



Hire Pack

Part One – Hirers Information

The instructions and guidance given in these notes form part of the contract between The Courtyard and The Hirer.

The Courtyard – Facilities available for public performances

Main House

The Main House is The Courtyard's principal performing space. Modelled on a traditional Jacobean-style courtyard theatre with seating on three sides, it seats around 400 people on raked and gallery seating, depending on the configuration. It is suitable for all kinds of performances, presentations, films and other public events. The auditorium can be either fully seated or flat floor, as it has a retractable seating system. There is also a large orchestra pit. We will be able to discuss your individual layout requirements before you make a booking.

Studio Theatre

The studio theatre is The Courtyard's more intimate performance space, accommodating 130 people on raked seating. Again this raked seating is suitable for films, exhibitions or cabaret style events.

Charges & Premiums

For full details of charges, please refer to the current schedule of Fees & Charges, available as a separate document. Please note that premiums do apply to Sunday bookings, Bank Holiday bookings and for late night or early morning working.

All hirers are expected to treat the venue and its facilities with respect and to keep backstage areas tidy. We reserve the right to levy excess cleaning charges where this is necessary. In addition, any breakages as a result of negligence or lack of care by the hirer or their representatives will be chargeable.

All performance hires or those hiring the Main House or Studio must have a minimum of £2m public liability insurance. We may ask to see proof of this at any reasonable time. Failure to provide this will result in denial of access, though all charges will still apply.

All visiting companies must comply with the licensing conditions at all times. In addition, all policies concerning health and safety must also be complied with. Copies of these documents are available on request.

Technical Arrangements

The Courtyard Technical Department welcome the opportunity to have an informal production meeting with theatre hirers prior to their visit to The Courtyard to discuss the forthcoming presentation in person, offer advice and talk through any potential difficulties. It is a requirement that the Hirer provides certain information prior to their get in (see below). Please phone 01432 346508 or email to arrange a mutually convenient time to meet.

Staff Contacts

Technical Manager:	Dave Beever	dave.beever@courtyard.org.uk
Chief Technician:	Nick Acons	nicholas.acons@courtyard.org.uk
Projectionist:	Simon Nicholls	simon.nicholls@courtyard.org.uk
Technical Admin Assistant	Lucy Hemmings	lucy.hemmings@courtyard.org.uk

The Hire Period

The earliest get-in time is usually 10.00am. If required, an earlier get-in may be arranged in advance at an additional extra cost to The Company. If utilising all day and evening, then it must be divided up to include at least two one-hour breaks. Schedules for the day should be sent to the Technical Manager in advance. If this is not possible, break times can be flexible and should be discussed with the Duty Technician upon arrival. Please advise the Technical Manager in advance if your get-out is likely to go on beyond one hour, as this will incur an additional fee.

Staging

The Courtyard will provide a bare stage with black box masking or a white cyc. Please specify any further requirements.

Staff Provision

Included in the basic hire fee, The Courtyard will provide up to 11 hours of multi skilled technician time which can be used on the first day of Hire. On subsequent days The Courtyard will provide 4hours of duty technical time. Additional technicians will be required unless you are providing your own operatives. If you are providing your own operatives they must be competent with the relevant skills and experience and signed off by the Technical Manager.

If your show is especially large or complicated, then please get in touch with the technical team at least a month before the show. The provision of Courtyard technicians over and above those included in the basic fee will be recharged at the rate stated in the Schedule of Fees & Charges.

At least one Courtyard technician(s) will oversee the safe running of the get-in and carry out any flying required. During show call the technician must be located at

prompt corner to act as Duty Safety Officer for the backstage area. The Duty Technician will carry out all flying during the get-out. The Company must pay for any other staff required, including a flyman if required for show call.

Health and Safety

All users and those who are involved with the hirer event in any way must comply with The Courtyard's Health & Safety Policies. These are available on request. If the hirer is in any way unsure regarding how a procedure, structure or event may give rise to Health & Safety issues, then they must discuss the matter further with an appropriate member of Courtyard staff who will advise.

