



Welcome to South London Theatre and your Directors' Handbook!

Congratulations on joining the team of directors for the next season and welcome to our community. This guide is designed to help you understand how South London Theatre works so you can get the best out of your directing experience here.

We've included some important dos and don'ts, a handy timeline to help keep you on track, plus links to various other resources that you may find useful.

There's a lot of advice from people who've done many productions at SLT, and we've also included contact details for various people/departments within the theatre, should you have any questions/need extra support.

This handbook also includes some very important information for you and your cast's safety and wellbeing, which you must read. You may be an experienced director at SLT, but please refresh your memory by going through the pack.

We hope you find it all useful!

SLT Theatre Committee (Spring 2026)

Contents

PLANNING Key Dates / Your Theatre Rep / Your creative team / Poster Design

MAKING IT REAL Auditions / Casting / Membership

BUDGETS AND DESIGN Budgeting / Staging and Set Design / Props and Costumes

REHEARSALS Times and spaces / Planning / Etiquette / Tips and advice

TICKETING AND PUBLICITY Ticketing / Publicity

THE FINAL PUSH Get-in / Run up week / Dressing Rooms / Getting bums on seats / Performances / End of show party / Get-out / That's a wrap

Appendix 1 THE IMPORTANT STUFF Code of Conduct / New members / Working with children / Smoking in shows / Signing in/out / Access to the Old Fire Station / Building Guardian duties / Fire Evacuation /

Appendix 2 PROPS AND COSTUME ETIQUETTE

INITIAL PLANNING – key dates, people and show identity

This section of the handbook will guide you through the initial planning stages of your show: what you need to think about first, and getting your team together. You should aim to cover/be familiar with most of this before holding your auditions.

Key dates

Once we've agreed a slot in our season with you, you'll get an email from Theatre Committee (TC) confirming all the key dates your show, including:

- **New season announcement** – the launch of the season where you can tell members about your show and start to get people involved in it. We ask you to refrain telling anyone publicly about your show until this event.
- **2x slots for auditions** – usually a Sunday afternoon and a Monday evening.
- **3x weekly rehearsals** – EITHER:
 - Wednesdays and Fridays 8 – 10pm and Sundays 4.45 – 8.15pm, OR
 - Tuesdays and Thursdays 8 – 10pm and Sundays 1 – 4.30pm
- **A get-in date** – when you, your cast and crew can get into the theatre (usually 9 days before your opening night)
- **Your performance dates** – usually Tuesday to Saturday evenings (family shows may vary)
- **A get-out date** – when you, your cast and crew need to take the theatre back to how you found it (usually the Sunday morning following your last night)

Please check all these dates carefully and put them in your diary. Apart from the audition slots, it's very difficult to change any of these due to the programme of shows across the season.

We'll also have a new season meeting for all directors shortly after the launch event, to go through the content of this handbook in more depth, and give directors a chance to network and share knowledge and experience. Theatre Committee (TC) will let you know when this has been booked.

Your theatre Rep

Every director is assigned a Rep to help you get the best out of working at SLT, and they will generally be your first point of call for any queries you have about the theatre. They will support you with:

- Finding/recommending members for your creative team, and introducing you to relevant members of the tech/backstage team;

- Budgeting for the show, as they will have knowledge of what SLT has the capacity to provide in-house, and what might need to be paid for from your budget;
- Keeping you on track with your schedule, and helping you meet any relevant deadlines;
- Pastoral support/conflict resolution – just in case any difficulties arise with any members of your cast/creative team;
- Attending occasional rehearsals and ensuring your show is performance-ready in time for your opening night;
- Feeding back to TC and requesting additional support from them if required.

We recommend arranging to meet with your rep as soon as you know who they are, and then keeping in touch every 1-2 weeks throughout the process.

Your creative team

Getting your creative team together early will mean you can start delegating tasks and allow you to focus on directing your show. The size of your team and roles within it will depend very much on the production you are doing – the bigger and more complex the show, the more help you will need.

Supportive community! They don't work for you.

We recommend:

- **An assistant director** – they can help you with planning rehearsal schedules, running warm-ups, managing your cast, as well as providing another pair of eyes and alternative ideas when you need them, or covering a rehearsal for you if you can't make it. Agree with them up front what their role is based on what you need them to do.
- **A stage manager** – they will oversee all your props and manage everything during show week – from working with front of house and keeping your cast in line, to managing the technical operators and back stage crew and ensuring all your props are present and in working order each night. They may well need one or more assistant stage managers, but you can agree that together.
- **A set designer** – they can bring ideas about staging, set and scenery, and do all the necessary planning, measurements and drawings the backstage team will need when it comes to your get-in.
- **A costume designer/Wardrobe rep** – they can manage all aspects of what your cast will wear, in line with your overall vision for the show. SLT has an extensive collection of costumes and most (if not all!) of your requirements should be sourced in-house to save on your budget.
- **A lighting designer** – this is quite a specialist job, and should be someone with experience in this area. If you'd like to bring in someone new to SLT for this role, your rep can arrange for them to meet with our technical team to show them our kit and how it works.

