

Welfare Report 2024

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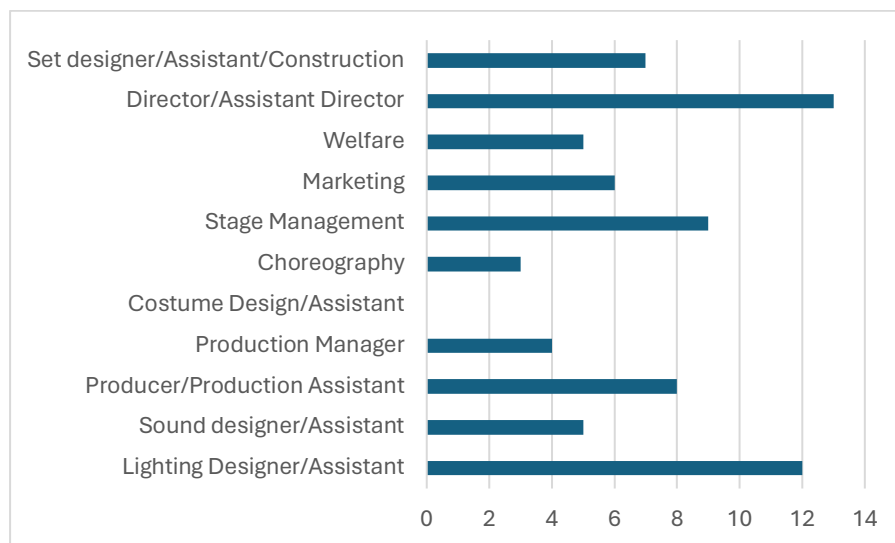
Aims

The Welfare Rep is a newer position that was added to the OUTTS committee in 2020, but in recent years not much has been done with the role due to Covid and other factors. To review the aims of this role, and of the OUTTS committee in general, we sent out a welfare questionnaire in March. This report summarises the findings of that survey to ensure transparency and accountability. The layout of this report is based on the first one completed in 2020.

The Questionnaire

In total, we received 29 responses.

Question 1: Role Demographics

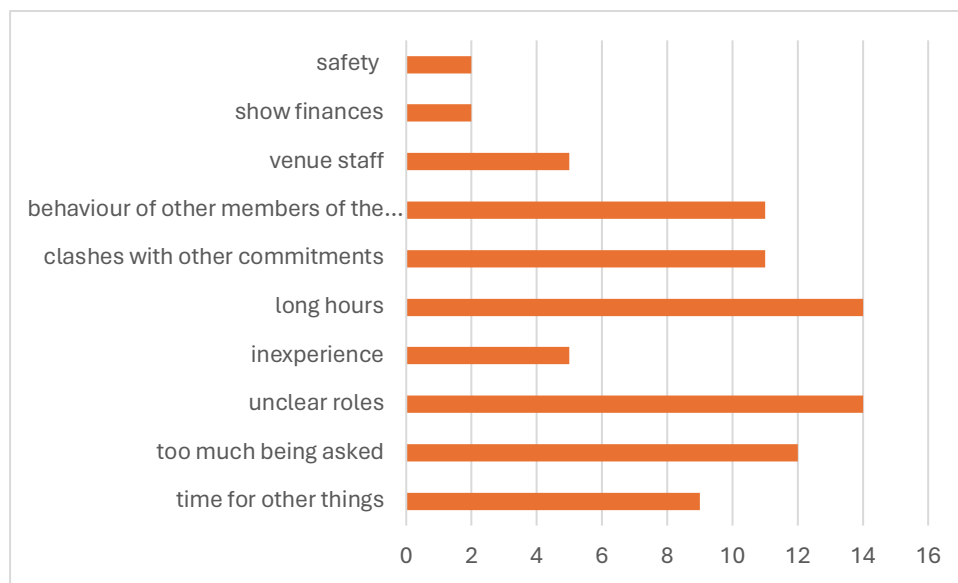


Initially, the survey also asked for year of study and division of degree, but these questions were removed due to an anonymous concern that asking for this information would decrease the anonymity of the survey.

The only demographic we therefore asked about was the distribution of roles. We allowed respondents to select as many roles as they tend to fill. The most common roles that respondents fill are **'Director/Assistant Director'** (13) and **'Lighting Designer/Assistant'** (12).