Recent changes to the Noise at Work regulations mean that lower limits for exposure to noise in entertainment venues apply. Hirers are reminded that along with The Courtyard, they have a duty to ensure that these exposure limits are not exceeded. The cumulative effect of noise exposure is relevant as duration of exposure influences acceptable levels. Under most circumstances, it is not expected that permitted levels of exposure would be breached. The Duty Technician will take readings as standard and will intervene if levels exceed the legal standard.

All sets and furnishings used at The Courtyard must be either Class 1 or fireproofed with a recognised brand of flame retardant. The Courtyard reserve the right to test any set being used in the theatre and if necessary refuse the same if we judge that the Health and Safety regulations have been compromised.

All portable electrical items brought into the venue must bear evidence of appropriate testing (such as portable appliance testing sticker) unless they are new items. Testing can usually be arranged if required but there may be a charge for this service.

Any structures, tools, scenery or other items brought into the venue must not pose a danger to others because of their nature, how they are stored or operated. Items that pose an identifiable risk either in use or as stored must be risk assessed and appropriate control measures put in place as deemed necessary.

All 'flying' at The Courtyard must be carried out by a member of The Courtyard's technical department, or a suitably qualified technician at the discretion of the Duty Technician. NB flying will be provided for you for the get-in and get-out, but not for show call – as outlined in the above section on crew provision.

All visiting technicians must be competent and familiar with the safe operation and use of any access equipment. Some items of equipment require operators to be formally trained and qualified. Such equipment must only be used by qualified individuals. Visiting company members must provide proof of appropriate qualification.

All companies using the Main House will need to provide a list of the people expected backstage. Everybody will need to sign in and out each day. Companies using the stage door will need to provide a stage door keeper for all times that they wish the door to be 'open'. Whenever this entrance is not manned, the door must remain locked shut.

Alcoholic drinks are strictly forbidden in all of the backstage areas including the orchestra pit. This rule will be rigidly enforced. Smoking is also forbidden in all backstage areas. Soft drinks are allowed in the dressing rooms at the discretion of the hirer, but in no other areas. Bottled water may be used on stage at the discretion of the duty technician. The enforcement of this and any other requirements are the responsibility of the hirer. These rules are for your own safety and in order to comply with licencing requirements.

Essential Information to be Provided by the Hirer

Hirers are required to provide the following information prior to commencing a get in or fit up at The Courtyard:

- Plans and details of any set and equipment, including a scaled ground plan.
- A show safety file including details of show running (scene changes etc).
- Risk assessments for your production/event.
- A hanging plot (if you require the rigging of cloths, lighting etc).
- Any relevant certificates (fire safety etc) and qualifications

In addition, all stage based staff may be required to undertake basic training in stagecraft to ensure their competency to undertake any work on stage.

If you require advise with any aspect of these requirements please contact The Courtyard Technical Department on 01 432 346508 or at www.courtyard.org.uk.

Some or all of these requirements may not apply where the event is not production based or where the Courtyard is taking complete responsibility for the technical aspects of an event. The Technical department will be able to advise.

Special Effects

Please read and complete the Risk Assessment Check Sheet and Production Risk Assessment Forms if using special effects (available from the Technical Manager). All special effects must be agreed to in advance with a member of The Courtyard's technical department, and their use is ultimately at the discretion of the Technical Manager. The Courtyard also reserves the right for the duty technician to confiscate any special effects that he or she considers to be a danger. Some special effects may require permission from the licensing department of the local authority and therefore advance notice is essential in order for this permission to be obtained.

Smoking

Smoking in public enclosed places is against the law. All buildings and vehicles owned or operated by The Courtyard are subject to this legislation and smoking is not permitted anywhere in the building.