- You will also need **operators to run the lighting and sound** for your show. A single operator may be enough for a simple show, but you may need a couple if there are a lot of cues. You won't need these immediately, but it's good to get people on board as soon as you can – you don't want to get into the theatre only to remember you've got no-one to operate the lights!
- You may need more specialist help – musicals may require choreographers; productions involving fight work may require a fight director; you may also need an intimacy co-ordinator for close physical scenes. Ask your rep to recommend anyone as appropriate, or chat to other members in our bar any time – it is a great way to meet enthusiastic volunteers!

Please be aware that anyone in your cast or creative team must be (or become) an SLT member to take an active part in your show.

Show Identity

While your show may not be for several weeks, the publicity team need to start promoting the season as a whole shortly after the new season announcement, so we encourage you to think about this early on in the process. Your poster will be the first glimpse into the visual language you create for your production – which may be especially useful for when it comes to attracting potential auditionees.

There are a number of (volunteer) designers who regularly contribute their skills to work on the graphic design elements of our shows, but of course you're welcome to manage this yourself also. You'll be sent a separate publicity guide which will explain more about what's needed, and your rep or the publicity team can recommend designers if required.

MAKING IT REAL – Auditions, Casting and Membership

Once you've thought about most of the big things and started to assemble your team, you need to start planning your auditions, and this section will guide you through that process.

Auditions

Confirm your audition dates and times

You will have been allocated two slots for your auditions when you were offered the show. If you need to make any changes, or request an additional time for callbacks, email rehearsals@southlondontheatre.co.uk with what you need and the team will do their best to help with what's available.

We use Calendly as our appointment booking software, which will capture everyone's details and give them important information about us. You can change the details to tailor it to your production, and you'll get support on how to set this up.

We always hold open auditions – meaning someone doesn't have to be a member to come along. (They only need to join if cast.) This allows you to spread your net wider, but do bear in mind that if you want to invite specific people to audition, you should take time to explain the way we work as a community, the rehearsal commitments and so on. You'll also need to make it very clear that they will need to become members before any rehearsals start.

Plan the process

There's no perfect way to run an audition, but decide what you want to do based on what you need from your cast. Some directors prefer to see people individually in short slots, others might invite a group for a workshop-style audition to explore different combinations of actors together. You might also want to ask people to play a scene, offer some direction and then see how they respond. Whatever you choose – think how long you will need with each person/group, and plan accordingly as time is limited.

Decide which bits of the script (if any) you will use for your auditions, and ensure you have enough copies of these on the day. You may want to send your auditionees the material to prepare in advance. If you're not sure about anything, talk to your rep, TC or an experienced director for some tips!

1-2-1 auditions

Intimacy/contact

We recommend being really clear with what you're looking for from your potential cast in advance. Do you need actors to be in a specific age bracket, or from a specific ethnic background? Is height or accent important to you? Are you looking for a certain energy or personality trait? The more you can tell potential auditionees in advance, the better chance you have of finding someone who's right for your show.

If you need children as part of your cast, and you absolutely cannot get away with adults playing those roles, you'll need to follow SLT's safeguarding policy, which will require chaperones to be present at every rehearsal and performance. Email training@southlondontheatre.co.uk and cc your rep to discuss this further as soon as your show is announced.

Publicising your auditions

Give the publicity team the details as soon as you can in the format they need (see the Audition Notices document). They will then add the audition notice onto the website, Facebook page, and share it through the theatre's main communication channels. However, don't rely on this alone – share the notice with your own networks to increase your chances of getting good actors at your auditions.

Depending on how well-known your play is and size of the cast, your allocated slots may fill up quickly.

Unfortunately, we get a lot of drop-outs when it comes to auditions – people who cancel last-minute, or those who just don't show up and you never hear from, so please plan for this accordingly. You're welcome to keep a personal waiting list or make arrangements to see extra people in your allocated time for those who weren't able to get a formal slot - best saved for roles you think will be harder to fill.

Keep in touch with the publicity team throughout – if you need to close applications early because demand has become overwhelming, or you want to focus on one or two specific roles, they can tailor the communications online accordingly.

On the day

Depending on how you're running your auditions, we recommend getting someone to help you with the meeting and greeting of your auditionees. Some like to come early, while there are always those who are late, and having someone to manage that for you and check people in can be invaluable.

Make sure everyone has a fair chance, and be strict with your timings, especially as you'll only have the room for a set amount of time. If you want to see more from someone, invite them to a callback.

Some directors like to take photos of auditionees as a reminder of who they are. This can

be useful, but you must obtain consent and delete any photos afterwards.

Self-tapes

Some directors are happy to accept self-tape auditions, if actors absolutely cannot make your first-round, in-person auditions. This is up to you. If you do receive self-tapes, please make sure you watch them and respond to the auditionee accordingly. Do delete the tapes once you have no further use for them.

Callbacks

Depending on your play and how many auditionees you have, you may want to hold callback auditions. These allow you more time to see what an actor can do, and also look at chemistry with other actors if that is important to you.

Bear in mind that people are giving their time to audition freely, so please respect that, and don't ask them to jump through lots of hoops or learn lots of material. Give as much notice as possible, and communicate clearly at every step.

Casting

The fun bit! We recommend calling your chosen cast to discuss key dates and requirements with them, and following up with an email with all the details can help. If you're unable to achieve a full cast, it's fine to put out another shout for suitable people to come forward for consideration. You can always ask your rep and/or assistant director for advice.

