

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Irish Film Classification Office publishes new Strategy Statement**

The [Irish Film Classification Office \(IFCO\)](#) has today (15.11.23) published its new Strategy Statement, which will guide its work over the years to 2025.

IFCO's vision is to provide audiovisual content regulation that empowers citizens and promotes plurality. The roadmap sets out how it intends to do this under three strategic themes: Quality Service; Resource Effectiveness and Excellence in Governance, and Communication and Engagement.

Commenting, Director of Film Classification, Dr Ciarán Kissane said: "IFCO is marking its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. Starting life as the Film Censor's Office in 1923, it has evolved from film censorship to providing classifications and advice for cinema and physical home entertainment, including movies and video games.

"As a public service, our work must balance the right to freedom of expression with the requirement that audiences are protected from harmful and illegal content – this is a cornerstone of our new strategy statement. We are pleased to set out our key aims for the coming years, which will allow us to continue to ensure that a diverse range of audiovisual content is available to Irish audiences and that they continue to receive the trusted guidance that allows them to make informed decisions as to what they watch or play."

He added: "Among our objectives are to increase the number of films classified for cinema release; maintain a high level of confidence in classifications and advice, and ensure that classification standards reflect current community standards. To that end, we expect to publish new draft classification guidelines in 2024. We will also promote the role and contribution of IFCO to Irish society through an enhanced programme of engagement with young people and major film festivals, and through marking the centenary of the establishment of the Office. We will also contribute to policy debates and practical initiatives that support the delivery of our strategy."

Work to promote the centenary of the Office is well progressed. Already this year, IFCO has run an in-cinema competition to promote awareness of the various film classification categories and a refreshed IFCO logo; taken part in Culture Night for the first time, with a film classification workshop; given its censorship-era records (1923-1980s) to the National Archives, and hosted a panel discussion with the National Archives to mark the centenary. It is also delivered a workshop on classification at the Galway Junior Film Fleadh.

Dr Kissane added “We were delighted with the response to the competition, and I would like to congratulate our three winners - Nuala Brennan, Stephanie Derbyshire and Niamh Whelan - who have all been presented with a new iPad.”

In addition, IFCO is partnering with the Dublin International Film Festival (DIFF) on the IFCO Centenary Lecture Series 2024. It is offering film and media students and early career researchers the opportunity to delve into the IFCO Collection at the National Archives and present their research at a public event at the Dublin International Film Festival 2024. Three bursaries of €1,000 each are available. The deadline for submission is 17<sup>th</sup> November 2023. Further details can be found [here](#).

Commenting, Dr Kissane said: “The IFCO Collection at the National Archives comprises the individual decisions on films reviewed by the film censor not already publicly available and those subject to appeals to the Censorship of Films Appeals Board, as well as previously unpublished reports of the Official Censor to the Minister. Together, they represent a fascinating insight into the social conventions of the time, cinema exhibition in Ireland, and the key role that censorship played in shaping Irish film culture. It is wonderful that they are now available for anyone to have a look at in the National Archives.

“We are delighted to partner with DIFF on the IFCO Centenary Lecture Series 2024. As part of this, we are looking for vibrant and exciting presentations based on documents in the IFCO Collection in the National Archives, which will be showcased at DIFF 2024 next spring.”

DIFF Festival Director, Grainne Humphreys added: “Dublin International Film Festival is delighted to be working with both IFCO and the National Archives on this exciting new initiative. We hope the opportunity will encourage emerging film writers to investigate the incredible documents and records compiled over the last 100 years. The IFCO Bursaries represent a wonderful opportunity for film students and researchers and we can’t wait bring these findings to wider audience as part of 2024 festival next February.”

Dr Kissane concluded: “IFCO is all about enhancing the public’s understanding of, and engagement with, the audiovisual content under our remit. We believe that our new strategy statement will help us to do this in a proactive, collaborative and impactful manner and we look forward to engaging with parents, young people, and the audiovisual industry over the coming years.”

The IFCO Strategy Statement 2023 – 2025 can be found on the IFCO [website](#).

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**Notes for Editors:**

- Director of Film Classification, Dr Ciarán Kissane is available for interview, on request.