The legislation does allow for an exemption on the smoking ban for the purposes of a performance on stage where smoking is an integral and important part of the action. If the hirer wishes to feature smoking on stage, he must apply to The Courtyard in writing at least 6 weeks prior to the first performance to seek permission, outlining why smoking is integral to the show. The Courtyard will then consider whether allowing smoking on stage will be appropriate, and advise the hirer accordingly. In order to avoid any difficulties, the hirer is advised to submit any request to permit smoking as early as possible. Please note that permission will not necessarily be granted and the hirer must abide by the decision. Hirers should note that there is no provision in the legislation to allow smoking for the purposes of rehearsal, including dress rehearsal.

Lighting

Please let us have a lighting plan at least two weeks prior to your get-in. Any additional costs incurred will be recharged to The Company.

The Courtyard does not provide gel or any lighting equipment additional to that specified on the technical specifications sheet provided. Colour calls and additional equipment can be brought in on behalf of The Company if required. All costs incurred will be recharged to The Company.

Performing Rights Society & Copyright

The performance of all copyright music (unless covered by other permissions) is subject to a PRS charge. This is set by PRS and is usually based on a percentage of box office income. All PRS charges are the responsibility of the hirer, although any liability will usually be managed by The Courtyard and the resulting charge added to the hirer's final account. The hirer must complete an appropriate PRS form, providing details of all the music used in their show and any other details that might reasonably be required. Failure to do this may result in the withholding of settlement monies. Not all copyright music can be performed in this way and some works are excluded from the PRS arrangement (notably Abba music, music from Grease and Disney works). It is the hirer's responsibility to obtain any relevant permissions required.

For more details about PRS charges and exclusions, please visit the PRS website www.prsformusic.com or be sure to discuss your event with us well in advance of the scheduled performance.

In some cases (such as for variety or pantomime), the PRS charge can be lower if permission is obtained in advance or notified to PRS within a specified timeframe. It is the responsibility of the hirer to liaise with PRS direct to take advantage of any such reduction. If a hirer has obtained an exemption or discount, then written details of this should be passed to The Courtyard to ensure the correct charge is applied.

All dramatic works will be subject to copyright laws (unless they are 'out of copyright'). It is the hirer's responsibility to ensure that any appropriate permission is obtained before confirming the works to be performed. Written confirmation of such

permission (where required) shall be provided to The Courtyard on demand. Should The Courtyard find that the hirer is intending to perform a work without the necessary permissions in place, the booking shall be immediately cancelled, though the hirer shall remain liable for all charges and will incur an administrative charge of £1 per ticket already sold to enable us to arrange customer refunds.

Dressing Rooms

The use of dressing rooms associated with each performance space is included in the basic hire fee (FOUR dressing rooms attached to the Main House and ONE attached to the Studio). If any other rooms are to be used as dressing rooms, then this detail must be included on the booking form. The use of other rooms is subject to availability and an additional charge may apply.

The Green Room is provided as a rest room for cast, crew and Courtyard staff. This room will not normally be available as a dressing room, except in exceptional circumstances. Advance written permission must be given if this area is to be used as a dressing room. A charge will be applied if companies require sole use of the Green Room.

Dressing rooms include fixed tables and a number of chairs appropriate to the size of the room. Please note that if other rooms are being used as dressing rooms, any chairs and/or tables found in these rooms are liable to be removed for use elsewhere in the building without notice, unless they have been specifically booked for your use.

Hirers are expected to keep the dressing rooms clean and tidy during their period of hire to facilitate regular cleaning by Courtyard Housekeeping staff. Any faults or breakages must be reported to the duty technician immediately. On conclusion of the hire period, the dressing rooms and all backstage areas must be left in a tidy and clear state. We reserve the right to charge for breakages or excessive cleaning. Additional cleaning will be charged at the rate of £25 per hour or part thereof. If specialist carpet cleaning is required, this will be charged at £50 per hour, subject to a minimum charge £100.

