Film, high-end television and animation programmes production in the UK: full-year 2017

BFI Research and Statistics Unit

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Key points

- In 2017, 211 feature films started principal photography in the UK, with a total spend in the UK of £1,911 million.
- This is an increase (12%) from £1,709 million in 2016, and is the highest figure since measurement began in 1994.
- Sixty-eight of these films were inward investment productions. These accounted for most (89%) of the UK spend, contributing £1,692 million to the total.
- Spend by domestic UK features was £190 million spent across 130 productions.
- Ninety-one high-end television programmes started principal photography in 2017, with a total UK spend of £938 million, an increase from £861 million in 2016.
- UK spend generated by inward investment high-end television programmes was £684 million the highest amount since analysis began in 2014.
- Twenty-one animation programmes started principal photography in 2017, with a total UK spend of £54 million a decrease from £92 million in 2016.

1. Total film production expenditure in the UK

The aggregate UK spend of features that started principal photography in 2017 was £1,911 million, an increase of 12% from £1,709 million in 2016. This is the highest figure since measurement began in 1994. Inward investment films contributed £1,692 million (89% of total), domestic UK films £190 million (10%), and co-productions £29 million (2%). UK spend increased by £201 million for inward investment films, decreased by £17 million for domestic UK films and by £3.5 million for co-productions (Table 1 and Figure 1).

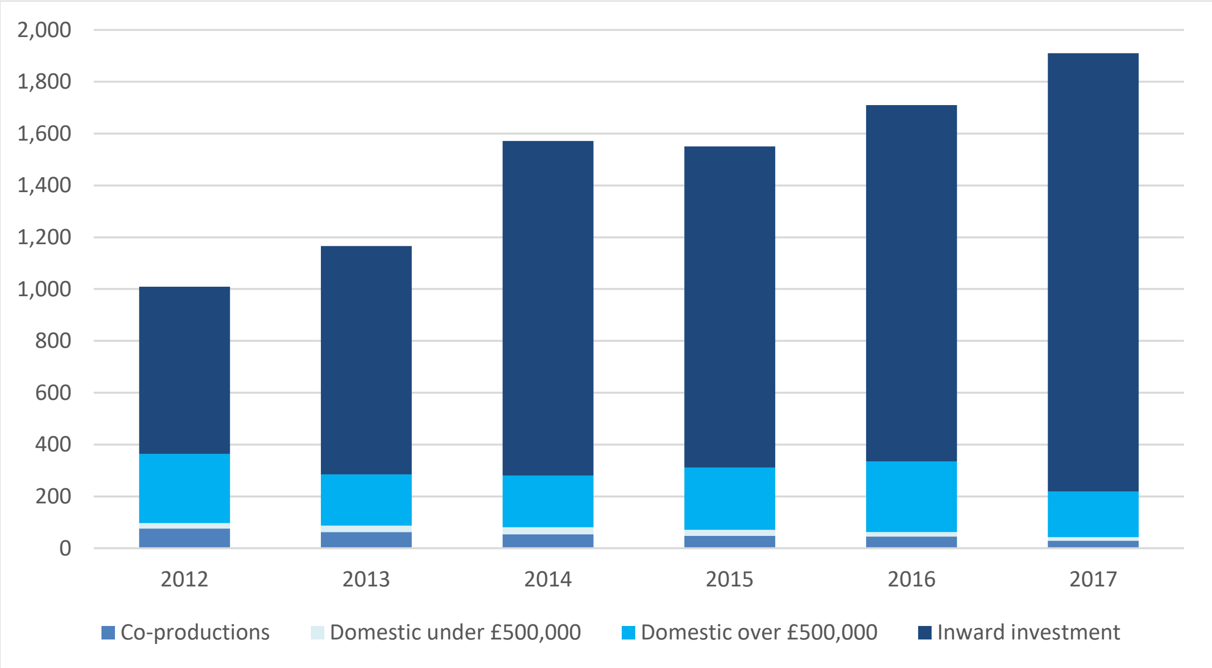
Domestic films with a budget greater than or equal to £500,000 had a UK spend of £176 million, down (35%) from £272 million in 2016, and accounted for 93% of the spend on domestic films. Domestic films with a budget less than £500,000 had a UK spend of £14 million in 2017, down from £18 million in 2016. However, these numbers should be treated as interim figures which are likely to increase, as there is a time lag in obtaining detailed information on production activity in the UK particularly for low and micro budget features.

