
Events and promotions in Birmingham City Centre

Guide 3 of the Birmingham Public Space Plan



[www.birmingham.gov.uk/
squares](http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/squares)

Welcome to Birmingham's public spaces. The Birmingham Public Space Plan unites all users of public space under a single simple set of principles:

1. **Thriving and Vibrant** - our streets and squares should be high quality welcoming places for everyone where our citizens' talent, richness of culture and entrepreneurial spirit flourish.
2. **Respectful of others** - Our streets are home to tens of thousands of residents, businesses, local people and visitors - anyone using our streets should anticipate the needs of others and take all reasonable steps to minimise any negative effects of their activity.
3. **Safe and Lawful** - anyone wishing to use these spaces must do so in a way that is safe, within the law and in compliance with any required permits and licences where required*.
4. **Fair** - we will foster a culture of community on our streets. We will empower our citizens to share our public space and resolve disputes quickly and informally wherever possible. Fair and effective enforcement will be available if someone is persistently acting unreasonably.
5. **Inclusive and Family Friendly** - anyone using our streets and squares should take steps to ensure their activity is as inclusive as possible and that the content is suitable for the audience - which in nearly all cases will be a family audience.

From these principles a suite of 7 guides has been created covering: Busking, Street Speaking, Street Trading, Leafletting, working as a Pedlar, Charity Collection, and Events.

What are events and promotions?

Events and promotions are **pre-planned outdoor activities** on City Centre public land, these include:

- ❖ **Cultural**, arts, religious and family festivals.
- ❖ **Charity** events and campaigns involving more than a simple street collection.
- ❖ **Product launches**, brand activations and product sampling.
- ❖ **Sporting** events such as cycle races and half marathons.
- ❖ **Public awareness** campaigns.

This guide covers public land - i.e. our streets and public squares. Shopping centres, churchyards and the areas in and around stations are generally private land and the landowner's permission is required to hold events there.

For information on political activity, protests and the promotion of religion see guides 2 & 4 - Leafletting and Street Speaking

Aim of this guidance

This guidance aims to provide a means to promote positive and considerate relationships with all those who share the public space and avoid confrontational situations.

The areas available

Birmingham City Centre is home to a wide variety of first-rate public spaces, from iconic public squares to bustling shopping streets. We are happy to consider **any public land** for your event, but below are some of our more popular event and promotional sites:



Centenary Square - Our largest event space, surrounded by the ICC and Symphony Hall, REP theatre and the magnificent new Library of Birmingham.



Victoria Square - our Civic Square, bordered by the ornate Council House and the classical columns of the Town Hall.



New Street, High Street & Edgbaston Street - bustling central shopping streets, enjoying daily footfall in excess of 30k.

Organising my event or promotion

- **Initial enquiries** about City Centre events can be made by visiting www.birmingham.gov.uk/squares and/or by speaking to the City Centre Operations Team citycentre@birmingham.gov.uk. The team have decades of experience in this field and will be happy to advise you on locations, availability, footfall and event setup. **Note** we typically require **at least 28 days' notice**, for large or complex events please give as much notice as possible.
- **Fill in an Enquiry Form** - this is available from the website or can be sent to you by the team.
- **Assessment of your proposal** - City Centre Operations will assess your enquiry and work closely with you to ensure that the Council has confidence that your event is **suitable** for the space and can be delivered **safely**, and **successfully** in line with the principles of the Public Space Plan.
- **Stakeholder Liaison** - Your activity will be taking place in an environment where tens of thousands of people live and work, we will contact those who may be affected by your activity and seek their views. In many cases we will provide them with the contact details of the event manager.
- In many cases an **Event Safety Manual** will be required, we will help you prepare this.
- **Safety Advisory Group** - large or complex events will go before a Safety Advisory Group - a meeting of expert representatives from the Police, Fire Service, Ambulance Service, and relevant Council departments. The SAG will scrutinise your Event Safety Manual, and advise you on any steps required for safe and successful event delivery.

Licensing and Permits

In addition to consent to use the public space, the following are examples of activities which require additional licences or permits

- **Regulated Entertainment** - e.g. dance, music, performances of plays or films.
- **Sale of alcohol**
- **Leafleting** See Guide 2 - Leafleting. **Note:** City Centre Operations holds a number of leafleting consent cards which can be hired for event use.
- **Gambling** including some raffles.