Chaperone Arrangements

The Courtyard has its own Child Protection Policy and Vulnerable Adult Policy which are sent to hirers with this document. All hires to which these apply should have their own policies and implement their own safeguarding measures. It is The Courtyards responsibility to ensure that hirers have these policies in place.

The guidelines below are intended to act as an outline for best practice when chaperoning young people/vulnerable adults in a theatre environment.

The Courtyard aims to provide a chaperoning ratio of 1:10, but it is recognised that the age or ability of the participants needs to be taken into account. The Courtyard recommends a similar ratio and set of procedures for any hiring company.

Visiting Company Responsibilities

Hirers need to have their own Vulnerable Adult and Child Protection Policies in place which conform to the Courtyards policies.

Hirers are advised to organise a training and awareness-raising session in advance of their event to ensure that all senior chaperones are fully conversant with best practice guidelines

The Courtyard Duty Technician will ensure all cast and crew are made aware of fire, evacuation and general safety procedures in a safety briefing on arrival. Hirers will be responsible for ensuring that all chaperones are also aware of these procedures.

An Example: Courtyard Chaperone System & Recruitment Process

In the case of **professional in-house shows**, The Courtyard will recruit appropriate DBS-checked and Herefordshire Council-licensed chaperones and ensure that they are fully aware of the responsibilities of their role. These chaperones will work in a paid capacity and, wherever possible, will have previous experience in a similar role.

In the case of **non-professional in-house shows** (ie Youth Theatre) where large numbers of unpaid chaperones are required, it is accepted as inevitable and appropriate that we will be reliant upon the voluntary services of the young members' parents. The Courtyard operates a structured chaperone hierarchy, with differing degrees of responsibility. This varies according to the number of children involved in any given production, but a typical structure for a large-scale junior youth production would comprise:

Chaperone Co-ordinator (Enhanced DBS checked and licensed)

Senior Chaperones (all Enhanced DBS checked and licensed)

Parent Chaperones (some Enhanced DBS checked and licensed)

Parent chaperones who are not DBS checked should not be left in sole charge of the children and procedures should be put in place to ensure this does not happen.

Chaperoning Responsibilities

The law states that 'the chaperone is acting *in loco parentis* and should exercise the care which a good parent might reasonably be expected to give that child.' Your first responsibility is to the children in your care.

- Take into account the child's age and experience when exposing them to adult conversation.
- Be fully aware of evacuation procedures in an emergency.
- Be aware of the First Aider on duty that evening (ie the Duty Manager Front of House).
- Should you have any cause for concern about the physical or emotional well-being of any child in your care, raise the issue with the Duty Technician who will inform the Courtyards Child Protection Officer (the Associate Director).
- If you are chaperoning a situation where long hours are involved (eg during a rehearsal situation) look for signs of a child being tired or unwell. Do not ignore signs in order to meet the production schedule.
- Try not to find yourself in a situation where you are alone with a child or young person. If this situation is unavoidable, make sure that another person knows you are supervising on a one-to-one basis and preferably try to remain in a more public area (such as the foyer). Where this is not possible or appropriate (ie in a backstage context) try to keep any doors open (except where a child is changing). It is accepted that in a backstage context, there may be times when a chaperone is alone with a young person for a certain period of time, depending upon the requirements of the production.
- Avoid touching the child/young person except when absolutely necessary and always gain the prior consent of the young person in advance. It is accepted that during the application of make-up etc some physical contact is inevitable, but it should be kept to a minimum.
- Respect the privacy and the dignity of the children/young people involved. If you are supervising members of the opposite sex over the age of 11, briefly step outside the dressing room if their costume change involves stripping down to their underwear.

- Ensure that the children are escorted to the stage quickly, quietly and safely.

If you have any concerns, queries or suggestions for the improvement of this policy, please contact the Child Protection Officer (currently the Associate Director) or the Operations Manager.

Box Office Arrangements

It is very important to discuss ticket plans with the Customer Sales Manager at an early stage.

