on films, commercials, videos and television programmes, and therefore have a combined statistical classification.

Data are based on the 2007 Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes: 59111 (film production); 59112 (video production); 5912 (film, video and TV post-production); 59131 (film distribution); 59132 (video distribution); and 5914 (film exhibition). The SIC codes can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/standard-industrial-classification-of-economic-activities-sic>.

As Table 2 shows, overall turnover for film industry companies increased by 52% between 2017 and 2021, rising from £13.4 billion to £20.5 billion. The greatest increase over the period was seen in turnover for video production companies which grew from £477 million to £2.0 billion, an increase of 310%. There were also increases in company turnover in film production (31%), film distribution (86%) and film exhibition (8%) but falls in turnover for film, video and TV post-production (-7%) and video distribution (-14%).

Total company turnover in 2021 was 1% lower than in 2020, the first year-on-year decrease in value since 2015.

Table 2 Turnover of companies by sub-sector, £ million, 2017-2021

| Sub-sector | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | Growth 2017-2021 (%) |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------------|
| Film production | 4,509.4 | 6,102.6 | 6,062.1 | 6,103.6 | 5,888.4 | 30.6 |
| Video production | 477.4 | 534.5 | 624.2 | 1,523.7 | 1,956.7 | 309.9 |
| Film, video and TV post-production | 1,800.6 | 1,844.1 | 1,370.4 | 1,374.6 | 1,673.6 | -7.1 |
| Film distribution | 4,871.3 | 6,788.4 | 9,069.5 | 9,803.1 | 9,077.0 | 86.3 |
| Video distribution | 190.8 | 129.5 | 152.8 | 142.8 | 163.6 | -14.2 |
| Film exhibition | 1,593.1 | 1,614.9 | 1,704.1 | 1,779.9 | 1,726.4 | 8.4 |
| Total | 13,442.6 | 17,013.9 | 18,983.0 | 20,727.7 | 20,485.8 | 52.4 |

Source: Office for National Statistics Inter-Departmental Business Register

Data as at March 2021.

Figures may not sum to totals due to rounding.

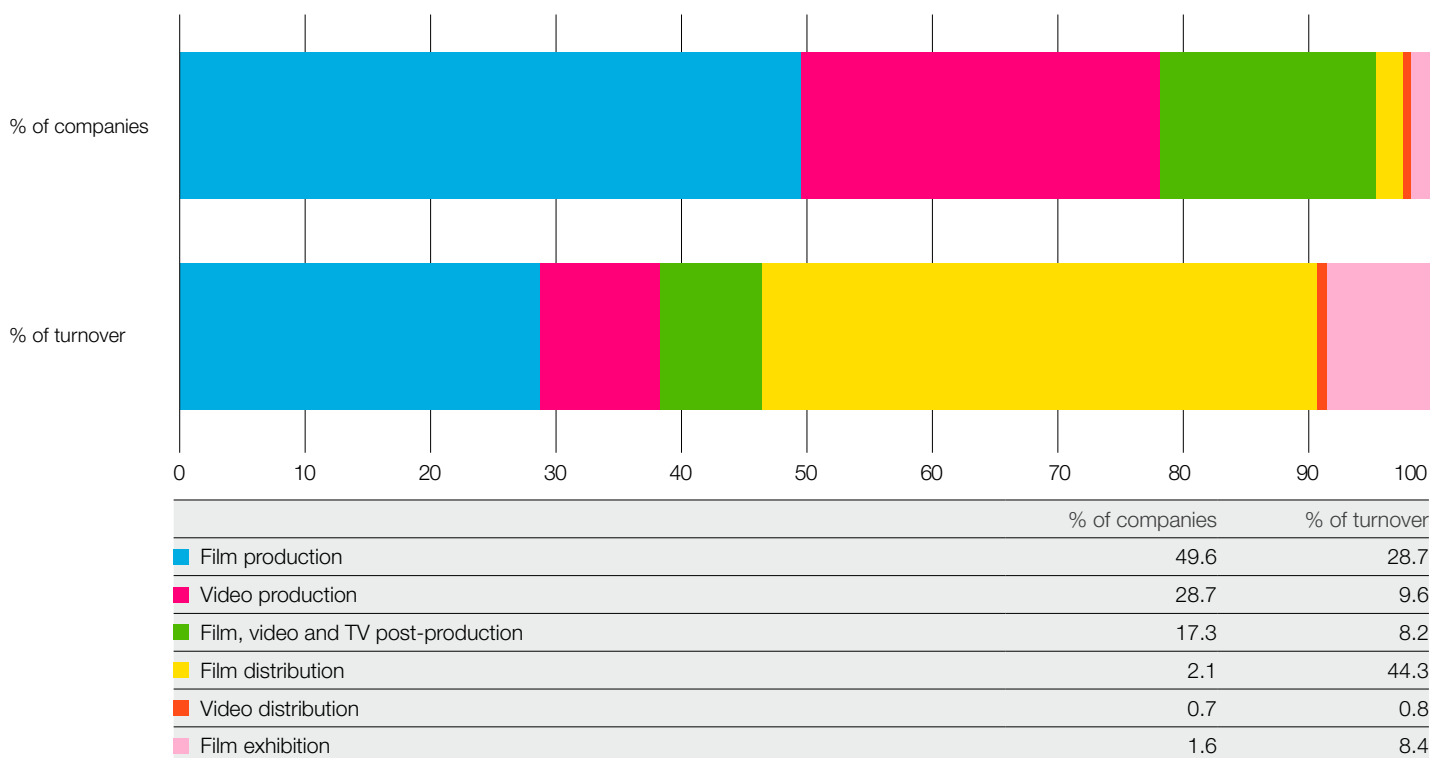
See notes to Table 1.