Please make sure that your cast knows not to make the news public until we make a formal announcement on the website once the whole show is cast. Once you have confirmed everyone, let your rep know and get headshots of all cast members and their names as they'd like them to be announced (some people have stage names). The Publicity team will ask you for all the details and a short paragraph on how you found the process.

And **don't forget to contact everyone else who auditioned and wasn't successful.**

It's really important. We're all doing this for fun, and people gave up their own time to come along and audition for you, so show them the courtesy of contacting them – even with bad news, via a standard email if needed. We may want these people to audition again, so please be encouraging, and do supply feedback if you have time or are asked for it.

Membership

All our auditions are open, so it's quite possible you will cast at least one person not already a member. Once you have the details of everyone you've cast, please **send Membership your cast list** (copy in your rep).

It's your responsibility to make sure everyone in your cast is/has signed up to be a member before the first rehearsal (and that no-one's membership has lapsed!). It's very easy for them to do online. Neither your rehearsals nor your show can go ahead unless everyone involved is a member. Everyone in your crew will also need to be members.

Budgets and Design

Once you have your cast in place, there's normally about three weeks before your first rehearsal. This is an excellent time to think about the overall design for your show (including any key pieces of set, props and costume), and how much it will all cost.

Budgeting your show

Most shows are given a production budget of **£200**. Usually your Stage Manager will keep an eye on this as they do most of the buying.

For some, more costly shows, we may agree to a higher budget, but that will be discussed at the time we accept your show into the season. Don't spend anything more without the prior agreement of the Theatre Committee, as we won't be able to repay you any more than that.

You MUST keep any receipts (ideally VAT receipts), as you'll need to include these with your [expenses form](#) at the end of the show.

<what you can and can't spend budget on>

We don't reimburse for scripts – this is something you and your cast need to pay for yourselves. If the rights for your play are issued by Concord publishing, they often insist that scripts are also purchased from them directly. We'll help you arrange this. Please speak to us if the cost of a script may be prohibitive for anyone in your cast/production team – we'd hate for this to be a barrier for anyone looking to take part.

Staging and Set Design

You may already have a clear idea for how you want your set/staging to look – great! Even so, it's still worth getting a designer on board to help with specifics, and at the very least talking to our backstage team to review your ideas and check any health & safety elements.

The layout you choose will likely affect how you conceptualise, rehearse and prepare for the show, so it's good to get the basics thought out in advance. You can view a detailed, scale drawing of the space [here](#) to help with your preparations.

Audience configuration

We have a very flexible studio space that can accommodate different audience layouts on bench seating, but we do need to have at least 65 seats available to sell for each performance for financial reasons.

While we'd encourage you to think creatively about how you'd like to use the space, making big changes to the seating configuration takes a lot of hard work from volunteers on get-in day, so you'll need to prepare for this accordingly. Speaking with the director/designer of the shows before and after yours to see where you may be able to share elements of your set/layout is a good way to improve efficiency and generate good will between the backstage team.

Set design

It may be clear from the script/stage directions or it may not. Are there any absolute must-haves when it comes to your set? Do you want it to be naturalistic and detailed, or more conceptual and minimal? What ideas and feelings do you want to get across? And don't forget about practicalities – where are the entrances and exits?

At SLT we have a good stock of black drapes and rostra at different heights, as well as flats, steps and wooden blocks that can be painted to your requirements. We have minimal furniture stored on site, so any key pieces you need outside of that will have to be sourced (and removed at the end of your run) by you, and within your budget.

Once you've firmed up your ideas, your set design will need to get the OK from our backstage team, to make sure it's both practical and safe for our theatre. Your rep can assist with pointing you in the right direction.

Props and costumes

We have an extensive range of both at SLT, but it would be good for you/your Stage Manager/Designer to write an initial list of the main things you'll need early on – especially anything niche – to make sure we have them.

Anything we don't have may be able to be sourced from within the membership (you'd be surprised what some people have at home!), or, failing that, bought from your budget.

For assistance with niche costumes (such as police officer uniforms) or any costumes that aren't modern day, we suggest contacting wardrobe@southlondontheatre.co.uk with your brief, and arranging a time to go and meet them to look at stock and potentially be allocated a member of the team to support you on your show. The team have a wealth of knowledge and are very happy to help.

If you need to buy any costume items please check whether Wardrobe want them before donating them after your show, as space is very limited!

Make-up and wigs

SLT has quite an abundant store of make-up left over from previous shows, as well as various members who can advise on how to achieve specific effects. We can even do prosthetics! Please seek these out before spending any money you might not need to.

Similarly with wigs - we have a good array in store, as well as members who can assist with getting them to look right on the night. Ask your rep to point you in the right direction if you'd like to use any wigs in your show.

In summary:

Things you may need to spend your budget on:

- Props or costumes we can't source in-house
- Specialist set pieces or items of furniture

Costs covered centrally (that won't come out of your budget)

- Use of any in-house props/costumes/set pieces
- Performance rights (where applicable)
- Marketing and publicity (see later section for more on this)
- Set paint (though only in discussion with Technical Manager)

Things you can't claim for

REHEARSALS

Once you have a cast, and made some headway on the design and budgeting of your show, it's time to start planning your rehearsals. This section will guide you through the rehearsal process of your show.