Tel: 01432 346533

Email: boxoffice@courtyard.org.uk

Pricing and Ticketing

Once the dates, start times, ticket prices and theatre seating format for an event have been agreed they cannot be altered. Please be sure to consider whether any seats will (or could) have a restricted view. The Hirer must confirm ticket prices in order to be listed in The Courtyard's brochure.

The Hirer will set ticket prices, Please note from the 1st April 2025 a £1 Levy will be added to all tickets sold and this will be included in the advertised price.

We recommend that hirers adopt The Courtyard's concession model, even if these groups are only offered a small discount. The Courtyard generally offers concessions to under 16s, students, senior citizens, registered disabled people and anyone in receipt of state benefit. Any disabled person who requires the services of a carer in order to attend a performance is entitled to a free ticket for their carer. People are asked to bring proof of their concession status with them when they collect their tickets. Group Booking Concessions also apply where every eleventh ticket purchased by a customer (in a single transaction and for the same performance) is free.

The Hirer will need to confirm with The Courtyard's Customer Services Supervisor any advance booking requirements for members or guests, and whether tickets are to go on sale to the public at the same time as the rest of the brochure.

The Hirer can also arrange priority bookings for members or special guests. This should be done well in advance, in consultation with the Customer Services Supervisor. The Courtyard cannot be held responsible if there are no extra or suitable tickets available for guests once an event has gone on sale.

Opening Hours

The standard minimum hours for The Courtyard Box Office are from 10.00am to 8.00pm Monday to Saturday. The Box Office is not normally open on Sundays and Bank Holidays and will operate on reduced hours during the annual 'dark week' in late July or early August. If there is an event outside of these times, the Box Office will be open for one hour before the performance and then until the performance time. Should the box office be required to be open longer than the standard hours outlined above to specifically service a hirer event, then the hirer will be charged an additional service charge of £25 per hour or part thereof. The Box Office accepts cash, cheques and most major credit and debit cards. Credit or debit card commission will be deducted from the ticket sales. Transaction fees apply to all sales unless the customer is part of a Courtyard membership scheme. We reserve the right to amend box office opening hours.

We offer an online service for most ticket types and this is available 24 hours a day. If you believe your event is not suitable for sale online, then you must discuss this in advance with the Customer Services Supervisor. If you opt out of online sales, then we may impose an additional box office service charge.

Any changes to the event details that need to be made once the event has gone on sale will be charged at £25 per hour (or part thereof), to include time taken to make the changes and contact customers where required. Charges will not apply if the change was required due to a Courtyard error.

Settlement

Our Finance Team aim to complete settlement monies within 10 working days.

They can be emailed at finance@courtyard.org.uk or contacted by phone on 01432 346528.

Front of House Arrangements

Staff Contacts

House Manager Katie Meredith katie.meredith@courtyard.org.uk
House Manager (Maternity Cover) Serena Doyle
Serena.doyle@courtyard.org.uk

House Seats & Stewards Seats

In common with general theatre practice, The Courtyard holds four seats for every Main House performance (two seats in the Studio) as 'house seats' in case there are customer problems or latecomers on the night. Six seats in the Main House and three seats in the Studio Theatre are also reserved for stewards who sit in to comply with licensing requirements. The Hirer should not include these seats in income calculations.

Wheelchairs

The Courtyard is licensed to hold three wheelchairs in the Main House and two in the Studio. If you require more than this then you must discuss your requirements with the House Manager *before* your event goes on sale.

Foyer

The use of the foyer area is possible for display purposes and for the sale of merchandise but must be agreed in advance with the House Manager. There is a 15% commission charge on any items sold (10% if you sell it yourself). The Courtyard reserves the right to remove any displays not previously agreed or that we feel are unsuitable.

Marketing and Publicity

Please note that in all cases it is the responsibility of the hirer to promote their own event. We are happy to give advice and help, but ultimately we are not responsible sales outcomes.

All updated marketing information including logos, print requirements, contact details, social media handles, marketing options and costs can be found in our Marketing Dropbox folder on the website.