Question 2: Stress Factors

This question asked OUTTS members to select the top three causes of stress in a production. The answers are displayed below. The biggest cause of stress was **'long hours'** (14) and **'unclear roles'** (14), which were selected by half of the respondents. **'Too much being asked'** (12) was another big concern, with **'clashes with other commitments'** (11) and **'behaviour of other members of the production'** (11) coming just below that. These four stressors made up the majority of concerns. Under our 'other' option, two people also raised concerns about venue equipment not always working. The potential stressors that were the least causes of stress to people are **'safety'** (2) and **'show finances'** (2).



Action

- Time and demand
 - When we review the Welfare Guidelines, we will stress the need for productions to plan ahead and make a clear timetable. It is important that people remember to allow more time than they think necessary to account for things going wrong (which is not bad, just inevitable!)
 - It is also essential to stress the need for **scheduling breaks** into the timetable. In the Welfare Guidelines, we will suggest maximum lengths of shifts and working days, and make it clear that no one should be pressured to skip or rearrange tutorials or lectures.
 - All roles should consider having assistants to delegate tasks; this will both speed things up and even out the workload. This suggestion will be included in the updated Welfare Guidelines.
- Roles
 - We will highlight in the Welfare Guidelines the need to make it clear what a role entails and, most importantly, what the production is expecting from the technician/designer in terms of time and quantity.

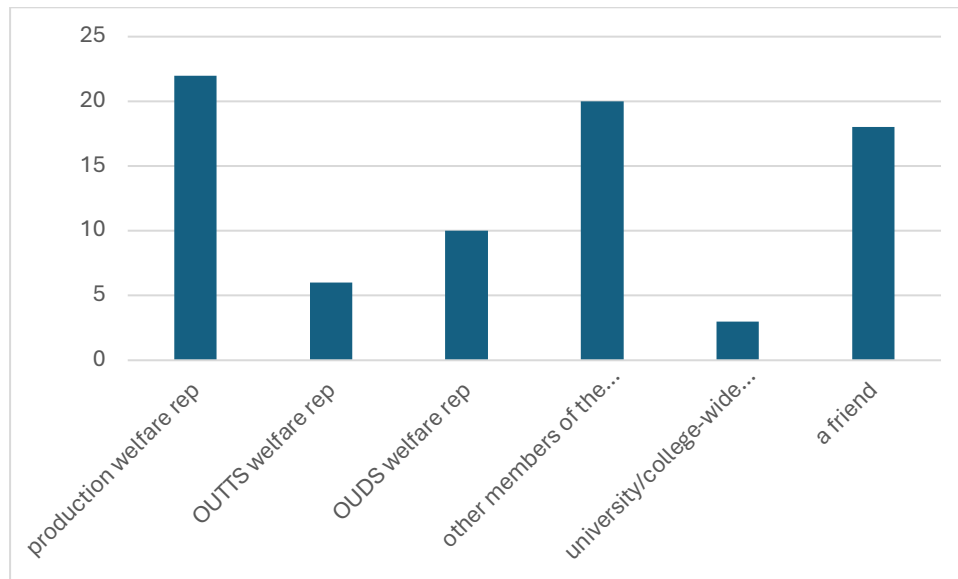
- We will re-promote the role guidelines on the OUTTS website and publish them on other social medias to make them more accessible – perhaps a linktree on the OUTTS Instagram page with links to Google Docs would be helpful.
- Inexperience
 - We will re-share the contact details of our Role Advisors on various OUTTS social media pages, as well as the mailing list, so that people know who to turn to if they are unsure. We will also encourage production companies to include the link to the OUTTS role descriptions in their crew call-outs.
 - We will run a wider range of workshops – recently, we have mostly been focussing on lighting, but we will run more sound, design, set etc workshops too.
 - We are currently circulating a feedback form to get a sense of what workshops people would be interested in.
 - In the past, we have run training shows, but it is hard to gauge how successful these have been. We will re-evaluate the training show system to see if there is a way of making them more educational and effective.
 - We will also re-promote the venue guides and hires guides on the OUTTS website. These are relatively unknown resources which explain how the venues and gear work.
- Conduct
 - As well as making clear guidelines for how people should behave and treat people in the Welfare Guidelines, we will review, update, and promote the OUTTS Code of Conduct so it is widely known what behaviours are unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
 - We will also share the Complaints Procedure guidelines, so that people know who to go to should they have a serious concern.
 - Inappropriate and disrespectful behaviour at hire openings will result in sanctions, such as banning someone from using the hires service for a period of time.