Times and spaces

Every show generally gets the same rehearsal period (musicals may get a bit more) – two two-hour sessions on weekday evenings and one three and a half-hour session on a Sunday, for about 8 weeks before you get into the theatre. Then you'll get just over a week in the theatre itself for technical work and final rehearsals.

You'll usually be in the smaller Kit Room for your early rehearsals (4 weeks) and the Fly Loft for the later ones (4 weeks) as your production gets closer. Please pay very close attention to the times and rooms you have been given as it is very difficult to change these once allocated. Many other external groups use the building all through the week (in addition to our own shows) and we don't want to disturb them.

On Saturdays in term time, the SLT Youth Group uses the building and directors and cast do not have access until 5pm. Please contact

training@southlondontheatre.co.uk if you really need to come into the building during the day. The Fly Loft on a Friday in term time is also used by the Youth group from 6pm – 7.45pm, so please don't attempt to enter the room during that time.

You can view the building calendar on the [website](#) any time. Please remember to check this regularly, as we do have to move rehearsals around from time to time. There's an iPad by the lift you can check too.

There may be times when your normal rehearsal space won't be available. This could be because a big show is on and more space is needed for dressing rooms, or building work may be happening that makes usual rehearsal rooms unusable. We will try our best to avoid this, but if you do need to find an "out" space, we'll give you plenty of notice and contact details for some very friendly local hostelrys such as The Hope, The Great North Wood and The Rosendale, who can often offer a room for free – just make sure everyone buys a drink!

Your rehearsal schedule

Planning is the way to get the most out of rehearsals. Make sure you know the dates that any of your cast can't make, then sit down and make a rehearsal schedule. You don't need to plan every minute, but give yourself enough time for blocking every scene, character work, scene changes and full runs.

You should be able to manage all your rehearsals within the rehearsal timetable you're

given. One of the skills of a director is making good use of the time they have. Speak to your rep or another experienced director if you'd like help with this.

If you want to see if an additional space is available at the theatre, or cancel or swap a room, please email rehearsals@southlondontheatre.co.uk as soon as you can. We need to make the best use of the space we can, so may want to reallocate rooms that aren't going to be used.

Rehearsal etiquette

- As a new Director, you'll need to receive training on how to lock up the building, and be allocated a fob to be able to access the building. Please contact fobs@southlondontheatre.co.uk to set this up before you start rehearsing.
- The Fly Loft and Kit Room both have a supply of blue chairs, and at least one small table. At the end of your rehearsal chairs should be stacked neatly to the sides. Please see the notices in each room for specific layouts.
- Litter should be put in the bins, and glasses returned to the bar (please use plastics).
- **Make sure you adhere to locking up rules when you leave the building.** If you're the last group to leave, you **MUST** check the building, turn off lights, close/lock doors and set the alarm.
- Look after any props you are using for rehearsals. You'll be allocated large plastic boxes to store everything apart from furniture on the shelves in the Kit Room, but don't leave them lying around (**see the Props appendix**). The props store can only be accessed through the Fly Loft, so please respect whoever may be using that space so as to cause minimal disturbance.
- If you need any temporary equipment or furniture for rehearsals please email the building manager to discuss.
- There are WiFi networks available throughout the building which you can use with the password SLT@1881@1967

Rehearsing when a show is on

Everyone using the other spaces in the building needs to be respectful during performances in the theatre. This is particularly true when you are rehearsing.

The Fly Loft and Kit Room are quite well insulated for sound, but you must keep the general volume down and avoid anything that will disturb the performance:

- No shouting, loud singing, amplified music or keyboards, jumping or stamping.
- Keep volume to a conversational level
- Don't exit the room towards the new stairs while the show is up, or use the first floor toilets, as your footsteps can be heard in the auditorium – always use the old stairs and go

down to the bar for toilets, or the access loo via Wardrobe on the 2nd floor.

If you're concerned that you will need to be louder, then you will have to find an "out" space. If you do decide to rehearse elsewhere, please let the building manager know so the room can be reallocated.

Practical rehearsal tips and advice

The following section is a combination of advice from some of our more experienced directors. If you're a new director, you may find it particularly useful when running rehearsals. This isn't an instruction manual, so read through and pick and choose what will help you.

- Get everyone in the cast and immediate crew to introduce themselves, say a bit about who they are and what they do both inside and outside of SLT.
- Show new people where everything is – loos, bar, wardrobe, green room, kit room, fly loft, so they feel more comfortable in the space.
- If possible, meet in the bar before you start rehearsals, and/or or do notes in there afterwards
- Try to do a vocal warm up and a physical warm up so actors don't go 'cold' into your rehearsal. If you're not sure what to do, ask your actors if they have something they'd like to lead the others with. Try to get everyone to do it – one or two may not but most will. There are many reasons for this – mostly it is to make that transition from the outer world to the specific world of the play you're working on and bring focus to the room.
- Encourage the cast to research if there is a particular history and context to the play so they get a sense of what it might have been like for their characters.
- Get the cast to **analyse who the characters are** – what is their story, where do they come from, what are their life experiences, and how do all those things affect how they see the world and what is in front of them?
- Get them to think about how their characters walk, stand, sit, and interact with others. Posture and speed of movement goes a long way to creating a character and can totally change how you see them.
- Ask your actors what they think the characters look like? Are they careful or careless in terms of their appearance? If their ideas don't chime with yours, see if there is room for manoeuvre. Often getting a bit of key costume can be a huge help with character development – a pair of glasses, a hat, a walking stick – you'd be amazed.

