

FIONA COOKSON APPOINTED DIRECTOR OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AT THE BFI

LONDON – Wednesday 10 September 2014: The BFI today announces the appointment of Fiona Cookson to the new role of Director of External Affairs at the BFI, Fiona joins the BFI's Executive Board at the end of September.

Fiona joins the BFI from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) where she is currently Head of External Relations and Press Secretary to Vince Cable. Fiona brings understanding and experience of issues such as business finance, export, inward investment and skills, gained from her time in both the public and private sectors, and will support the BFI to strengthen and build engagement with its key stakeholders.

Fiona will lead External Affairs, a new Directorate which incorporates Film Policy, Creative Europe Desk UK, the BFI Research and Statistics Unit, BFI Certification Unit and Corporate Communications & Public Affairs.

Amanda Nevill, CEO of the BFI, said: "Fiona's experience at the heart of British policy-making will be invaluable as we seek to maximise opportunities for the UK's film and screen industries, and demonstrate their importance as drivers for growth in the UK economy overall.

"Fiona's appointment comes as UK film is riding high both culturally and commercially, and she joins us at an exciting and dynamic moment as we work to build on this success by developing ambitious and exciting plans to support film companies, champion filmmakers and inspire audiences."

Fiona Cookson said: “After 13 years in Government it is a thrill to be moving into an organisation that combines the best of public service with the best of individual enterprise, expression and creativity.

“The BFI is a powerful champion for British film at a time when the industry is enjoying such commercial and critical success. I am really looking forward to being part of the team that does such a great job serving filmmakers and audiences across the UK.”

Alongside her media work at BIS, Fiona has helped to position the Department as an advocate for business and enhanced its reputation with leading business organisations and companies large and small.

Fiona began her Government career at the Home Office providing media advice to Home Secretaries and senior ministers. Over six years, Fiona honed her crisis communications skills on highly charged issues like terrorism, immigration, crime and policing. From there she moved to the Department of Health where she was chief press officer, delivering an ambitious campaign to support the reform of the NHS.

Fiona also brings with her private sector experience, having worked at a financial PR consultancy in Leeds after graduating, a tech PR consultancy and latterly as Account Director at Global PR Consultancy Weber Shandwick.

- Ends -

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NOTES TO EDITORS

About the BFI

The BFI is the lead organisation for film in the UK with the ambition to create a flourishing film environment in which innovation, opportunity and creativity can thrive by:

- Connecting audiences to the widest choice of British and World cinema

- Preserving and restoring the most significant film collection in the world for today and future generations
- Championing emerging and world class film makers in the UK - investing in creative, distinctive and entertaining work
- Promoting British film and talent to the world
- Growing the next generation of film makers and audiences

The BFI is a Government arm's-length body and distributor of Lottery funds for film. The BFI serves a public role which covers the cultural, creative and economic aspects of film in the UK. It delivers this role:

- As the UK-wide organisation for film, a charity core funded by Government
- By providing Lottery and Government funds for film across the UK
- By working with partners to advance the position of film in the UK.

Founded in 1933, the BFI is a registered charity governed by Royal Charter.

The BFI Board of Governors is chaired by Greg Dyke.