You must have a **valid licence or permit** where required, and you need to allow sufficient time for any relevant applications to be processed before your event - typically **at least 28 days**.

You must operate strictly within the conditions of any licences and permits you hold at all times. Failure to do so will lead to your event being suspended and may give rise to prosecution.

Engage with the surrounding community

A culture of community can be built effectively and simply if everyone is open to dialogue. By speaking with one another politely and directly we can prevent problems before they start - being open to reasonable compromise and sharing space fairly goes a long way.

- **Introduce yourself** - where practical introduce yourself to those around you, encourage people to approach you if they experience a problem. Let them know what you are doing and how long you intend to do it. This simple step is extremely effective at reducing complaints.
- **In the case of large or high-impact events, details of your event and contact details for an event organiser must be left with nearby residents and businesses.** The City Centre Operations team can help with this process.
- **Polite interactions** are much more likely to produce positive outcomes.
- If you wish to speak with someone, **please wait for a suitable interval in their activity.**

Advertising Regulations

If your event involves advertising products or services including then any adverts **must** comply with the CAP code of practice which can be found at their website www.cap.org.uk/Advertising-Codes/Non-Broadcast.aspx

- The code includes rules to ensure adverts are **legal, decent, honest and truthful** and has specific guidance concerning things like advertising to children and the marketing of alcohol, tobacco, cosmetics, health and slimming products.

Complaints about advertising content should be reported to the Advertising Standards Agency www.asa.org.uk/Consumers/How-to-complain.aspx



Noise

There are no specific rules on decibel levels or amplification (except after 9PM), however it is expected that your activity is reasonable and has a positive effect on your surroundings rather than a negative one.

- Any **noise produced should not be intrusive** into the lives of others living or working nearby, this includes build, event and breakdown days. Potentially intrusive noise must be kept to a minimum.
- On rare occasions loud events such as outdoor concerts may be allowed in the City Centre, in these circumstances the event organiser must demonstrate that a robust **noise management plan** is in place and that **nearby residents and businesses have been adequately consulted**.
- **Perform sound checks if your event (including build or breakdown)** produces noise, check levels with those around you, especially local business.
- Anticipate the effect your event may have on residents.
- **Know your equipment** - certain sounds carry more than others, and some sounds are have the potential to be more intrusive than others.
- Try to keep it varied - if your activity uses music, similar pieces one after another have the potential to become quite intrusive.
- **If you use backing tracks**, please make sure these are not left running when they are not needed. Please think about the positioning of any amplifiers/loudspeakers.

Did you know? Due to the relatively narrow streets and high buildings, sounds can travel a surprisingly long way in Birmingham City Centre. Please be aware of this, also, please don't be offended if someone asks you to make a reasonable change to your activity.

Be willing to compromise - if someone is negatively affected by your activity, be open to making reasonable changes such as turning an amplifier down, moving a short distance, or changing the direction you're facing.

