



***The South Devon Players
Theatre & Film Company***

Cast & Crew Company Handbook



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Welcome to the South Devon Players Theatre & Film Company

This is a book (available as a PDF) on our website, and sent out to those who join our company as actors, or production crew. Everyone working with the company, permanently, or temporarily, is asked to work with us in a positive, safe team.

Over the years, we have found that sometimes there can be different expectations as to what to expect in a regional, largely female-led theatre company, so this document has been created to address some of the common questions or different expectations which may occur.

The intention is, that this book will clarify what to expect, and how we work.

SECURITY NOTICE:

Please be aware that any correspondence received from a contact address/ name other than those below (or that is not on headed paper and signed by hand, by a company director as registered with Companies House), should be disregarded and treated as unauthorised impersonation.

Email:

Please send all messages to the company owner, Miss Laura Jury on: southdevonplayers@gmail.com (emails checked twice daily). All messages for other persons in the company, will be acknowledged, and then forwarded to them directly.

Phone:

Call Laura Jury directly, on: 07855 090589 (If no reply please make sure to leave a text message or answerphone message).

If calling from outside the UK, the country code is +44.

Post:

Non-urgent postal mail to our rehearsal venue: c/o Chestnut Community Centre, 1-3 Poplar Close, Brixham, Devon TQ5 0SA (mail to this address is collected weekly at rehearsals. If you need to send something urgently or with more security, please email or phone us directly for a home postal address)

Website and main social media newsfeeds:

Website: www.southdevonplayers.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/sdevonplayers

Twitter: www.twitter.com/sdevonplayers

*The South Devon Players Theatre & Film Company, is the trading name of The South Devon Players Limited;
Registered at Companies House: Company number 11569166*

Overall expectations

We are an enthusiastic company of performers and creatives, who have come together to create professional theatre and entertainment.

Our actors and crew range from experienced veterans, through to complete beginners, all of whom work together. The company has, over the years, won a number of local, national and international arts awards and been nominated for many more.

All cast and crew, regardless of experience, are required to work together in a constructive, positive, and safe team, to create shows consummate with the quality expectations of such a company.

Sometimes, we will work, often digitally, with creatives from other countries. In those cases, as a British registered company, we are subject to British law, and require creatives who are citizens of other countries to work within those same parameters. Those laws may relate to data protection (GDPR), copyright & intellectual property, child protection (if working with children), work permits/ visas, equality/ discrimination laws, anti-bullying, to name but a few.

Cast and crew are required to be reliable, communicative, and not undermine/ gaslight others. There is no separation between cast and production/ tech team, all of whom work together to create a great show.

It must be remembered that everyone is equally important; whether the company owner, the lead actor, the ensemble actor, the understudies, the tea lady, the cleaner, the lighting and sound technicians, or anyone else. If that team is broken, the production falls apart. Therefore we do not permit belittling of any role or person in the show.

Equally no actor or crew member in a show is permitted to use their role to undermine, intimidate, harass, or bully other cast.

Sometimes members of the team will have more than one role in a show. They are expected to work focussed on the relevant role to the part of the production they are in. If a task is finished, and a new role taken on, then the role in hand needs to be the one focussed upon.

Actors and crew are required to be able to carry out the required tasks for their performance including learning lines/ cues/ blocking, attending rehearsals and performances.

Remember, you are joining a professional company not a drama school or an amateur group. If you have taken on a role advertised as requiring a particular skill, and not discussed any additional help or support you need at the outset to complete that role, we may have to recast/ re-crew.

Attendance

Cast and crew are all required to attend regular rehearsals and sessions. These usually take place once or twice per week. A minimum of 75% attendance of agreed rehearsals is required. Attendance means arriving at the rehearsal call time, and remaining for the entire required rehearsal.

It should always be remembered that while you rely on the other actors and production crew to be there so that you can create your best performance/ work, everyone else also requires exactly the same of you.

You cannot create the interpersonal dynamics with someone “reading in”. In shows with action scenes, special effects etc, it may also be a matter of everyone's physical safety that you are there. If someone is unreliable in timely rehearsal attendance or communication, we also have to assume that they will be unreliable for performances to a paying public.

It should be remembered that this is a workplace, not a hobby-club.

If attendance falls below 75% without prior agreement or someone no-shows, with no communication, to more than one rehearsal, the production crew reserve the right to recast or re-crew that persons role without any warning or discussion.

Actors and crew must remain at the rehearsal for the full duration of the rehearsal, until given permission to leave. Mid-rehearsal break is just that, required by union regulations (not to mention sheer comfort!) and does not constitute the end of the rehearsal day.