Table 1 UK spend of features produced in the UK, 2011-2017, £ million

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Co-productions	75.5	62.8	53.5	47.3	45.4	29.4
Domestic UK features	287.9	222.1	226.4	263.8	289.4	189.6
Of which budget < £500,000	*21.5*	*23.7*	*27.8*	*23.3*	*17.5*	*13.8*
Of which budget ≥ £500,000	*266.4*	*198.4*	*198.6*	*240.4*	*272.0*	*175.9*
Inward investment	646.3	881.5	1,292.2	1,239.1	1,374.6	1,691.5
Total without films with budget <£500,000	984.6	1,140.6	1,542.0	1,524.1	1,690.8	1,896.7
Total	**1,009.6**	**1,166.4**	**1,572.1**	**1,550.1**	**1,709.4**	**1,910.6**

Source: BFI
Data are rounded to the nearest £0.1m so may not sum exactly to the totals shown.
Films are allocated to the calendar year in which principal photography started.
Films at all budget levels are included in this analysis. For pre-2011 data restricted to films with budgets of at least £500,000 see the BFI Statistical Yearbook 2016 www.bfi.org.uk/statistical-yearbook.

Figure 1 Value of UK spend of inward, domestic, co-production and total features, 2012-2017



Source: BFI

In 2017, 211 films started principal photography in the UK. Of these, 68 were inward investment films, 130 were domestic UK features, and 13 were co-productions (Table 2 and Figure 2). Both the number of domestic and co-productions was lower than 2016. However, these numbers should be treated as interim figures which are likely to increase, as there is a time lag in obtaining detailed information on all production activity in the UK, particularly for low and micro budget features.

In last year's release (Film and other screen sectors production in the UK 2016) the number of films reported for 2016 was 200 which has subsequently been revised in this release to 293 as more information has become available. It is likely that this year's total of 211 will be revised upwards therefore it is not necessarily direct evidence of a decline in the production of domestic features in the UK.

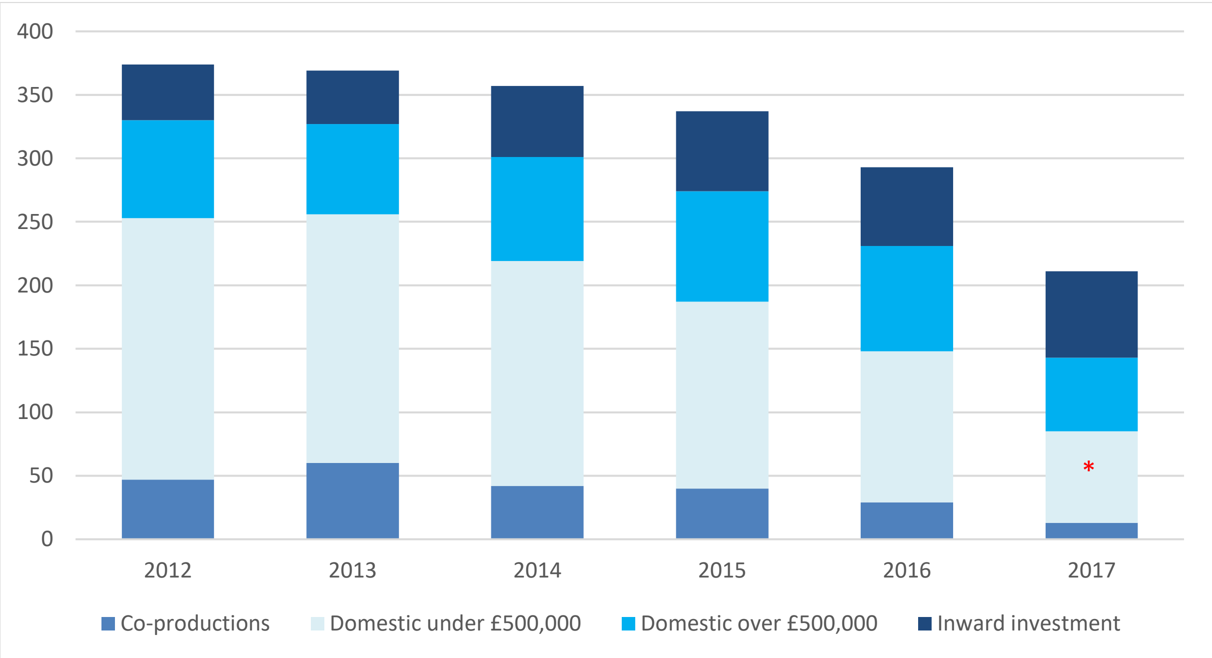
Domestic films produced with budgets less than £500,000 decreased from 119 in 2016 to 72 in 2017, and the number of domestic films with a budget greater than or equal to £500,000 decreased from 83 to 58. Again, these numbers should be treated as an interim result, as there is a time lag in obtaining detailed information on all low and micro-budget activity in the UK.