Image: *The Last Letter from Your Lover* Photo by Parisa Taghizadeh. Courtesy of StudioCanal

Film distributors represented 2% of film industry companies in 2021 but accounted for 44% of industry turnover (Figure 1). This reflects the dominant position of the UK subsidiaries of the major US studios in the film value chain. Film production companies represented 50% of companies and 29% of turnover.

Figure 1 Percentage of film industry companies and turnover by sub-sector, 2021



Source: Office for National Statistics Inter-Departmental Business Register
See notes to Table 1.

Size distribution of film companies

The size distribution of film companies in 2021 is shown in Tables 3 to 6. In most sectors, the majority of companies were very small with an annual turnover of less than £250,000. The one exception is film exhibition, where 52% of companies had a reported turnover of £250,000 or more.

Table 3 Size distribution of film production companies, 2021

| Turnover size band (£ million) | Number | % | Turnover (£ million) | % |
|--------------------------------|--------------|--------------|----------------------|--------------|
| ≥5.0 | 180 | 2.1 | 3,747.3 | 63.6 |
| 1.0-4.99 | 470 | 5.4 | 966.7 | 16.4 |
| 0.5-0.99 | 375 | 4.3 | 248.7 | 4.2 |
| 0.25-0.49 | 715 | 8.2 | 246.5 | 4.2 |
| 0.1-0.24 | 3,225 | 36.9 | 500.3 | 8.5 |
| 0.05-0.09 | 1,895 | 21.7 | 140.9 | 2.4 |
| <0.05 | 1,880 | 21.5 | 38.0 | 0.6 |
| Total | 8,740 | 100.0 | 5,888.4 | 100.0 |

Source: Office for National Statistics Inter-Departmental Business Register

Notes:

Data as at March 2021.

Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Table 4 Size distribution of post-production companies, 2021

| Turnover size band (£ million) | Number | % | Turnover (£ million) | % |
|--------------------------------|--------------|--------------|----------------------|--------------|
| ≥5.0 | 55 | 1.8 | 1,044.9 | 62.4 |
| 1.0-4.99 | 105 | 3.5 | 248.1 | 14.8 |
| 0.5-0.99 | 95 | 3.1 | 68.0 | 4.1 |
| 0.25-0.49 | 175 | 5.8 | 62.8 | 3.8 |
| 0.1-0.24 | 1,245 | 41.0 | 175.2 | 10.5 |
| 0.05-0.09 | 810 | 26.6 | 60.7 | 3.6 |
| <0.05 | 555 | 18.3 | 13.9 | 0.8 |
| Total | 3,040 | 100.0 | 1,673.6 | 100.0 |

Source: Office for National Statistics Inter-Departmental Business Register

Notes:

Data as at March 2021.

Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Table 5 Size distribution of film distribution companies, 2021

| Turnover size band (£ million) | Number | % | Turnover (£ million) | % |
|--------------------------------|------------|--------------|----------------------|--------------|
| ≥5.0 | 35 | 9.3 | 8,939.7 | 98.5 |
| 1.0-4.99 | 30 | 8.0 | 78.3 | 0.9 |
| 0.5-0.99 | 35 | 9.3 | 24.2 | 0.3 |
| 0.25-0.49 | 50 | 13.3 | 16.8 | 0.2 |
| 0.1-0.24 | 70 | 18.7 | 11.6 | 0.1 |
| 0.05-0.09 | 65 | 17.3 | 4.9 | 0.1 |
| <0.05 | 90 | 24.0 | 1.5 | <0.1 |
| Total | 375 | 100.0 | 9,077.0 | 100.0 |

Source: Office for National Statistics Inter-Departmental Business Register

Notes:

Data as at March 2021.

Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Table 6 Size distribution of film exhibition companies, 2021

| Turnover size band (£ million) | Number | % | Turnover (£ million) | % |
|--------------------------------|------------|--------------|----------------------|--------------|
| ≥5.0 | 20 | 6.9 | 1,568.4 | 90.8 |
| 1.0-4.99 | 45 | 15.5 | 101.4 | 5.9 |
| 0.5-0.99 | 40 | 13.8 | 29.3 | 1.7 |
| 0.25-0.49 | 45 | 15.5 | 14.6 | 0.8 |
| 0.1-0.24 | 55 | 19.0 | 8.5 | 0.5 |
| 0.05-0.09 | 40 | 13.8 | 3.0 | 0.2 |
| <0.05 | 45 | 15.5 | 1.2 | 0.1 |
| Total | 290 | 100.0 | 1,726.4 | 100.0 |

Source: Office for National Statistics Inter-Departmental Business Register

Note: Data as at March 2021.

National/regional distribution of film companies

Tables 7 and 8 show the national/regional distribution of film companies and film company turnover in 2021. In total, 69% of film companies were concentrated in London and the South East, and 86% of turnover was

generated by companies located in these two regions. The London concentration was particularly strong for distribution (56% of companies and 98% of turnover) but the exhibition sector was more widely spread across the UK, with 74% of companies and 39% of turnover associated with companies based outside London.

While London and the South East dominate in production and post-production, there are significant regional centres, particularly in the East of England, the South West and the North West.

