

Development & Advocacy Tickets Policy

Complimentary Tickets

March 2021

Sam Freeman

Development & Advocacy Tickets Policy

Development & advocacy tickets (“Comps”) for company members are an essential part of ensuring in-depth knowledge of our artistic product so that we can advocate effectively for the work on our stages and the organisation. They are also very important in ensuring a high-quality customer service stemming from our knowledgeable, experienced team. This policy lists the entitlement & principles behind these tickets.

Policy updated: March 2021

Policy leads: Sam Freeman, Liam Evans-Ford, Tamara Harvey

Contracted & Relief Staff

Identification:	<p>On the current staff list or staff ID badge Will be identified on box office as "Theatr Clwyd Staff" Department heads may be asked to confirm</p>
Includes:	<p>Theatr Clwyd Productions (excluding Panto)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>2 comps</u> to be used on any performance provided the show is not sold out • <u>1 comp</u> for press night • <u>1 comp</u> for streamed and digital performances <p>Panto</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>2 comps</u> for off-peak performances provided the show is not sold out Off Peak for 2021/22 is: 19 Nov – 9 Dec, then 5 – 14 Jan • <u>1 comp</u> for press night • <u>1 comp</u> for streamed and digital performances <p>Cinema</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>1 comp</u> for standard films (not live or special screenings) provided the showing is not sold out <p>Comedy Club</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>2 comps</u> provided the show is not sold out • <u>1 comp</u> for streamed and digital performances
Booking:	<p>Tickets must be booked by the staff member <i>Please do not try to book tickets at peak box office times (10am – 12pm, 6pm - 8pm)</i></p>
Excludes:	<p>Visiting Companies (See page 13) Jazz, Classical & Music Events One Night Stands (e.g. Comedians or Musicians)</p>
Rules:	<p>Sold out means less than 10 seats available at the cut off time, which is 30 minutes prior to the performance start. Comps can only be collected in person from the box office 30 minutes prior to show start. Comps are for personal use and are non-transferrable.</p> <p>If box office cannot be identified and verification is not possible instantly then Box Office may ask people to pay for their ticket with the understanding that it will be refunded at a later point if they should have had a comp.</p>

Associates	
Identification:	On the current associates list Will be identified on box office as "Associate"
Includes:	<p>Theatr Clwyd Productions (excluding Panto)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>2 comps</u> to be used on any performance provided the show is not sold out • <u>1 comp</u> for press night • <u>1 comp</u> for streamed and digital performances <p>Panto</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>2 comps</u> for off-peak performances provided the show is not sold out Off Peak for 2021/22 is: 19 Nov – 9 Dec, then 5 – 14 Jan • <u>1 comp</u> for press night • <u>1 comp</u> for streamed and digital performances <p>Cinema</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>1 comp</u> for standard films (not live or special screenings) provided the showing is not sold out <p>Comedy Club</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>2 comps</u> provided the show is not sold out • <u>1 comp</u> for streamed and digital performances
Booking:	Tickets must be booked by the Associate via the Sales Manager <i>Please do not try to book tickets at peak box office times (10am – 12pm, 6pm - 8pm)</i>
Excludes:	Visiting Companies Jazz, Classical & Music Events One Night Stands (e.g. Comedians or Musicians)
Rules:	<p>Sold out means less than 10 seats available at the cut off time, which is 30 minutes prior to the performance start. Comps can only be collected in person from the box office 30 minutes prior to show start.</p> <p>Comps are for personal use and are non-transferrable.</p> <p>If box office cannot be identified and verification is not possible instantly then Box Office may ask people to pay for their ticket with the understanding that it will be refunded at a later point if they should have had a comp.</p>

Actors, Stage Management & Technical Teams (TC shows)