- Allow enough time for costume fittings. This can take longer than you think! The assigned wardrobe team member will need to have the script, discuss the vision with you, gather cast measurements and have time with the cast to try on costumes that they have pulled.
- If you need an actor to do something significant to their **appearance** such as hair, facial hair, talk to them before you start rehearsing so you don't have to negotiate halfway through the process. Some people absolutely love changing up their appearance; others are more circumspect. We're amateurs so there is a limit to what you can expect people to do (most people have to go to work with whatever you have lumbered them with).
- **Pin down any accents** as soon as you can. If help is needed call on those who specialise in vocal techniques, the language, or are from the place you are trying to conjure. (YouTube also offers lots of tutorials.) Even if it's just the pronunciation of a few words, it's worth getting it right early on.
- Try not to give line readings – actors should not just be copying the way you have imagined it in your head – but discovering their own interpretation. You may need to lead them there by trying different actions, or improvisation.
- Set **a date by which you need actors to put their books down**, and put this in the rehearsal schedule. You may need to be quite firm with this if you notice anyone in your cast hasn't put the necessary work in.
- Discuss **methods for learning lines**. In addition to apps or repetition, you can try breaking scenes down into units and working on those. Moving back and forth between units, some actors find they learn lines in these short units very quickly in the rehearsal process.
- Do take on board suggestions from the cast/your AD in terms of blocking, playing a scene, how to get a certain dynamic. You may have the overall picture of how you want the play to be, but other people have much to bring to the rehearsal process. You don't have to carry on with it if you don't think it works but don't dismiss their suggestions unless you have tried them.
- **Never** say 'we don't do that here' if someone suggests how to play a scene or asks to try a stagecraft technique, but be open to suggestions. Other people have huge amounts of life and other experience to bring to the rehearsal process, and doing things in a different way might greatly benefit the scene.
- **With difficult scenes** that aren't working it can be useful to employ some specific techniques. 'Actioning' can be very useful under the right circumstances – applying transitive verbs to individual actions to enable the actors to analyse the dynamics of a scene in detail.

- **Props** – get actual or dummy props and practise with them, especially if their character must prepare food for example, or carry out a complex sequence with a number of objects. Some people are hugely adept with props, others are not, and you may need to adapt the scene to your actor's capabilities.
- Similarly try to **get a sense of the actual furniture** so it's not a surprise when you get on set, or you have to re-block because there's no space to do what you'd rehearsed.
- **Practise with costumes** for as long as possible – especially if there are lots of changes to make sure you know how to put everything on in the right order. This is especially the case with complex period costumes, or with detailed uniforms.
- **Be kind and considerate.** Remember that one person's tease is another person's bullying – try to read the room and if someone seems discomfited, take them aside and ask them what the issue was. If people don't seem to be getting on with each other try to find out why and resolve it as soon as possible, with support from your rep if required. You cannot expect everyone to be great friends, but there must always be professional respect and courtesy in action.
- Be careful, especially with young and new members, that you don't over-focus on individuals so that they feel vulnerable. We strongly recommend not doing any one to one work without your AD or another cast member present. Socialising with individual cast members outside our bar (unless they're already friends of yours) should be avoided in case your intentions are misinterpreted.
- Please make sure you and your cast are familiar with our code of conduct and safeguarding policy. There's a lot of useful information here <https://www.southlondontheatre.co.uk/about-us/policies/>
- If there are **intimate scenes**, and you're unsure how to handle them, there are members who have expertise in this so we strongly encourage you to reach out to them. Be sure that no-one feels uncomfortable or under pressure to go beyond what feels right for them. Consent is very important.
- If you have any **fight scenes** in the show, for health and safety these should be rehearsed alongside your warm-up EVERY show night and dress rehearsal time. Engage the help of a fight coordinator early on.

Ticketing and Publicity

Once your rehearsals are underway, you'll be contacted by the Box Office and Publicity teams to get your show on sale and start promoting it.

Ticketing

Your casting announcement will trigger Box Office to set up a page for the show on [our TicketSource booking site](#). At some point midway through your rehearsal process you'll be asked for the following information to build out the event listing:

- A synopsis of the play - this is usually taken from the season description on our website, but this is an opportunity for you to update it if you want.
- The genre (comedy/drama etc).
- Details of the cast.
- Any content advisories (e.g. adult themes, minimum recommended ages, flashing lights).
- Estimated Running time (this can be a MIN-MAX time range at this point, or if we really have no idea - TBA).

To start with all shows will be allocated 50 seats to go on sale each night, until the exact number of seats is known following your get-in.

Encourage your cast to share the link www.ticketsource.co.uk/slt to friends and family, but please discourage them from buying tickets on behalf of others. It starts to get complicated when there are cancellations or exchanges and we must know who is in the building each night in case of emergency evacuation.