Table 2 Number of features produced in the UK, 2012-2017

	2012	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**
Co-productions	47	60	42	40	29	13
Domestic UK features	283	267	259	234	202	130
Of which budget < £500,000	*206*	*196*	*177*	*147*	*119*	*72*
Of which budget ≥ £500,000	*77*	*71*	*82*	*87*	*83*	*58*
Inward investment	44	42	56	63	62	68
Total without films with budget <£500,000	135	145	163	166	163	137
Total	**374**	**369**	**357**	**337**	**293**	**211**

Source: BFI
See notes to Table 1.

Figure 2 Number of inward, domestic, co-production and total features, 2012-2017



Source: BFI
Films are allocated to the calendar quarter in which principal photography commenced.
* The low numbers for domestic productions with budgets under £500,000 is partially attributable to a time lag in obtaining complete information on all low and micro-budget activity in the UK.

A broad range of films started principal photography in 2017 and which include: *The Lion King, Avengers Infinity Wars, Peterloo, Red Joan, The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind, The Little Stranger* and *Cold War (Zimna Wojna).*

1.1 UK and non-UK Films

This release does not report UK and non UK production to avoid disclosing data on the small number of non UK films which had some UK production spend.

Data for previous years can be found in previous editions of full year production in the UK statistics and in the BFI Statistical Yearbook.

1.2 US studio and independent films

In 2017, the majority of UK spend (71%) was accounted for by films backed by the major US studios, a total of £1,354 million (Table 3). This was an increase from £1,101 million in 2016, where US films accounted for 64% of UK spend.
UK spend by independent films was £556 million in 2017 down from £608 million in 2016. Independent inward investment films contributed the largest amount of the UK spend with £366 million (66%), Domestic Independent films had a decrease to £162 million and accounted for 29% of the total Independent UK spend.

Table 3 UK spend of US studio and independent films produced in the UK, 2012 - 2017, £ million

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
US studio films	669.5	770.0	1,017.0	1,152.1	1,101.3	1,354.0
Independent films	340.2	396.4	555.1	398.0	608.2	556.6
Of which Co-productions	*75.5*	*58.5*	*53.5*	*47.3*	*40.1*	*29.4*
Of which Domestic	*185.9*	*206.4*	*209.3*	*224.2*	*289.4*	*161.7*
Of which inward investment	*78.8*	*131.5*	*292.3*	*126.5*	*278.7*	*365.5*
Total	**1,009.6**	**1,166.4**	**1,572.1**	**1,550.1**	**1,709.4**	**1,910.6**

Source: BFI
Data are rounded to the nearest £0.1m so may not sum exactly to the totals shown.
The notes section at the end of this release provides information on film definitions.

