

Summer box office bounce 'confirms ongoing sector recovery', says UK cinema chief

Cinema operators' recovery hopes have been spurred by latest [figures](#) revealing the [UK](#) recorded its best box office [performance](#) since February 2020 this weekend.


Latest figures show total box office takings in the UK and [Ireland](#) reached £18.7 million last week, with £10.9 million taken over the weekend – British [screens](#)' best performance since February 2020.

Chief executive of the UK Cinema Association, Phil Clapp, told the Standard the weekend's takings were up 64% on the previous weekend, and "an incredible" 1169% up on the same weekend last year.

The Odeon chain announced the weekend was its biggest since reopening, with families making up more than a third of attendance.

The UKCA is hopeful these figures will soon be topped.

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Industry leaders are quietly confident the numbers signal a bumper staycation August to come, and sales that will only “accelerate” in September and October as the weather worsens and a long-anticipated slate of films is released – from James Bond, No Time to Die to Spider-Man: No Way Home.

Studios have finally begun to release long-awaited films as vaccine rollouts speed up around the world, boosting cinema operators.

Clapp pointed to the fact that in early August 2020 there was a “sparse” film slate, whereas last weekend saw both The Suicide Squad and Jungle Cruise released into cinemas. Along with Marvel’s Black Widow, the new releases ensured a “diverse mix” of films to attract audiences, Clapp said.

He said: “Last weekend – the best since February 2020 – confirms the ongoing and strong recovery being seen by cinemas across the UK, driven by a clear desire from audiences once again to share the big screen experience with others, backed up by an exceptionally strong slate of films now and over the coming months.

“With people perhaps choosing to staycation over holidays abroad over the summer and beyond, we have every reason to hope that that recovery will if anything accelerate as the year progresses.”

The slate of films set to be released in the coming months – and which cinema chains hope will prove financial winners – includes a handful of sequels to box office big-hitters.

Clapp’s most-anticipated of the releases, in addition to the eagerly-awaited Bond and Spider-Man films, are Top Gun: Maverick, Ghostbusters: Afterlife, Downton Abbey 2, Dune and West Side Story.