Direction

Our usual direction team comprises a director, and an assistant or trainee director who will cover for the director if the director is ill/ also performing in some scenes.

Directors will create the vision of the show, and while every director works slightly differently, it is all in a positive manner to ensure the best show, and performance possible – with the best interests of everyone in mind.

Cast and crew are asked to keep written notes of direction they are given, and to follow the same. We strongly recommend adding notes to your script, and require cast to bring a pen to rehearsals for that purpose. The ability and willingness to follow direction is required.

We have noticed a growing trend for some actors or crew new to the company, usually those who are inexperienced, or simply not used to being team-workers, to sometimes feel that they want to become backseat directors and decide that they will send additional notes or comments to other actors, belittle other actors, demand that other actors go against official direction, speak over direction, or resist official direction themselves etc. “Being Outspoken” is also not an acceptable excuse.

Backseat directing, actors giving notes to other actors, is prohibited, and will result in disciplinary procedures up to and including the culprit being removed from the production.
If a direction or note does not come from the official director(s), then it is not to be given.

If an actor has a note, question or suggestion, it is welcome, but must be made quietly and privately to the director only, and the directors decision on the matter is final. If someone receives illicit “notes” or direction from another actor, it should be brought to the production teams notice at once.

In rehearsals, actors are not permitted to sit at the directors/ stage managers desks without specific invitation.

We hope to soon open a directors training scheme based around shadowing and helping with smaller shows. This is currently not open.

In Rehearsals

In a rehearsal, we require our actors and crew to arrive at a set time, which allows for at least half an hour to prepare, discuss, ask questions, etc before the rehearsal “curtain up” time. (this may be 15 minutes for digital rehearsals) .

Actors and crew are asked to either wear costume, or if the costume is not available, they are asked to wear stage blacks ideally, or at least flat soft shoes and clothing that they are able to move in comfortably and modestly.

Everyone is also expected to bring their script, a pen or pencil, a notebook and their diary.

When rehearsal begins, everyone is expected to turn off and put away any phone, tablet or other digital device, excluding any device in direct use for the show. While someone may request to keep it on, on silent, in case of an emergency or expected message, they must not be distracted from following cues or lines, or from any required task, by use of the digital device, or prioritise the digital device over their rehearsal. It is also vital for rehearsals and shows that people are quiet “side-stage” and “backstage”.

After two hours, we will call a break, where questions may be asked, notes given. After notes, we have a 10-15 minute break, and then resume to the end of the session, where again, we will share notes, answer questions, and then pack things away. Sometimes some of the cast or crew may walk into town to have a post-rehearsal social at the pub, and any member of the team is most welcome to come.

Everyone is asked to help pack up and tidy up our hired rehearsal room to leave it ready for the next users of the building. This means that while the crew pack the props/ costumes/ technical equipment, everyone is expected to ensure that they have washed and put away any mugs or plates used, and put any rubbish in the bin. We then all leave.

A general rule, we do not permit cast or crew to bring relatives or friends to “come and pop along to sit in” rehearsals, although we welcome (and encourage) anyone new to working with us, to bring a friend or chaperone to auditions with us, and anyone involved in a scene coming under our intimacy policy (available on our website) is also encouraged to bring a chaperone to that rehearsal.

Anyone visiting our company for any reason, is required to follow the same rules of conduct, and awareness of theatre conventions, as our cast and crew.

Technical rehearsals

These are as important as acting rehearsals, and allow the technical team to ensure that the lighting, sound and other special effects work smoothly. You may also be asked to work with technical effects as part of your performance, for example interacting with a back projection, or cuing some of your action off a lighting or sound effect. It may also be as simple as standing on your stage mark, while the spotlight is adjusted to light your face, or to speak some of your lines so that sound levels can be perfected.

In between rehearsals

We maintain a locked facebook cast and crew group, where we can discuss, share resources, keep each other updated with news etc.

Understudies

We strongly encourage those new to acting, to join us as understudies. We encourage the understudy to be in the show (as one of the paid cast, usually in an ensemble role). While guaranteed a performance in that ensemble, you are more familiar with the show, should an understudy need to be called upon to take over a role. It is not down to "not being good enough", it is down to a simple way to build confidence, learn skills, and play a critically valuable part in the show. If you have been asked to be in the show, in ANY role, this means that you are considered to have the skills required to the full show standard.

Rehearsal locations

Physical rehearsals take place as a rule on Wednesday evenings and/or Sunday afternoons, in a community centre which we hire for those days, in Brixham, South Devon, UK. Actors and crew need to be able to attend in person, therefore we prioritise applications from the Devon area, and may discount applications where we feel that the actor may not be able to attend rehearsals on a regular basis.

