

Caring for the Christie bear suits

The Christie has two bear suits. They are worth over £1,000 each and therefore it is important that they are carefully looked after so that they stay in good condition for future fundraisers. The suits are available on loan to fundraisers to use at fundraising events.

1. Ordering the bear

Christie Bear's diary is kept in the Fundraising team, please speak to your Fundraising contact to make a booking. The bears are very popular so early booking is advisable. The suits may be booked out for up to a week at a time dependant on availability and must be returned as soon as possible after the event, preferably the following working day, so that they are available for the next booking.

2. Pick up and delivery

The costumes are bulky and therefore cannot be posted or easily carried on public transport. Please try to make arrangements in advance for someone to pick up and return the suit to the Fundraising Office.

3. Wearing the suit

The suit is designed to fit adults of average build up to size 16 (ladies)/40" waist (men). The suit is too big for anyone under 5ft 2" and too small for people over 6ft. The suit is claustrophobic, the head is quite heavy and sight is restricted. It should not be worn for more than 20 minutes at a time without a break because the wearer will become overheated. Do not allow any person who suffers from claustrophobia, heart disease, asthma or other breathing problems to wear the suit.

Hints and tips:

- Work out a rota beforehand and locate a place to change out of sight of any children. Young children can be upset if they see the head removed!
- Children adore Christie Bear but wait for them to approach you. Don't scare the timid ones and beware of the boisterous ones!
- Visibility is limited when wearing the suit so a 'minder' is advisable.
- Make all actions larger than life – walk as if marching
- **GET INTO CHARACTER AND HAVE FUN!!**

4. Your responsibilities

Please air the costume before returning it. The feet in particular may be damp after use - please dry them out before packing the costume back in its bag. You can use a hairdryer on a cool setting. It is not possible to wash the suit after every booking so please try to keep it as clean as possible. Sponge off (then dry) any light stains or mud after use. Please do not allow the bear to walk in dirty places or stand in the rain.

5. Reporting problems

Because the suit is in almost constant use it is important that any problems are reported to the Appeals Office as soon as possible. Please advise us if you feel that the suit is due for a clean or refurbishment. We would be grateful if you would consider the next hirer and return the suit in a condition that you would like to find it.

Christie bear, wear and care

The Costume consists of:

- 1 lightweight head with adjustable head harness
- 1 full fur body
- 1 white vest with logo
- 1 pair furry boots/feet

Putting the costume on:

- Put the full fur body on and zip up the back
- Put furry boots/feet on
- Pull fur legs OVER boots
- Put the t-shirt on
- Put the head on and adjust the head harness to fit using the knob at the back only

Care and cleaning:

- All garments and fur body parts can be washed at 40 °C in a gentle wash
- Wash underbody as above removing hoops first
- Sponge down the head and boots/feet using a mild detergent. Do not over wet
- Blow dry on a cool setting, brushing gently
- Keep costume hung up outside tour bag for ventilation
- Keep head stored upright
- Never put costume away damp or crushed in a corner
- Remember the more care you take over looking after the costume – the longer it will last and the better it will look