Table 4 shows the breakdown between the number of US studio films and independent films that started principal photography in 2017. Throughout the period, the majority of films were independent; in 2017 there were 193 independent films (91%) compared to 18 US studio films. The number of US studio films has been fairly stable since 2008 with 2015 being the highest number with 24 films.
The number of independent films decreased from 276 in 2016, though this number is likely to be revised upward as more information on low and micro-budget productions becomes available.

Table 4 Number of US studio and independent films produced in the UK, 2012 – 2017

	2012	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**
US studio films	17	17	17	24	17	18
Independent films	357	352	340	313	276	193
Of which co-productions	*47*	*59*	*42*	*40*	*28*	*13*
Of which domestic	*278*	*265*	*258*	*233*	*202*	*129*
Of which inward investment	*32*	*28*	*40*	*40*	*46*	*51*
Total	374	369	357	337	293	211

Source: BFI
The notes section at the end of this release provides information on film definitions.

1.3 Independent UK films by category

This release does not report UK production for Independent UK films by category for 2016, to avoid disclosing data on the small number of non-independent UK domestic films which had some UK production spend. Data for previous years can be found in previous editions of these statistics and in the BFI Statistical Yearbook.

2. High-end television

Total UK production spend for high-end television programmes (HETV) was £938 million in 2017 an increase (9%) from £861 million in 2016. UK spend on inward investment programmes has increased and they were the largest contributor with £684 million the highest amount since analysis began. There was no spend associated with co-productions in 2017, however the amounts have been combined in previous years to avoid disclosing budgets. Domestic HETV accounted for £254 million, a decrease from £324 million in 2016 (Table 5).

Table 5 UK spend on high-end television programmes produced in the UK, 2013-2017 (£ million)

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Co-production & inward investment	261.0	318.1	455.0	537.0	684.0
Domestic UK HETV	172.8	339.9	426.5	324.0	254.3
Total	**433.8**	**658.0**	**881.5**	**861.0**	**938.3**

Source: BFI
Co-production and inward investment have been combined to avoid disclosing budget data for individual titles.
HETV are allocated to the period according to the date principal photography started.

A total of 91 HETV programmes started principal photography in 2017 a decrease from 108 in 2016. Of these, 49 were co-productions and inward investment an increase from 42 in 2016, 42 were domestic HETV, down from 66 in 2016. These figures are slightly lower (16%) than 2016 and again may increase due time lag in obtaining detailed information on all production activity in the UK.

Table 6 Number of high-end television programmes produced in the UK, 2013-2017

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Co-production & inward investment	16	32	29	42	49
Domestic UK HETV	35	64	69	66	42
Total	**51**	**96**	**98**	**108**	**91**

Source: BFI
Co-production and inward investment have been combined to avoid disclosing budget data for individual titles.
HETV are allocated to the period according to the date principal photography started.

Titles that started principal photography in 2017 include: *Krypton, Game of Thrones: Series 8, A Discovery of Witches, Doctor Who Series 11, In the Long Run* and *A Very English Scandal.*

3. Animation programmes

At the time of reporting the UK spend for domestic television animation programmes for 2016 was £54 million. These figures are a decrease (41%) from 2016 figure of £92 million. Domestic UK programmes accounted for £33 million (62%). However, the figures for 2016 are likely to change due to the time lag in obtaining detailed information on all production activity in the UK. (Table 7).

Table 7 UK spend on television animation programmes produced in the UK, 2013-2017 (£ million)

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Co-production & inward investment	16.7	16.5	23.4	32.4	20.8
Domestic	62.9	76.4	35.3	60.0	33.3
Total	**79.5**	**92.9**	**58.7**	**92.3**	**54.1**

Source: BFI
Co-production and inward investment have been combined to avoid disclosing budget data for individual titles.
Animation programmes are allocated to the period according to the date principal photography started.