Digital Shows.

Actors and crew working digitally, are required to be able to confidently use Zoom video conferencing as a rehearsal platform, with a clear webcam and microphone, and fairly steady WIFI, as a condition of being involved in the project. While we are happy to help with any finer points of Zoom use, we do require those working with us to have basic familiarity with the system prior to beginning.

Our broadcast technician uses software called OBS (Open Broadcast System) to link to an embedded show link on our website. (this allows us to run a ticketed event to earn ticket sales, so that the ticket money can be shared equally between everyone)

As the video feed goes through OBS, our broadcast technician adds in things like a countdown clock at the start, title cards between scenes / locations & times; and sound effects.

This is the reason for the statement that "what you see, isn't always what the audience sees."

Because of the way the OBS system and Zoom work, it isn't possible to feed the final stream back to the cast as it is being performed. This is also why we need to be so strict on the split second timing of the cues. The reason the crew will require you to work tightly to cues to stand by, and activate your camera and microphone, is so that things can be cued.

Additionally, activating your camera and/ or mic too early eats Zoom bandwidth away from those who are performing, resulting in a sub-par experience for the audience including: juddering images, sound & video not syncing, the camera pulling away from the performance to you, distracting sounds, the broadcast technician unable to run other cues, and breaking of the whole audience experience.

*“Mic on – Cam on
Cam off – Mic off”*

When you are given a “Go” cue in the chat window, you need to turn your mic on, and then camera on. This means that you will not forget to put your mic on, and be performing silently. At the end, when your character has exited, you turn your camera off and then your mic off. This means that the click of your mic going off, is covered by the sound of the next scene beginning.

Never ever use the spacebar as a shortcut in Zoom. While the clicks seem quiet, they are picked up in OBS and the broadcast, and distract the audience.

As a general rule the available view of Zoom is drawn to whichever camera source is making noise, and only works with one camera at a time. Occasionally with the internet there can be a lag.

The cues (or framing, see below) are not there to interfere with the creative performance choices within a scene, but are simply technical points to ensure that they are shown to the audience in the best way with the tech available. We are also not altering the text in any way, other than for things which would not physically work in a zoom environment.

We also mention framing in the webcam, because while on the Zoom screen, you may look beautifully framed, the OBS system tends to crop a little, so the broadcast technician may ask you to work differently with your framed image, to ensure that OBS doesn't crop you in the audience view.

We do ask the actors to additionally work with the technical team - because of the constraints of digital performance, Zoom allows for digital backdrops which for this, take the place of a theatre set. so we will need everyone to work with a blank wall/ curtain or rigged sheet so that the backdrop image is clear (note that some more powerful laptops may not need this, and work from any backdrop, but for those of us with older laptops, they tend to need the plain background). Digital backdrop images for each scene are provided by the crew.

We will also ask about light (only the lighting in your working room, nothing you need to additionally get) to get you lit as well as possible (using the principles of three - point lighting) and this only involves what you have to hand: ceiling lights, desk lights, phone torch, for examples. We try to get everyone as uniform as possible for continuity.

So, on the day, what the audience see from the viewing link they are given via our website, is a countdown clock, the opening title card, and then the performance begins, the camera on whoever is speaking/ active at the time, with the relevant sound effects, scene/ location cue cards as the story progresses between locations and eras. At the end they see the credits.

What we see, is the Zoom window, one another and those cues going in.

Dropped signal is always a fear for us all, but luckily is pretty rare. To minimise this, make sure you have your workspace close to your router, or a signal booster, and that you have other apps or browsers using the internet, closed at the time.

A lot can be choreographed through Zoom. Through simple sleight of hand tricks it can look as if one person is passing another a prop through the screen. The same principles can be applied to full fight choreography – we ran a magnificent and convincing sword fight between Macbeth and Macduff, in a

recent Shakespearian zoom production. Workshops are provided. As with fight choreography in a physical space, we require that exact choreography is learned, and that nothing is rehearsed without the fight trainers present.

Shows (physical)

Our shows are performed for three performances over two days (usually Friday Night, Saturday Matinee, and Saturday Evening) at our home town Brixham Theatre. This usually begins our tour and actors may be asked to attend additional days that final week for rehearsals at the theatre, because the in house theatre technicians also need to learn the show, and what we are doing.

Following this, we go on tour on subsequent Friday/ Saturdays, at venues currently around the Southwest but hoping to expand, where we have a daytime “getin” and setup, and evening performance. These often involve quite a bit of travelling as they are not usually overnight events. Actors need to have, in rehearsals, noted guidance on blocking for the different venues (most spaces are different from one another). Photos and 360 videos of the different venues are shared in the cast and crew facebook group, for reference.