Identification:	On the production team list (Producers to produce for all shows)
Includes:	<p>The show they're working on (excluding Panto)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>2 comps</u> up to and including press night • <u>2 comps</u> for the remainder of the run • <u>1 comp</u> for streamed and digital performances <p>The Panto they're working on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>2 comps</u> up to and including press night • <u>2 comps</u> for off-peak performances provided the show is not sold out Off Peak for 2021/22 is: 19 Nov – 9 Dec, then 5 – 14 Jan • <u>1 comp</u> for streamed and digital performances <p>Theatr Clwyd Productions during duration of contract</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>2 comps</u> to be used on any performance provided the show is not sold out • <u>1 comp</u> for press night <p>Cinema during duration of contract</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>1 comp</u> for standard films (not live or special screenings) provided the showing is not sold out <p>Comedy Club during duration of contract</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>2 comps</u> provided the show is not sold out • <u>1 comp</u> for streamed and digital performances
Booking:	Tickets must be booked by the Company Stage Manager <i>Please do not try to book tickets at peak box office times (10am – 12pm, 6pm - 8pm)</i>
Excludes:	Visiting Companies Jazz, Classical & Music Events One Night Stands (e.g. Comedians or Musicians)
Rules:	<p>Sold out means less than 10 seats available at the cut off time, which is 30 minutes prior to the performance start. Comps can only be collected in person at the box office 30 minutes prior to show start.</p> <p>Comps are for personal use and are non-transferrable.</p> <p>If box office cannot be identified and verification is not possible instantly then Box Office may ask people to pay for their ticket with the understanding that it will be refunded at a later point if they should have had a comp.</p>

Creative Teams (TC shows)

Identification:	On the creative team list (ask Producers if unsure)
Includes:	<p>The show they're working on (excluding Panto)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>1 comps per performance</u> up to press night (for work use only) • <u>2 comps</u> for press night • <u>2 comps</u> for the remainder of the run • <u>Industry comps</u> (for agents, possible future collaborators) are booked at the discretion of the Artistic Director/Executive Director/ Producer via the Sales Manager • <u>1 comp</u> for streamed and digital performances <p>The panto they're working on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>1 comps per performance</u> up press night (for work use only) • <u>2 comps</u> for press night • <u>2 comps</u> for off-peak performances provided the show is not sold out Off Peak for 2021/22 is: 19 Nov – 9 Dec, then 5 – 14 Jan • <u>Industry comps</u> (for agents, possible future collaborators) are booked at the discretion of the Artistic Director/Executive Director/Producer via the Sales Manager and should ideally be booked for off-peak performances provided the show is not sold out Off Peak for 2021/22 is: 19 Nov – 9 Dec, then 5 – 14 Jan • <u>1 comp</u> for streamed and digital performances <p>Theatr Clwyd Productions during duration of contract</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>2 comps</u> to be used on any performance provided the show is not sold out • <u>1 comp</u> for press night <p>Cinema during duration of contract</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>1 comp</u> for standard films (not special screenings) provided the showing is not sold out <p>Comedy Club during duration of contract</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>2 comps</u> provided the show is not sold out • <u>1 comp</u> for streamed and digital performances
Booking:	<p>Tickets must be booked by the Company Stage Manager <i>Please do not try to book tickets at peak box office times (10am – 12pm, 6pm - 8pm)</i></p>
Excludes:	<p>Visiting Companies Jazz, Classical & Music Events One Night Stands (e.g. Comedians or Musicians)</p>
Rules:	<p>Sold out means less than 10 seats available at the cut off time, which is 30 minutes prior to the performance start. Comps can only be collected in person at the box office 30 minutes prior to show start.</p> <p>Comps are for personal use and are non-transferrable.</p> <p>If box office cannot be identified and verification is not possible instantly then Box Office may ask people to pay for their ticket with the understanding that it will be refunded at a later point if they should have had a comp.</p>

Production Managers (TC shows)