Table 7 National/regional distribution of film companies, 2021

| | Film production | | Post-production | | Film distribution | | Film exhibition | | Total UK film | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| | Number | % | Number | % | Number | % | Number | % | Number | % |
| England | 8,240 | 94.3 | 2,860 | 94.1 | 360 | 96.0 | 240 | 82.8 | 11,700 | 94.0 |
| London | 4,620 | 52.9 | 1,540 | 50.7 | 210 | 56.0 | 75 | 25.9 | 6,445 | 51.8 |
| South East | 1,505 | 17.2 | 565 | 18.6 | 75 | 20.0 | 45 | 15.5 | 2,190 | 17.6 |
| East of England | 675 | 7.7 | 225 | 7.4 | 20 | 5.3 | 25 | 8.6 | 945 | 7.6 |
| South West | 500 | 5.7 | 200 | 6.6 | 10 | 2.7 | 25 | 8.6 | 735 | 5.9 |
| North West | 305 | 3.5 | 120 | 3.9 | 15 | 4.0 | 25 | 8.6 | 465 | 3.7 |
| Yorkshire and The Humber | 220 | 2.5 | 65 | 2.1 | 10 | 2.7 | 15 | 5.2 | 310 | 2.5 |
| West Midlands | 200 | 2.3 | 70 | 2.3 | 10 | 2.7 | 15 | 5.2 | 295 | 2.4 |
| East Midlands | 145 | 1.7 | 55 | 1.8 | 5 | 1.3 | 15 | 5.2 | 220 | 1.8 |
| North East | 70 | 0.8 | 20 | 0.7 | 5 | 1.3 | 0 | - | 95 | 0.8 |
| Scotland | 245 | 2.8 | 85 | 2.8 | 10 | 2.7 | 20 | 6.9 | 360 | 2.9 |
| Wales | 155 | 1.8 | 65 | 2.1 | 5 | 1.3 | 20 | 6.9 | 245 | 2.0 |
| Northern Ireland | 100 | 1.1 | 30 | 1.0 | 0 | - | 10 | 3.4 | 140 | 1.1 |
| UK | 8,740 | 100.0 | 3,040 | 100.0 | 375 | 100.0 | 290 | 100.0 | 12,445 | 100.0 |

Source: Office for National Statistics Inter-Departmental Business Register

Notes:

Data as at March 2021.

The overall total differs from that in Table 1 as it excludes figures for video production and distribution.

Count of companies is rounded to the nearest 5 for disclosure reasons.

Figures/percentages may not sum to totals due to rounding.

Table 8 National/regional distribution of film company turnover, 2021

| | Film production | | Post-production | | Film distribution | | Film exhibition | | Total UK film | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| | Turnover (£ million) | % | Turnover (£ million) | % | Turnover (£ million) | % | Turnover (£ million) | % | Turnover (£ million) | % |
| England | 5,737 | 97.4 | 1,521 | 90.9 | 9,054 | 99.8 | 1,664 | 96.4 | 17,976 | 97.9 |
| London | 4,134 | 70.2 | 1,145 | 68.4 | 8,923 | 98.3 | 1,050 | 60.8 | 15,252 | 83.0 |
| South East | 388 | 6.6 | 115 | 6.9 | 55 | 0.6 | 18 | 1.0 | 575 | 3.1 |
| East of England | 793 | 13.5 | 142 | 8.5 | 36 | 0.4 | 28 | 1.6 | 999 | 5.4 |
| South West | 161 | 2.7 | 45 | 2.7 | c | c | 27 | 1.5 | c | c |
| North West | 99 | 1.7 | c | c | 4 | <0.1 | c | c | 531 | 2.9 |
| Yorkshire and The Humber | 71 | 1.2 | c | c | c | c | 8 | 0.5 | c | c |
| West Midlands | 50 | 0.8 | 9 | 0.6 | 3 | <0.1 | 4 | 0.3 | 66 | 0.4 |
| East Midlands | 31 | 0.5 | 8 | 0.5 | c | c | 133 | 7.7 | c | c |
| North East | 10 | 0.2 | 3 | 0.2 | c | c | c | c | 20 | 0.1 |
| Scotland | 56 | 1.0 | 18 | 1.1 | c | c | 19 | 1.1 | c | c |
| Wales | 31 | 0.5 | 29 | 1.7 | c | c | c | c | 65 | 0.4 |
| Northern Ireland | 64 | 1.1 | 106 | 6.4 | c | c | c | c | 209 | 1.1 |
| UK | 5,888 | 100.0 | 1,674 | 100.0 | 9,077 | 100.0 | 1,726 | 100.0 | 18,365 | 100.0 |

Source: Office for National Statistics, Inter-Departmental Business Register

Notes:

Data as at March 2021.

'c' indicates the data have been made confidential by the Office for National Statistics to avoid disclosing details of individual companies.

The geographic distribution of turnover is given by the location of the company, not its local units, so a London concentration may be overstated for companies such as cinema chains which have local units around the UK.

The overall total differs from that in Table 2 as it excludes figures for video production and distribution.

Figures/percentages may not sum to totals due to rounding.



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