New members must NOT use their 2 free ticket allocation for others to come and see the show they're in - it's intended for the newbie to come and see subsequent shows or ones during their rehearsal period, and they should email boxoffice@southlondontheatre.co.uk to request redemption of those.

Publicity

Getting people involved in your show and getting an audience to watch it are both essential for a successful production. We'll give you lots of help, but much of the responsibility for promoting your show comes down to you and your cast.

We'll send you a separate publicity pack with details of what publicity activities are managed centrally by SLT, what you need to provide, and advice on what you should do. It's really helpful, so make sure you read it and take note of any deadlines.

The main things we provide are:

- **Printed posters and flyers.** Check the publicity pack for design specs.
- Listings in our regular newsletters to members
- Director's Preview of your show – published a couple of weeks before you go up.
(Publicity will send you some questions to respond to and request some rehearsal photos in order for this to be created,)
- **We'll create website and Facebook events,** Instagram and Bluesky posts for your performances - feel free to share these, and get your cast to do so too.
- **We also produce a programme** for the show. You'll be asked to supply information and rehearsal photos for it a few weeks before your show goes up. Don't forget to keep a list of everyone who helps you so you can give them a mention.

Your responsibilities include:

- **Giving the publicity team the information they need** by the deadlines they give you.
- **Sharing the official events and notifications** about shows.
- **Taking some photos throughout your rehearsal process**
- You and your cast **using your own networks and social media accounts** to get people interested - you can share photos from rehearsals if you like, but be careful about using copyright material.
- **Organising a photographer** to come to a dress rehearsal, so we get some photos to share on socials to promote the show and to go in our archives - we have a list of people you can ask.
- Completing the [SLT archive wiki](#) after your show with show details and photos so that we have a record for the archive - we'll provide guidelines on this

THE FINAL PUSH

Congratulations! You've rehearsed the show, it's on sale, and now you're ready to get into the theatre. This section will cover what happens over the next two weeks.

Get-in

You'll be able to get into the theatre at midday on your get-in day, and you might be able to help the previous production with their get-out to speed things up. Organisation is the key to a good get-in.

As we are a community theatre, it is expected that everyone involved in the show pitches in on get-in day.

Either you or your designer or stage manager should lead on pulling it together, liaising with your backstage supervisor who will coordinate a team of people to help with set building, painting, rigging lights and setting up sound. You'll need to have all your cast called (and maybe some other willing helpers if you have a small cast) to help with any shifting and lifting - including reorganising the seating if it needs to be moved. Your stage manager must be present at both get-in and get-out.

In advance of the get-in, you should have at least one production meeting with everyone involved. You can share the designs for the set and plans for sound and lighting. Establishing a plan for the day with a priority order and allocation of work will help things go smoothly. You should be able to use a lot of our existing scenery for most sets but make sure that anything additional has been ordered and will be delivered in time for your get-in.

The more you can get done on the day, the less will fall into the rest of run-up week, and the more time you'll have to rehearse.

The main things you'll need to try and get done on the day (or at least started) are:

- Building the set and any seat moving (if applicable)
- Ensuring any large items of set have arrived on site and are stored safely
- Checking sightlines, spacing and any safety elements in moving around the space
- Arranging the backstage area and props tables
- Getting the dressing room (Green Room) ready - this is the actors' home until get-out day

It's highly unlikely any rehearsal will happen on get-in day, but don't let your cast waste the time. If they aren't needed for shifting, it's a great opportunity to finalise costumes, find any last props, or just run lines. Get them to walk through their entrances and exits

on the day to make sure they are accessible - it's hard to make structural changes after this day.

Lighting design and rigging - get-in day.

Run-up week

This is when it really all starts coming together. It's when your cast gets used to working on the set, your crew learns and practises the technical side, and you sort out any last niggles. A rough guide to the week is as follows (though some elements can be flexible):

Sunday: Get-in day - all cast and crew

Monday: Light rigging and plotting (often cast not needed on this day)

Tuesday: Hanging of blacks (daytime), cue-to-cue (evening)

Wednesday: Set Painting (daytime), Stagger through Act 1 with tech, props and costumes (plus notes)

Thursday: Set Painting (daytime), Stagger through Act 2 with tech, props and costumes (plus notes)

Friday: Full show run, notes and tidy up/clear the space (see below)*

Saturday: No access to the theatre due to Youth classes and possible external evening show, so the theatre must be left clean, tidy and safe the night before

Sunday: No access to the theatre until 12.30pm due to possible external morning show. After this, normally a full dress rehearsal in the afternoon, followed by a cast and crew meal out

Monday: Full dress in show conditions - with photography

*The Youth Group uses the theatre space for their classes on Saturdays, so it must be left clean, safe and tidy on a Friday night. Put props in a safe place and don't leave ladders, paint etc lying around to create a safety hazard. As a courtesy, please talk to the Youth Theatre manager well in advance if you think your set may impact on their being able to run activities for 20 children in the space.

• **Please take a photo of your set and your seating configuration once finalised so that we can upload it to an archive for future reference** - send it to theatrecommittee@southlondontheatre.co.uk along with scans of any sketches or plans you have

From the dress rehearsal onwards, it's the Stage Manager's show. You can give notes after the dress, but after that directors are expected to step back and chill out, unless changes need to be made to the show because of unexpected emergencies. That means no notes after the first performance - just sit back and enjoy it.