Identification:	Jim Davis or Hannah Lobb
Includes:	<p>The show they're working on (excluding Panto)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>1 comp</u> per performance up press night (for work use only) • <u>2 comps</u> for press night • <u>2 comps</u> for the remainder of the run • <u>1 comp</u> for streamed and digital performances <p>The panto they're working on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>1 comp</u> per performance up press night (for work use only) • <u>2 comps</u> for press night • <u>2 comps</u> for off-peak performances provided the show is not sold out Off Peak for 2021/22 is: 19 Nov – 9 Dec, then 5 – 14 Jan • <u>1 comp</u> for streamed and digital performances <p>Theatr Clwyd Productions during duration of contract</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As per contracted staff & relief page <p>Cinema during duration of contract</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As per contracted staff & relief page <p>Comedy Club during duration of contract</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As per contracted staff & relief page • <u>1 comp</u> for streamed and digital performances
Booking:	<p>Tickets must be booked in person at box office <i>Please do not try to book tickets at peak box office times (10am – 12pm, 6pm - 8pm)</i></p>
Excludes:	As per contracted staff & relief page
Rules:	<p>Sold out means less than 10 seats available at the cut off time, which is 30 minutes prior to the performance start. Comps can only be collected in person at the box office 30 minutes prior to show start.</p> <p>Comps are for personal use and are non-transferrable.</p> <p>If box office cannot be identified and verification is not possible instantly then Box Office may ask people to pay for their ticket with the understanding that it will be refunded at a later point if they should have had a comp.</p>

Actors' & Creatives' Agents (Theatr Clwyd shows)

Identification:	On the company contact sheet (ask Producers if unsure)
Includes:	<p>The show their client is working on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For non-panto shows: <u>2 comps</u> for run • <u>1 comp</u> for streamed and digital performances • For Panto: <u>2 comps</u> for off-peak performances provided the show is not sold out Off Peak for 2021/22 is: 19 Nov – 9 Dec, then 5 – 14 Jan
Booking:	<p>Tickets must be booked by the Company Stage Manager <i>Please do not try to book tickets at peak box office times (10am – 12pm, 6pm - 8pm)</i></p> <p>If box office cannot be identified and verification is not possible instantly then Box Office may ask people to pay for their ticket with the understanding that it will be refunded at a later point if they should have had a comp.</p>
Naming:	Comp should be booked in Agent's name, NOT Actor's, and account marked as "Agent for actor's name"

Staff of Visiting Companies

Identification:	Must be booked through the Company Stage Manager or producer via Marie
Includes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Various</u> – please speak to Marie/William/Nick to clarify <p>Please make visiting companies aware that if a company uses more than their contracted complimentary tickets allocation then the cost of additional tickets will be charged back to the company in their settlement</p>
Booking:	<p>Tickets must be booked via Producers - <i>Please do not try to book tickets at peak box office times (10am – 12pm, 6pm - 8pm)</i></p> <p>If box office cannot be identified and verification is not possible instantly then Box Office may ask people to pay for their ticket with the understanding that it will be refunded at a later point if they should have had a comp.</p>
Rules:	Tickets are subject to availability.

Organisational Guests

Identification:	Booked through Marie (Executive Team sign off)
Includes:	Occasionally we may have guests in the building – e.g. funders, politicians, directors or creatives we want to work with. We may book complimentary tickets for these people where required. They will be booked through Marie and must be signed off by one of the Executive Team (Liam or Tamara).

Development Guests

Identification:	Booked through Sales Manager – Signed off by Development Director (Zoe)
Includes:	Occasionally we may have guests in the building – e.g. funders, politicians, directors or creatives we want to work with. We may book complimentary tickets for these people where required. They will be booked through Marie and must be signed off by one of the Executive Team (Liam or Tamara).

Board/Trustees

Identification:	Booked by Development Team
Includes:	<p>Theatr Clwyd Productions (excluding Panto)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>2 comps</u> to be used on any performance provided the show is not sold out • <u>2 comps</u> for press night • <u>1 comp</u> for streamed and digital performances <p>Panto</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>2 comps</u> for off-peak performances provided the show is not sold out Off Peak for 2021/22 is: 19 Nov – 9 Dec, then 5 – 14 Jan • <u>2 comp</u> for press night • <u>1 comp</u> for streamed and digital performances
Booking:	Tickets must be booked by Development Team with Sales Manager
Excludes:	<p>Visiting Companies (See page 13)</p> <p>Jazz, Classical & Music Events</p> <p>One Night Stands (e.g. Comedians or Musicians)</p>
Rules:	<p>Sold out means less than 10 seats available at the cut off time, which is 30 minutes prior to the performance start. Comps can only be collected in person from the box office 30 minutes prior to show start.</p> <p>Comps are for personal use and are non-transferrable.</p> <p>If box office cannot be identified and verification is not possible instantly then Box Office may ask people to pay for their ticket with the understanding that it will be refunded at a later point if they should have had a comp.</p>

Basic Principles

Development & advocacy tickets (referred to unofficially as “comps”) are an established part of the theatrical lexicon that can translate as “free tickets”. This, however, is not an accurate description of their function organisationally. They are an essential part of ensuring the theatre’s ongoing success in the development of organisational and regional profile, building strategic partnerships, broadening experience of the arts with low engagement groups and ensuring high quality customer service and artistic product.