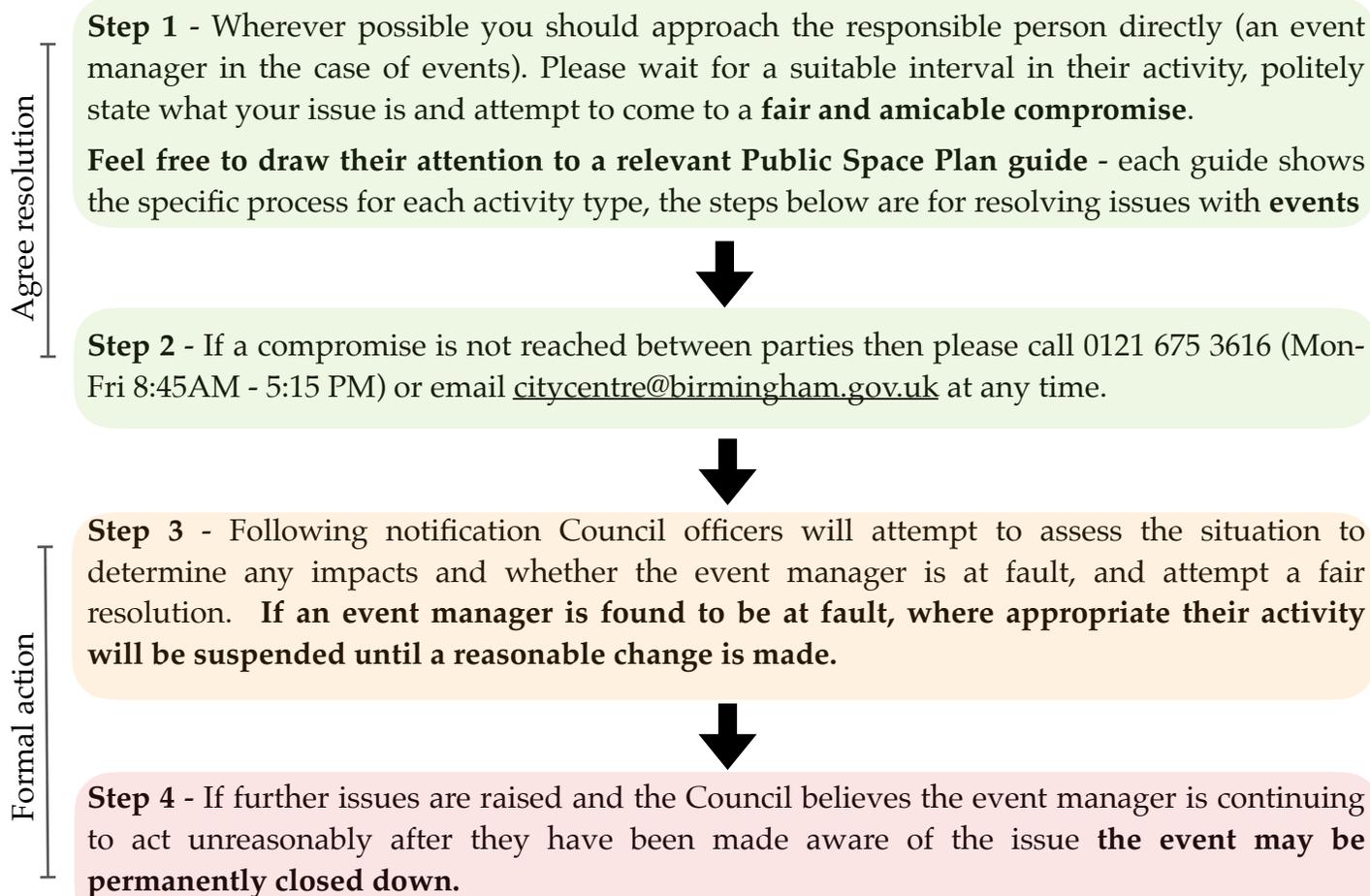
Excessive volume can cause distortion which many find uncomfortable, turning down the volume can enhance your activity for more people to enjoy.



Resolving Issues

This section is for everyone - event managers, residents, businesses and anyone else using public land.

We aim to empower everyone to solve problems quickly and easily on the street. On those rare occasions where a reasonable compromise cannot be reached we have a simple set of steps to ensure a fair resolution to the problem. Effective enforcement powers are available as a last resort to deal with any individual persistently acting unreasonably.



Note: If you're a resident whose home life is being affected by noise you can report a noise nuisance see www.birmingham.gov.uk/noisenuisance for details.

Further information

Selling Merchandise or Services

If you wish to sell on the public highway you will need **street trading consent**. Costs can vary depending on the location and size of the pitch. Call 0121 303 0254 or email MarketStalls@birmingham.gov.uk for details. See Guide 4 - Street Trading for more details.

Charity

Any activity on the public highway involving a collection for (or donation of proceeds to) charity requires a charity street collection permit. These are free and available from the www.birmingham.gov.uk/streetcollectionlicence

Public Liability Insurance

All event organisers must demonstrate that they have suitable Public Liability Insurance before an event can go ahead.

Food

If your event involves selling food then each vendor must have a Food Standards Agency Hygiene rating of 4 or 5.

If you are planning to offer samples of food and drink, then you will also need to demonstrate a commitment to best practice with food safety - including **food hygiene** and **allergen awareness**.

Contact Details

- ❖ The other guides can be found at <website>
- ❖ For all enquiries about this guidance please contact the **City Centre Operations Team** on 0121 675 3616, citycentre@birmingham.gov.uk or www.birmingham.gov.uk/citycentre

This is version 0.72 of the guide, produced in April 2016.