A total of 21 animation programmes started principal photography in 2017. Of these, 14 were domestic. The numbers of animation programmes are substantially down (55%) in comparison to the 47 in 2016. However again the time lag in obtaining detailed information on all production activity in the UK will likely see this change.

Table 8 Number of television animation programmes produced in the UK, 2013-2017

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Co-production & inward investment	9	17	14	13	7
Domestic	36	45	36	34	14
Total	**45**	**62**	**50**	**47**	**21**

Source: BFI
Co-production and inward investment have been combined to avoid disclosing budget data for individual titles.
Animation programmes are allocated to the period according to the date principal photography started.

Titles that started production in 2016 include: *Horatio Genius for Hire, Robozuna, Tee and Mo, The Clangers Series 2* and *Peppa Pig Series 5.*

Notes

1. BFI Research and Statistics Unit production tracking

The Research and Statistics Unit production tracking system attempts to track all films produced in whole or part in the UK (i.e. it is a census, not a sample).

Sources of information include the British Film Commission, industry tracking forums, Creative Skillset, trade press and internet sources, UK film certification data and direct approaches to film producers.

Only productions with some UK spend on shooting, visual effects or post-production are included.

Spend is allocated to the calendar year, half year and quarter in which principal photography starts.

For high-end television and television animation programmes, only programmes officially certified as British are included.

2. Revisions

Production tracking is a continuous process and numbers are updated each quarter to reflect newly tracked films, updated budget or UK spend information and postponements or cancellations. Adjustments apply to previous periods as well as to the most recent reported period. The tables in this report contain revised data.

Statistics on **Video Games** and **Children's Television** will be reported in the release: British Film and other screen sector certification Full Year 201 (Publication Date; 31st January 2017).

3. Definitions

A **domestic** (indigenous) UK production is a feature film, HETV programme or television animation programme made by a UK production company that is produced wholly or partly in the UK.

A **UK co-production** is a co-production (other than an inward co-production) feature film, HETV programme or television programme involving the UK and other country partners usually under the terms of a bilateral co-production agreement or the European Convention on Cinematographic Co-production.

An **inward investment production** is a feature film, HETV programme or television animation programme which is substantially financed and controlled from outside the UK, where the production is attracted to the UK because of script requirements, the UK's infrastructure or UK tax incentives. Many (but not all) inward productions are UK films, HETV programmes or animation programmes by virtue of their UK cultural content and the fact that they pass the cultural test administered by the BFI Certification Unit on behalf of the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport.

An **inward feature co-production** is an official co-production that originates from outside the co-production treaty countries (usually from the USA) and which is attracted to the UK because of script requirements, the UK's infrastructure or UK film tax relief.

A **VFX-only film** is a film that has a substantial quantity of digital visual effects made in the UK at one of the UK's main VFX houses but no other UK spend.

A **UK film** is a film that has been certified as British by the DCMS or by the Certification Unit of the BFI (acting on the authority of the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport) or which is a *de facto* UK film by virtue of being made in whole or part in the UK by a UK production company.

A **US studio film** is a film that is produced in whole or part by one of the major US studios or one of the major US studios' specialist subsidiaries.

An **independent film** is a film made by an independent production company or group of independent production companies.

US studio films are generally distributed in most territories by the parent studio. Independent films are usually distributed by different distributors in different territories.

4. Disclosing individual film information

Spend data are not disclosed when the number of productions (co-production, domestic or inward) is five or fewer.

5. Feedback

We welcome feedback from users of our statistics releases to help us improve what we do. If you have any feedback on these statistics or if you wish to make a complaint, in the first instance please contact us using the named contact details listed below

6. Pre-release Access

This release has been prepared according to the Code of Practice for Official Statistics published by the UK Statistics Authority (2010). Pre-release access has been granted to the following:

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