There are, broadly speaking, seven reasons why these tickets should be allocated:

- **Organisational Profile**

Increasing the profile of the organisation is essential in ensuring Theatr Clwyd’s continued sustainability through ticket sales, sponsorship and bringing the highest calibre artists to Flintshire.

Development & advocacy tickets might be allocated to members of the press (for reviews of productions), key contacts for tourism (for example Destination Management or Visit Wales) or potential collaborators (for example actors, creatives or writers we want to work with in the future).

- **Regional Profile**

Developing the profile of Flintshire and North Wales as a centre for economic growth as part of regional regeneration and encouraging an influx of business investment into the area by showcasing the high quality cultural offer alongside the stunning landscape and high standard of living.

Development & advocacy tickets might be allocated to support Flintshire County Council’s department for Economic Growth in promoting the region.

- **Strategic Partnerships**

Sponsorship and collaborative working with private sector organisations allows Theatr Clwyd to help fulfil regional objectives by running projects (such as Justice In A Day (raising awareness of the consequences of crime for ages 13 – 14), Arts From The Armchair (supporting those with early onset memory loss) and Behind Slammed Doors (working to engage teenage daughters promoting mental well-being and addressing youth employment and disengagement)).

Development & advocacy tickets might be allocated to enable relationships to be nurtured both with potential sponsors or collaborators and with those with limited economic means to fulfil the project and deepen engagement.

- **Low Engagement Groups**

We recognise that we serve Communities First areas within Flintshire. It is essential that the theatre remains price accessible which is why we strive to have lower price tickets as part of our pricing strategy. This is, of course, balanced against financial targets and the need to ensure sustainability. However for some groups these prices, although reasonable, are beyond their financial capabilities (for a 21 year old on Job Seekers Allowance a £10 ticket represents 17% of their weekly income).

Development & advocacy tickets might be used in conjunction with an outreach project to ensure access to theatre for vulnerable people in our community.

- **Developing Customer Services**

There has been a huge shift in emphasis in recent years for public facing organisations to strive for high quality customer service. At Theatr Clwyd, this includes (but is not limited to) ensuring staff are knowledgeable, can offer insight on what is being sold and can be effective advocates for the work of both the theatre and the region. Customer service and audience experience will feed very heavily into our onward business planning to build returning audiences and encourage economic growth. This ensures the theatre remains a sustainable world-class asset for the county and the region.

All staff who engage with the public and with visiting companies and artists (either directly or through the promotion or operations of the organisation) should be allocated development & advocacy tickets on a regular basis to ensure a depth of knowledge, pride in the work we produce and an understanding of the ethos of the organisation.

- **Developing relationships for philanthropic, sponsorship and partnership opportunities**

Theatr Clwyd is moving in to a new phase of seeking philanthropic and other external relationships as a priority to enable and support the mission of the organisation. Development and advocacy tickets might be used to develop excitement about and support for the work of Theatr Clwyd in order to engage potential supporters. Where the opportunity for these relationships is to develop support the Director of Development alongside the Executive Director will determine the suitability of a complimentary ticket to attract potential supporters.

- **Ensuring Quality of Artistic Product**

Theatr Clwyd has an international and national reputation as a leading producer of theatre which benefits the region, Wales and the UK. When other companies and artists visit Mold, our creative and programming team needs to see their shows in order to assess and support company development and ensure that our high standards are upheld.

For our produced work (where shows run for 3 weeks or longer) the creative teams need to have regular access to the show to ensure its continued quality - a director for example will often tweak the show throughout the first week to ensure it's perfect for the press performance – this has a knock on effect for other creatives working on the show. It's also important that our staff and associate artists can talk knowledgeably about what we produce (so box office, for example, can recommend the show and give customers insight as to its content, themes and suitability for different audience members).