Venues

Whether a rehearsal venue or a show venue, our actors and crew are expected to arrive on time, behave in a professional manner befitting a touring professional company, respect the venues “in-house” rules and staff.

The venue (all areas) must be left clean and neat, as you would wish to find it, when we leave. This means making sure that you leave your dressing room and performance space clean and neat, washing and putting away any mugs or plates that you have used, putting rubbish in your dressing room bin, returning props and costumes to the crew for packing and storage, and leaving the whole space as you found it, with no rubbish or damage, or abandoned items.

Cast and crew are not permitted to break into locked spaces like climbing into locked car parks, picking the locks on a cupboard out of curiosity, or forcing locked doors. If there is an emergency, please contact venue staff to assist you.

We do not permit backstage guests. The people allowed back stage are venue staff, and our cast and crew only, or in an emergency, identified members of the emergency services. If meeting friends/ family, or signing autographs, this must be done at the stage door, or in the theatre bar, after the show, once you have changed into your street clothes, and ensured your dressing room space is tidy and clean (packed up if required) .

Props

Props are either the property of the company or of someone loaning them. They must not be played with, moved, and, after use, must be put back in their place immediately their scene is finished.

Weapon props are under the charge of the designated production armourer, they must not be taken out of the rehearsal/ performance space, played with, or used to threaten another, even jokingly, outside specific fight choreography rehearsals. Wandering off with a prop is not acceptable.

Fight scenes

Any actor involved in a fight scene is required to attend the fight choreography sessions, to learn the choreography, and to keep full notes. Improvisation, or playing around with weapons will lead to dismissal from the scene, and if that means that the role is lost, as the fight is unavoidable for the character, then that will be the case. Fight scenes must not be rehearsed without the choreographer present.

Wardrobe

Costumes are supplied by the production, either owned by the company or members of the crew (or occasionally hired in).

Costumes need to be taken care of – kept hung up when not in use, clean, and not worn while eating or smoking.

If a cast or crew member buys an item of costume, or an accessory, that can only be reimbursed as agreed beforehand by the company directors. At such time as it is reimbursed, it becomes the property of the company.

Copyright

Materials (scripts, music, sound effects, photos/ graphics) are all copyright-owned by the company, licenced for specific production use by the owner, or are creative commons licenced.

It is critical that all production materials are treated as if copyrighted, and that nothing is assumed to be “free for use”. This also means that we do not permit “passing a copy of the script along to a friend”, or use of / reproduction any production materials outside of the production, in any medium, for any purpose.

Clips of performance recordings or photos are usually made available to actors and crew for their personal portfolios / showreels after the show. If the show is written by an external author, then it must be with their approval.

If you should wish to use any production materials outside of the production, this can only be done with the written permission of the copyright holder.

On a wider scale, there are a number of misconceptions regarding the use of copyrighted material:

If it is on the internet, you are free to download and use it in any way you wish:

Incorrect. Most material on the internet is copyrighted and will require a fee – or at the very least written permission - for use. The only exception is CC (Creative commons) licenced material. There are a number of licencing formats for Creative Commons content, including free for use with attribution, free for use without being edited, free for use with being edited, free for non-commercial use only. It is important that you check on the type of CC licence in place for the work. If in doubt, you can find out more about CC licencing at www.creativecommons.org.

NOTE: if an item does not come with a CC licence attached, then its copyright belongs to someone, whom you will need to contact to use the work. For the purposes of our cast and crew, we ask that all work is treated as if copyrighted, and any decisions about using CC-licenced work, is left to the senior production crew.

For any CC work used, full credit must be given to the original creator of the work.

If you are not charging money from a project/ performance involving the piece of work, it is free to use:

Wrong. If the work is copyright, then it still needs all the usual permissions. It may be possible to use some short excerpts in educational settings (like classrooms) to which an audience is not invited. As soon as you are using longer sections, inviting an audience, and/or charging for the event in which the work is being used, you need to get all the full permissions.

You didn't know who to contact regarding use so you went ahead:

This wouldn't stand up in a court of law. If you cannot locate or make contact with the creator of a piece of work, you simply cannot use it.

Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs)

In our company these link heavily to copyright and intellectual property. These are extremely common in professional theatre, film and television.

For example, you may be asked to not announce your role in a new production, until the company announce it.