Make sure actors are briefed and know what is going on each day. Managing their expectations is also an important part of this final week. Suddenly they may feel they are less important than all the other technical stuff that is going on!

Each show will need an audience announcement before it goes up. This is best done as a recording (by you or someone of your choice) to be played when the auditorium goes dark and the audience has settled, and you can adapt the style and content depending on the show you are doing. But there are some important points you will need to make:

- Turning off mobiles and other devices that might make a noise or light that could distract the actors or annoy the audience
- No taking photographs or filming
- A reminder that our bar will be open during the interval (if there is one) and after the show
- If applicable, a reminder that anyone leaving the auditorium can only be readmitted at the interval

Dressing Rooms

Each show is allocated a single dressing room from midday on get-in day to midday on get-out day: usually this is the Green Room on the first floor. We can allocate more rooms, for example if you have children in your show, but this should be the absolute exception, as it will stop other shows from having rehearsal space. Separate changing rooms for children is a topic covered in the Safeguarding & Chaperoning guidelines.

Your stage manager needs to make sure that the cast keeps the room tidy and that everyone has enough space. Any food in the Green Room must not be left uncovered.

Getting bums on seats

After your get-in you'll need to finalise the details of the show with Box Office and Front of House. They will want to know the exact number of seats available (which you'll be able to count once your seating layout is in place); the running time and whether there is an interval; and whether late arrivals will be admitted. This will depend on your layout, but you may be able to identify a point at about 10-15 minutes after the start when latecomers can be admitted without causing a disturbance.

The final week is when you and your cast really need to get promoting your show. If you haven't already, get it out there on your various social media accounts. Tell friends, family and colleagues. We'll be promoting it too, but the more you can do, the bigger your audiences will be.

One final note on tickets is that at SLT we have a rule that no-one is allowed to offer complimentary tickets for our shows. As a charity, we need to manage our income carefully and every ticket counts. That includes all directors and casts, for anyone including actors' agents. The only exception is the rights agent, which is part of our contract with them to put on the show. If you think you need to offer comps to anyone from outside our membership, perhaps as a thank you for any special voluntary help they've given you such as voice coaching, you must speak to the Box Office Manager first.

For anyone who's helped build your set, do please offer them a free seat at your dress rehearsal - it's good to have an audience, even if small, and it's a thank-you for them.

Performances

Once you've done your final dress rehearsal and given any notes, you hand the show over to your Stage Manager to run. You've done your job, so let them and the rest of the team get on with it. Sit back and enjoy. Please don't try and give notes or make any changes - trust them to get it right. If there is an issue, especially if it involves health and safety, always discuss it with your Stage Manager and agree on the best way to handle it.

Please be aware that while you may wish to watch the show every night, if you've sold out, you may have to watch from the tech box as we must prioritise seats for paying audience members.

End of show party

It's traditional to have some kind of celebration after the final performance. Everyone has worked hard by this point and letting off steam is a great final opportunity to foster our sociable SLT community and mourn the end of what has typically been a thrilling experience.

Celebrations usually (but not exclusively) happen in the bar, which can stay open until 2am if it's arranged in advance. It is your responsibility to arrange this with the Bar Committee and make sure you have trained bar staff signed up to run the bar for the full time you plan on having it open.

Do make sure you invite everyone involved in the show - including all your crew. If any non-member guests who've been to the show stay on for the party, that's fine, but please remember that all of you have responsibility for their behaviour. If any mess results, you and your cast have to clean it up!

Get-out

No-one wants to do it, but it's really important to get your whole cast and crew on board for your get-out - 10am sharp on the Sunday morning after you close. The more people you have, the quicker and easier it will be. You must have cleared the theatre and dressing room, leaving them clean and tidy, having returned all props and costumes, and removed any personal items by midday. If your show has a small cast and you have a big set to dismantle, it's worth asking the incoming show if they can help you out by coming in earlier to assist you.

That's a wrap

And that's it - congratulations!

Please get any outstanding expenses approved by the Theatre Committee using this form <http://www.southlondontheatre.co.uk/forms/expenses.pdf> with receipts attached, within one week of your show coming down. Make sure that you have shared the production photographs if not taken by our usual photographer, and you're done.

We really hope you enjoy your experience directing at SLT. And come back and do it again!

Appendix 1 - THE IMPORTANT STUFF

It may seem dull, but a lot of responsibility comes with directing a show at SLT. Please make sure you read this section to understand what this means for you.

Code of Conduct

We have a Code of Conduct that sets out how we expect our members, visitors and staff to behave. It's really just about being respectful of everyone and making SLT a great place to be. As a director, you need to be aware of what is expected of you and your team. You can find the Code of Conduct [here](#).

Working with children

We are very lucky to have a fantastic youth theatre at SLT, which is great if your show has children in the cast. We always have lots of volunteers who want to audition for shows, and the Youth Group leaders will be happy to help you arrange auditions.

Naturally we have a strict safeguarding policy for any work that involves children or vulnerable adults. If you want to include children in your show, that's great, but you'll need to familiarise yourself with the policy and contact our safeguarding officer as soon as possible for specific guidance for your show. You can find our safeguarding policy [here](#).