Question 3 and 4: Welfare Contact

Question 3 asked people how often they knew who to go to if they had a welfare concern on a production. The options were **‘always’**, **‘sometimes’**, and **‘never’**. 34 % of respondents said they **‘always’** knew who to go to, and 64% said that they **‘sometimes’** knew who to go to, with only one person saying that they **‘never’** knew. This is an improvement on the 2020 survey, in which 7 out of 27 people said they **‘never’** knew. While it is good news that less people are now completely unsure, it is still desirable to increase the amount of people who always know.

Question 4 asked people who they would consider talking to theatre-related welfare issues about. Respondents could pick as many answers as they wished. The results are displayed below. People feel most comfortable talking to their **‘production welfare rep’** (22), with **‘other members of the production’** (20) being the second most popular option. Sadly, **‘OUTTS Welfare Rep’** (6) was the second-least popular response, with

OUTTS members being more likely to talk to the **'OUDS Welfare Rep'** (10) than the **'OUTTS Welfare Rep'**.



Action

- The Welfare Guidelines will stress the importance of making it clear who the Welfare Rep on a production is.
- We are aiming to make the role of OUTTS Welfare Rep more active, so that people know who they are and feel more comfortable speaking to them.
- We will publish a list of OUTTS members who are peer support trained who can also act as a point of contact for anyone who wants to talk about welfare concerns.
- Given that the OUDS Welfare Rep is also popular among OUTTS members, we will aim to do more combined welfare events with them.
- Given that many OUTTS members speak to other members of their production company about welfare issues, we will encourage all members of production teams to be aware of various welfare resources so that they can signpost them if another concerned member of the crew approaches them.

Question 5: Welfare Resources

We asked OUTTS members to rank which resources they would find most useful, and the average ranking was as follows:

1. Guidelines for good backstage welfare
2. Anonymous contact with a welfare rep
3. List of OUTTS members who are Peer Support trained
4. Welfare drop-in sessions
5. Links to mental health resource

Despite **'anonymous contact with a welfare rep'** being the second most popular option, an anonymous comment raised concerns about anonymous contact putting an

unfair burden on the welfare rep. Nonetheless, when anonymous contact was facilitated in the past, no one took advantage of the opportunity to use it.

Actions

- When the Welfare Guidelines are updated, we will circulate them on OUTTS social media and mailing list and ensure they are included with hires receipts as the Terms of Hire are.
- We will discuss whether or not to provide anonymous contact with a welfare rep in a committee meeting.
- We will make a list of OUTTS members who are Peer Supporters and happy to be contacted by people who want to discuss welfare issues.
- We will organise more welfare events that give OUTTS members the opportunity to casually chat with the Welfare Rep and Peer Supporters

Question 6: Other Comments

Common responses to this question are separated by category below.

Overcommitting

One concern that has been raised is that of people committing to too many shows. Unfortunately, this is something that OUTTS cannot police, so we will encourage people to think about their own personal limits and availability before they take on lots of productions. We will also ask production companies to make it clear how much commitment they will expect from their crew members when they are recruiting, so people can plan accordingly.

Consent

A welfare concern has been raised about the fact that crew members are not asked for their consent to work on scenes with sexual content and/or partial nudity. Just as it is essential for directors to obtain consent from their actors before doing these scenes, it is also crucial that crew members are made aware of the sensitive nature of certain scenes and given the opportunity to say no to working on them. We will make this clear both in our Welfare Guidelines and Code of Conduct.

Time and Directors

Respondents have raised the issue of directors not being understanding about how long it takes to rig lights, putting pressure on them to get their job done quicker when it is not feasible due to the time required and the amount of work being requested. To combat this, we will address this issue in the Welfare Guidelines and encourage directors and technicians to speak beforehand about what the director wants and how much time the technician thinks this will take to achieve so that plans can be made accordingly. We will stress the need on our socials and mailing list for directors to read the Welfare Guidelines as well as technicians and designers.

Faulty Equipment

Hired equipment not working has also been raised as a source of stress for OUTTS members. We will review the condition of our gear more frequently and make sure that if something is broken or lost it will be taken off the hires portal. If OUTTS members find that lighting or sound equipment hired from the hire store is broken, we will try our best to fix it or replace it. However, while we do try our best, it must be remembered that OUTTS committee members are also giving up their spare time to work on the committee and it is not a paid job, so members may not always be free to help at short notice. This must be respected. We will also make it clear that if a set piece comes disassembled, it is the production company's responsibility to assemble it.

*This document was written by Tilly Jackson-Long in her capacity as outgoing Welfare Rep on the 2023/24 committee. The incoming OUTTS Welfare Rep is **Michelle Tse**. If you have any questions regarding this document, or would like to discuss welfare issues in general, please email welfare@outts.org.*