Commonly, you will not be permitted to take selfies/ other photos in rehearsals or on set for your social media (please speak to the company for official photographs), share scripts or photos of scripts which may infringe writers copyrights or give spoilers, discuss the production publicly without permission (unless of course something has gone horribly wrong and you need to contact union, medical, or law enforcement authorities), or discuss production methodology publicly. If you are working with someone famous, you are likely to be required to not discuss their presence.

A safe rule of thumb with our company is that if information is on our public social media (NOT the locked cast/ crew groups, which remain private) then you are free to share it publicly, but if it is not, then you are unlikely to be allowed to share it.

Any cast/ crew wishing to take or share photos, make or share recordings, etc, that have not been put on our public social media (twitter and facebook @sdevonplayers) must get written company permission to do so.

Publicity

Show posters, watermarked rehearsal/ production photos, and press releases, available on www.southdevonplayers.com, or on www.facebook.com/sdevonplayers, may be openly shared at any time to promote shows and sell tickets.

No images or text may be edited, cropped, dubbed, or altered in any manner. Cast and crew are not permitted to use selfies, rehearsal recordings, unwatermarked images, or content from the locked “cast and crew” discussions, without written company permission.

No content may be used to promote any other company unless agreed in writing with the South Devon Players company owners.

Shows are advertised via poster displays, door to door leaflet drops, press releases, listings on events websites and social media, radio interviews, publicity stunts/ walkabouts, etc.

Anyone doing any publicity for the company is required to maintain a positive, approachable, professional image while doing so. (for example delivering posters after drinking several pints of beer while singing rugby songs, would not go down well!)

Nobody must create any additional videos, or other publicity that may infringe another's copyright (just because something is on the internet, does not make it free for you to use).

Social Media

Everyone's personal social media is just that. We don't wish to control how you use your social media, other than noting the copyright and NDA clauses above.

Once it is public that you are working with us however, we do prefer that you keep a socially acceptable image by refraining from things like posting sexually explicit content, content which promotes discrimination on grounds of race/ gender/ sexuality/ religion, or being abusive/ defamatory to others.

Many of our people add each other on social media, however nobody is under any obligation to add anyone whom they do not wish to.

Data Protection

In simple terms, we cannot use people's contact or personal information for any purpose other than that which they have agreed to in writing. We cannot pass on people's details to others, with the only exclusion of law enforcement or medical professionals (upon seeing formal identification), in an emergency. We will ask for information for production use only, including contact details, clothing measurements, and how to pay you, but this is destroyed at the end of each production. If someone leaves before a show run is complete, their details will be destroyed at that time.

Child Protection

It is rare that we have a child in our productions, and there are specific and detailed regulations on the law surrounding child actors, also available from our child protection policy at www.southdevonplayers.com (governance tab)

Any child wishing to work with us, must ensure that their parent contacts us in the first instance. If a child contacts us, they will be asked to put their parent in contact with us. If an unaccompanied child comes to any audition or rehearsal, the production team will call the police or social services to ensure that the child is returned home safely.

Any child actor must be accompanied at all times by a licenced chaperone, or parent acting as chaperone, including in rehearsals and performances, as well as travelling to and from same. If a parent is unable to attend with the child, the parent must supply a licenced chaperone to accompany the child, our company will need to see a copy of the chaperones licence upon arrival.

Only the child's parent or a licenced chaperone, is permitted to accompany the child, and they must be fully conversant with, and observe, our child protection policy. They must not ask any other crew member or actor to accompany the child or to break child protection laws.

Equal Opportunities

We pride ourselves on being an equal opportunities organisation. We welcome a diverse range of people, with no discrimination against anyone, regardless of gender-identity, disability, political or religious beliefs, nationality, racial origin, socio-economic background, parental status, previous education/training, union membership status, marital status. No person working with us, is to be discriminated against, on any of these statuses.

Disabilities access meeting

All persons working with us, at the start of each new project, are offered a private disabilities access meeting, with a member of senior production staff. If someone has a disability (visible or otherwise) and may require specific achievable accommodations to confidently carry out their role, we strongly encourage such a meeting in order to find out how best we can support that person. It is, of course, each person's choice as to what they may wish to disclose or not, but we cannot help if we are not aware.

People trafficking

We have been approached a number of times, being asked to bring people (often, but not always, unaccompanied teens and preteens) to the UK, “in secret” without any visas or work permits “to make them famous”. This is illegal people trafficking and all instances are now reported to the Police in both our country and that of the person contacting us, as well as to international anti-slavery organisations, and child protection organisations in the persons home country.

Foreign Workers

Anyone who is a citizen of a foreign country, may be asked to show us their visa or work permit, allowing them to work in the UK before receiving any offer of work. Accepting foreign workers is subject to them fulfilling UK regulations for foreign workers which are active at the time.

