



Costume Lead – Job Description

The costume lead is a voluntary role. The costume lead will be responsible for liaising with the director and production team/committee on all matters related to costumes for the specific show you are appointed to. You will need to organise a team of people/volunteers to support you during the rehearsal period and the production run, but the production team/committee will also support with introducing you to potential team members. You do not need to be able to sew or make costumes from scratch to lead the team, as long as you can recruit some team members able to support with sewing for costume alterations and fixes during the show run.

Most of our costumes are hired (though for some shows, we have avoided hiring by sourcing items and making some ourselves to reduce costs). The committee will be responsible for approving and paying for any costumes hired but the lead may act as the point of contact with the hire company if appropriate. Some directors will have specific ideas on what they want for costumes and the costume lead will need to ensure any choice of hired costumes are also approved by the director.

The production team/committee will set a budget that you will need to work within/to.

In no particular order, and not a mutually exhaustive list, the costume lead will also need to:

- Look at a Character List and liaise with the Director about costume requirements of the show
- Put together a basic costume list for cast detailing what they will need to provide themselves (eg. certain shoes/tights/socks etc.)
- Organise a costume team, contacting potential members with show dates to check availability
- Look at sets of costumes available for hire within the budget
- Decide what can be made, what needs borrowing and/or what needs to be hired balancing the best use of budget with achieving the best looking costumes for the show (you could contact other societies or groups about borrowing/buying items from them if appropriate and you should find out what items are in the COS store that might be able to be used before hiring items)
- Ascertain whether this show requires wigs and appoint someone to lead on this or liaise with the Exec Committee who can arrange for someone to lead on wigs as necessary/appropriate (there are some wigs in the COS store that can be used)
- Attend some rehearsals to take cast measurements (see later for more information on this)



- Attend some show runs and/or liaise with creative team to ascertain when there might be quick changes, how many this may involve and work out key points in show where you need your team to be to support with any of these as necessary
- Let the Exec committee/production team know of any known risks presented by items of costume to include in the show risk assessment
- Create a rota for the costume team for the show run to make sure you have enough people to support with quick changes and running repairs (amount needed will depend on the show itself)
- You will need to organise getting items needed for running repairs during the show run and any extra costume rails you think you might need (dressing rooms have a rail in) – we have some of this in our store including a haberdashery box and sewing machine so please liaise with the Exec committee/production team on this
- Arrange to receive delivery of the costumes, check they are all there, note any obvious marks/damage and then label up for individual cast to try on
- Arrange a costume call for cast to come and try on their costumes (this is often before get in or could be arranged on get in day – will depend on schedule and when the hire company can deliver/arrangements we have with the Mercury in place to use dressing rooms/space)
- Set up costume area for running repairs/cast support once in the theatre
- Watch tech and/or dress to determine any adjustments to the look of costumes that might be needed (liaising with director on this also)
- Make sure cast know of any particular care they need to take of particular costume items
- Ensure cast know how to return costumes at get out and organise collecting them all in and checking them all off, ready for hire company to collect
- Supervise returning costumes to the hire company at get out to ensure all are returned as per our hire agreement

Taking Cast measurements

Recording people's measurements counts as biometric data, which is special category personal data in data protection law. Therefore, extra care needs to be taken about how this data is stored and who it is shared with. Please read and ensure you follow our privacy policy and data protection policy. When you take cast measurements, please ensure you do this in a private space (though if working with under 16s a chaperone may need to be present and you should make sure there are always 2 trusted people present in addition to the cast member) so others (not on costume team or chaperones) aren't watching and don't get to see or hear other cast's measurements. Measurements should be kept stored safe and only shared if necessary for the purpose of costuming the show with relevant appointed



people. Once a show has finished all personal information should be securely destroyed (i.e. shredded).

Useful Tips:

- You need plenty of black clothes to wear backstage and black footwear
- You may need a small torch with you if doing quick changes backstage as you'll likely be working in limited lighting or in the dark
- Charity shops and websites like Amazon and eBay are particularly useful for buying any supplementary items you might need
- Keep all your receipts so you can claim money back out of your budget
- Keep a record of what has been spent so you stay within your budget
- If in doubt, ask for help as there is usually someone who knows the answer