One of Theatr Clwyd's strengths is its long serving staff who are able to offer insight to all our stakeholders to enhance and support the overall experience.

The “Complimentary” relationship.

So called “complimentary tickets” are important across the organisation and are in no way a one-way transaction. The ticket is ‘paid for’ in the way that the quality of the show is then enhanced, the audience experience improved or the strategic objectives of the theatre achieved - a journalist returns reviews enhancing the profile of the theatre, box office team members develop understanding to better sell the show, and philanthropic supporters and prospects provide support in many different ways.

How do we manage the numbers allocated?

We have to ensure we are not losing income as a result of complimentary tickets.

Current policy is that complimentary tickets are unavailable for sold out shows (i.e. fewer than 10 tickets unsold at the cut-off point, 30 minutes prior to the performance starting). Comps are non-transferrable, ensuring that they are for staff only. All audience development allocations are signed off by the Director of Marketing & Communications and the Artistic or Executive Directors and decisions are made with a long term view for the overall development of the organisation.

Development & advocacy usage is, invariably, much higher towards the beginning of a production’s run when the necessity both artistically and organisationally is at its most important. Finally, for high-yield productions such as the Pantomime, exclusion periods apply to ensure the highest possible box office income.

Public “Free Ticket Offers”

As an organisation we should never offer free tickets publicly in an untargeted manner.

Offering free tickets to anyone, irrespective of circumstance or context, sends a message that we do not place a value on our tickets. This can lead to reduced ticket sales, where potential audiences are unwilling to commit to purchasing in advance, waiting for the free ticket.

Our tickets have a high value and are priced to balance accessibility and ensure high income. Our pricing policy is regularly reviewed to ensure that we are building new audiences and thus sustainability.

Is our description incorrect and how do we clarify their usage?

Part of the problem with “complimentary tickets” is how they are recorded; the terminology we use must accurately reflect their purpose. As part of our review of pricing and concessions this will be monitored and adjusted to ensure it is more appropriate for a transparent, 21st century arts organisation.

Visiting Companies

Visiting company agreements are complicated and often reflect the pressure on the production companies to cover their running costs through ticket sales alone. The short length of the runs at Theatr Clwyd (usually a week in the AHT and often less in our other spaces) mean less flexibility to allow staff complimentary tickets. The variables are much greater with each visiting production company and their unique set of circumstances.

It is important that Theatr Clwyd staff are able to see visiting work – particularly front-line sales staff and those responsible for programming and selling the events as part of their job.

Advocacy tickets are useful for the following purposes:

- Knowledge of the show to aid sales
- Maintenance of relationships with visiting companies
- Supporting the creation of linked educational resources
- As a channel to interact with potential donors or creative collaborators

For example:

- Box office seeing a show on the first day of its run to help sell the show to potential customers for the remainder of that week
- Marketing team seeing a show if the company is likely to return in the future in order to have a clear understanding of the work
- Artistic & Executive teams needing to meet producers to ensure long-term relationships
- Creative Engagement team running workshops or planning future supporting events
- Development team meeting & greeting potential donors who are already attending

Access:

- Complimentary ticket cards (limited availability) are available from Tracy for visiting performances
- They gain access to the auditorium but with no guarantee of a seat (in some cases the observation box may be used)
- They are subject to availability
- Single tickets are available only
- It is understood that this is not a compulsory or essential activity for staff so time watching shows is not part of contracted hours (unless it is as part of a meet & greet or development opportunity)-
- Complimentary ticket cards are prioritised according to need with the final decision made by the Director of Marketing and Communications in the first instance and the Executive team in the second instance.

The priority for staff seeing these shows is:

1. Artistic/Producing Team
2. Box Office & Sales
3. Executive & Development
4. Marketing (if the company is likely to return in future)
5. Other staff

'Gold' Tickets

Special complimentary ticket cards may be allocated at the discretion of the Artistic and Executive Directors to individuals who have given the theatre exceptional service over a period of many years. These cards will entitle the cardholder to complimentary tickets for any event subject to availability and will be set at a maximum of 2 tickets per event. A list of these cardholders will be maintained by Marie and on the box office.