Tax

All earnings as self employed actors or creatives, inclusive of profit shares, must be declared to HMRC or the equivalent tax office in the creatives home country, as the responsibility of the person earning the money.

Appropriate behaviour

Whatever the content of our show, we do not permit any sexual humour/ explicit jokes to be made. Bullying, belittling, touching people inappropriately, simulating or miming sexual activity is also not permitted. While these things may be mentioned in a script, it is not to take place outside of the formal rehearsals (please see our intimacy policy for specific guidelines on rehearsing such scenes).

We also consider backseat directing, no-showing to rehearsals/ performances, breaking copyright, or bullying/ gaslighting, to be inexcusable inappropriate behaviour.

In the past we have had a few people join the company looking for – and harassing other cast/ crew for - sexual partners, fetish activities, etc. This is sexual harassment and is grounds for instant dismissal from a production.

We also ask that all cast and crew minimize strong language in the workplace.

Shouting; aggressive or intimidating tones in speech/voice/language/ text; belittling, gaslighting, or other forms of intimidating or coercive behaviour are not permitted. In the first instance, we encourage an amicable discussion, in case it is simply a clash on a stressful day, or a misunderstanding; but if it continues, or that discussion is not possible, further action up to, and including dismissal from the projects, will need to be considered.

All concerns about sexual or other harassment, intimidation or bullying, should be brought to the immediate attention of the company directors (Please email southdevonplayers@gmail.com) . We also fully support any wider contact (EG seeking Union or mediation advice) to resolve these issues. At the end of the day, it is critical that we are a safe, respectful place in which to work.

Equality

All cast and crew are welcomed and in a safe space regardless of skin colour, ethnicity, religion, gender identification, sexual orientation, political affiliation, or native language. Any behaviour which discriminates against someone on grounds of any of these characteristics, is grounds for a warning, and if it continues, dismissal.

If in a script or show, a statement is made or a word spoken, of another language or culture, and a verified native of that language or culture corrects us, we will verify and work with that correction. We will not knowingly caricature other cultures or languages.

If a script blatantly depicts another culture/ nationality in full or part, we will make every effort to consult with natives of that culture/ country, in order to ensure accuracy and respect.

If depicting a character with sexist, racist or other discriminatory views in a play, that character is very clearly a character who is a racist or discriminatory character, and their beliefs, while depicted, are not glorified or shown as “good”, and must not spill over beyond what is shown on the stage.

Payments

Payments can work one of two ways. There may be a show profitshare, or a fee. Whichever is relevant to the project is advertised. If the opportunity comes later, through grant funding, or sponsorship etc, to upgrade everyone from profitshare to higher amounts, of NMW or above, then that happens automatically. However, we never promise what we cannot deliver. If someone leaves before a show “run” is complete, they will only be paid for the performances in which they appear.

Profitshares are where cast and crew each receive an equal share of profits from ticket sales. In this case, the ticket sales have the cost of the performance venue deducted (no other production costs are deducted), and that final amount is what is shared by cast and crew. It is equally divided by the number of people involved in the show.

We do not deduct rehearsal hire, props/ costumes, licences, etc, because those costs are fundraised for separately through our market stall, Ebay shop, Redbubble shop and the activities of the Friends of the South Devon Players.

Screenshots of the ticket sales and show venue hire costs are shared to the cast in the cast and crew facebook discussion group.

Flat fees are the other way a show may be paid. Ultimately, this is our ideal way of working. This happens when a show has received grant funding, or we are being commissioned by an outside body. The aim in all cases is to ensure that Equity minimum is paid. (by law NMW will be covered).

Occasionally, we will accept a lower paid project, if it is in aid of a local bona-fide charity, or student project, and if we happen to be available at the time. The project must not leave our cast or crew out of pocket or impact upon their work time.

Contracts

Perusal copies of our actors and crew contracts are available on our website under the auditions and governance tabs.

We do require that all cast and crew (and other contractors), sign, and return, copies of the relevant contracts. They may be terminated in writing by either side, or it will be deemed to be broken, if someone has, for example, no-showed to rehearsals and thus been recast, or if they have been removed from a production due to inappropriate behaviour.

Cast and crew will not be permitted to commence work with us, until the contracts have been signed.

We encourage cast and crew to also provide the contract details to their agents if relevant, and are more than happy for cast and crew to confirm any contractual details via their union.