Smoking in shows

If your play is accepted for performance and it contains stage directions for the actors to smoke, please discuss this with Theatre Committee as we need to establish whether it's really crucial to the action or characterisation. If you can perform the play without smoking it simplifies matters, but if it's artistically appropriate then we'll ask you to use fake e-cigarettes or herbal cigarettes. These can only be used with your actors' consent, and you need to inform the House Manager so that a warning can be added to audience member and volunteer information.

Your stage manager will also need to disable smoke alarms for the duration of the section/s of the performance when smoking takes place.

Signing in and out

Always sign in and out on the sheets on the front desk, and make sure any cast or crew you are working with do the same. This is essential in the event of a fire as it will be used by the fire marshals to make sure the building is empty. During show week, your stage manager should set up a separate sign-in sheet for cast and crew only.

Access to the SLT Fire Station

To request a fob, please email fobs@southlondontheatre.co.uk Fobs cost £5 and will give you access to the front door and various internal doors. However, they also come with the responsibility of being the Building Guardian if you are first in or last out. You won't be allocated a fob until you've been trained to lock up either by an experienced person or at a training session. Please make sure you are familiar with the Building Guardian duties in the Building Guardian and Lead Fire Marshall guide. Regular fob training sessions are held.

(We're unable to allocate fobs to cast members - there are just too many of them, so we have to restrict it to directors and stage managers.)

There must be a minimum of two people in the building at all times, for your personal safety.

Building Guardian duties

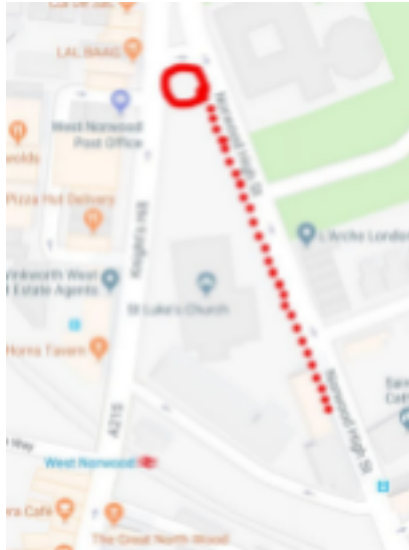
The Building Guardian is responsible for the security and safety of the building, for leading an evacuation, and for locking up at the end of the evening. It is essential to make sure that nobody is left in the building (especially unauthorised public that may have gained access)

On non-show nights whoever is running the bar is the Building Guardian. However, if there is no Bar Volunteer on-site, then the last responsible person on site takes on that role. As a director leading a rehearsal, this could be you if you and your cast are the last to leave the building.

On show nights the Building Guardian and Lead Fire Marshall will be one of the Front of House team or the Bar Volunteer, depending on how late it is. The Bar Volunteer will usually be responsible for locking up, unless a trained Fob Holder is staying later. If you stay later than the bar is open, the responsibility for locking up will pass to you.

Fire Evacuation

If an alarm sounds at any time evacuate immediately and proceed to the assembly point (St Luke's Church Gardens). The only exception to this rule is if you are (a) in the Theatre and (b) a public performance is in progress. In this case the Lead Fire Marshall or Stage Manager will announce the need to evacuate.



Please follow their lead. On non-show nights you (the Director) are responsible for ensuring that your cast and crew know the evacuation routes, and for leading them out in an evacuation (whether or not you are also acting as the Building Guardian).

Take the building sign-in sheets with you to check people off.

Fire Evacuation Assembly Point is ST LUKE'S CHURCH GARDENS

- On exiting the Fire Station, turn LEFT
- Do not cross the road
- Assemble in the Gardens

Appendix 2 - PROPS AND COSTUME ETIQUETTE

The locked props store is just off the Fly Loft, so please respect whoever is booked into the Fly Loft when accessing this space. If it's your production and somebody else needs it, please be understanding.

The smaller store is opposite the loos on the same floor, and is accessible at all times unless there's a show going on beneath.

We have a lot of props and costumes to manage - please follow these instructions.

- It's important to keep the stores as tidy as possible as our space is extremely limited
- If boxes are left out and props dumped, it becomes very difficult and potentially dangerous to manoeuvre around
- Please store your show props in **labelled boxes** on the Kit Room shelves during the rehearsal period. There just isn't room to store them in either of the props stores
- **If you need help locating certain props**, please email carole.ironside@icloud.com or wardrobe@southlondontheatre.co.uk We can tell you if an item is available/stocked and where to find it. Please check before you use your budget to buy something that's not immediately obvious!
- We're happy for you to root around for your treasures, but **please put unwanted costumes and props (and the boxes you've searched) back where they belong.**
- It's a good idea to take photos of the position of the boxes (most are labelled), and to **create a comprehensive "exit list"** to help during get-out to return things back to their owners or proper places.
- Please ensure costumes are washed before being returned, following instructions (ie hand wash only) as appropriate
- **The SLT Members Facebook group/hivemind** is a good place for sourcing items you need. Check with your cast and crew too!
- Please **check with us before you donate any items** you've purchased, created or had given to you as we only have very limited storage on site - we may ask you to take things away with you.
- **Do return the key and gun safe key** back to the keysafe when you've finished