Contracts, and agreements in all matters, must be filled out and returned in person or via email (southdevonplayers@gmail.com) to a company director as registered on Companies House, who are the only persons authorised to countersign a contract and make agreements/ reports on a contractual, employment, copyright, financial, legal or employment basis for the company. No other person may recruit/hire/fire, make agreements or sign contracts on behalf of the South Devon Players.

Disciplinary

In general terms, we have a three step disciplinary procedure, when things go wrong.

The first step will be a verbal warning and discussion of the problem, and how to rectify the situation.

The second step takes place if the person continues the same problematic actions, or if they then begin a second problematic action. This is a written warning from the company owners, outlining the problem, and reiterating the steps needed to ensure that it does not happen again.

If someone receives a first or second level disciplinary, it will remain on record for one year, and any further infractions, will receive the next highest step.

The third step, if the previous steps are ignored, is dismissal from the company.

In certain cases we may move straight to the third step, if someone's safety, or the well-being/ quality of a production is deemed at risk. These extreme cases are likely to include (but not limited to): sexual impropriety, abusive behaviour, repeated reports of bullying, threatening or committing violence, theft, no-showing to rehearsals or performances, extreme cases of backseat directing, breaking child protection laws, or generally bringing the company into disrepute.

If it feels like something that the company cannot cope with "inhouse", for example if a company owner is being targeted, or the situation is complex, we do reserve the right to contact official bodies, like trade unions, law enforcement, social services, etc; for additional advice, and mediation.

Complaints/ concerns/ feedback

We take the wellbeing of the cast and crew (as well as of venues and audiences) extremely seriously. If things have gone wrong, they need to be sorted out, so if there is a problem, please contact us. (We also like positive feedback so if you have anything good to say that is also great, and we will share with cast and crew)

Cast and crew will usually have an in-house union representative for Equity and BECTU, and they are

your first port of call for any personnel concerns.

You are also able to approach your show director with any questions, or the company owners, to discuss any production concerns. Remember we want everyone to be happy and safe.

Audiences, and venues, please contact southdevonplayers@gmail.com (our main company email) with any concerns, which will be investigated and responded to.

If a problem is something with which we are unable to deal, for any reason, or if we, as a company need additional advice, we will refer the query to specialists, eg Unions, law enforcement, Citizens Advice, to resolve the matter in the most positive way possible. If any of our team are advised to undertake additional training, then this is to be complied with.

Nobody should feel any fear about approaching the company directors with any concerns at all, regardless of any personal friendships, contacts or work relationships.

If you wish to get external advice then you have access to the following professional bodies

Equity - <https://www.equity.org.uk>

Bectu - <https://bectu.org.uk>

Policies and governance

We consider it extremely important to have strict operating procedures, which are updated regularly. These ensure that we are working both within the law but within ethical best practice.

We do ask that everyone working with us, is familiar with the policies and guidelines by which we operate. These can be found at <https://www.southdevonplayers.com/governance-documents.html>

Frequently asked questions

- **I am only looking for a hobby and cannot attend regularly. Is there a place for me?**

Unlikely. As a professional company, we have strict rules about attendance, reliability, and high quality. Everyone involved is critical to the show.

- **Can I use my work in this company towards getting my Equity card?**

Yes, absolutely. In fact, several people have done so. Equity will ask you for written confirmation of the work, and amounts earned. You need to be able to show a total of £500 earnings from your work as an actor, to be accepted for membership.

- **Can I use my credits from working within this company towards my Spotlight membership?**

This is a question for spotlight. We are aware of an actor who used his theatre credits with us towards his Spotlight membership. They were initially rejected but after we supplied a letter confirming that it was paid work, on our letter headed paper, he informed us that they accepted the credits.

- **I would like to be involved but I do not like to go out in the evening. What can I do?**

This will limit what you can do, however, you may be able to get involved behind the scenes, with publicity, making props/ sets, fundraising etc.

- **Can I get a weeks work experience for school with your company?**

We take people on for the duration of a show run which usually spans more than a week, working on a handful of days per week. For a school placement needing a week of fulltime work, we cannot take anyone on. There are also specific regulations about ages and what work can be done on a theatre set, by someone who is a minor.

- **Someone told me that they can get me a role with your company. How does this work?**

This is not possible. Our open auditions welcome anyone who wishes to try out for the shows. There is no “fast track” in to bypass this. Nobody who has any authority with our company would tell you any different. Occasionally we may contact people who auditioned for us before, who really impressed us, when a new casting comes up, but all roles are allocated by audition.

- **I am not a member of a union, can I still be involved?**

Absolutely. We are a complete mix of union and non-union members.

- **I only have amateur or school experience. Will you still audition me?**

Absolutely. We cast on talent and professional aspect, not on past resume's . We will be expecting you to work to our standard and commitment, but many happily make that step.

- **Do you only cast people you know, or quietly pre-cast? (do I actually have a chance of being cast?)**

We do not pre-cast. Any role being advertised is up for audition equally. It may go to someone we have worked with before, or it may go to someone new; it is all down to who turns out to be most perfect for the part. There is no bias.

- **Do you accept scripts from external new writers?**

We currently do not. This may change in the future, but for now, we have our scripts and inhouse writers. Any script we look at, when a call may go out in the future, must be marketable with an engaging and familiar hook for audiences, and be linked to researched history set ancient times to 1900, or classical literature. We prefer shows without excessive sexual content.

- **Do you need any music for your shows?**

Not at the moment. Should we seek a composer, we will advertise through our crew team.

- **Can you come and perform some street theatre for our event?**

We are not a street theatre company, most of our shows require detailed staging. We will discuss street events themed alongside our shows, of the time of your event, ensuring that there are cordoned or defined performance areas, and remuneration for our cast/ crew.

- **Do you have actors or technicians available for outside work?**

We operate an in-house agency, and certainly have actors and crew available for external paid work.

- **Are you the same company as Brixham Theatre, Brixham Operatic And Dramatic Society, or Project X?**

No, all of these, and we, are separate organisations and companies, working within theatre (amateur and professional, respectively, depending on the specific organisation). There are people who work with more than one of the companies, but they are all separate organisations.

- **Are your shows about pirates?**

No. While Brixham has a large annual pirate festival, and we do run fundraising activities at the Festival, we are not a pirate themed company. The majority of our work is not about pirates.

- **How do I know if your shows contain swearing, nudity, violence, loud sounds, strobe lighting or other things that may affect if I, or friends/ relatives, would like to see the show?**

We state these details on our website (www.southdevonplayers.com, on the box office tab) as well as on our show posters in the “content advisories” section. If you then have additional questions, please contact us directly to ask about them and we will be pleased to help.

– **What is the company name?**

The South Devon Players Theatre & Film Company. We often call ourselves SDP for short.

– **How can I find out about upcoming auditions, crew calls or shows?**

Our website has sections for auditions and crew calls. When new ones come up, we also announce them on our social media accounts.

– **Do you accept child actors or child crew?**

Only very rarely, when a casting calls for a child role. We do not accept child stage crew.

Useful Online Resources

(Free to access. Cut and paste web addresses into your computer browser)

Office/Admin

Openoffice - is a free answer to Microsoft Office, with added functionality of being able to export documents direct to PDF. / <https://www.openoffice.org>

Quickfile - is a free business/ accounting program, for up to 1000 ledger entries. - <https://www.quickfile.co.uk>

Zoom is free for up to 40 min calls, using video-conferencing to work - especially useful during the Covid-19 lockdowns/ <https://zoom.us>

GIMP is the internet's free answer to Photoshop. Very powerful, and with some great third-party plugins available, you can create your show posters, video overlays, image watermarks, batch edits and anything else with ease. / <https://www.gimp.org>

Video editing

Hitfilm Express is a programme that contains basic video editing. It is also easy (and cheap) to buy add-on packages for special effects, motion graphics and more. / <https://fxhome.com/hitfilm-express>

NCH VideoPad is a very simple but robust video editing program, ideal for beginners or lower capacity hardware. The non-commercial version is free (please make sure you are honest about how you are using it)./ <https://www.nchsoftware.com/vidiopad/vpsetup.exe>

Da Vinci Resolve is a complex program for more advanced video editing, with a specialism in colour correction. Do note that you will need a more powerful computer to run Resolve - Laura's 4gb ram laptop can't do it. / <https://www.blackmagicdesign.com/products/davinciresolve>

Audio Editing

Audacity is a fantastic, fully free, audio editing, recording and mixing program, with some excellent sound correction and noise removal functions./ <https://www.audacityteam.org>

In the Theatre

Mixx is free "DJ" software, but ideal for mixing different inputs from sound, eg microphones, and sound effects, or microphones and backing music. Can be integrated with Itunes <https://www.mixxx.org>

Freestyler is free stage lighting control software, ideal for production lighting. You will of course need to use this linked to external lighting equipment to control the lights. <http://www.freestylerdmx.be>

Open Broadcaster Software, allows you to create and stream live broadcasts to the platform of your choice (youtube, facebook live etc) from your computer/ webcams etc. <https://obsproject.com>

MapMap is a free projection-mapping program that allows you to project images or video onto any surface of your choice (you will of course need to use this with a projector) <https://mapmapteam.github.io>

Theatre stage layout

