



London Borough of Lewisham

Guidance, conditions and application form for Play Streets

Introduction

This is a step by step guide to organising a Play Street.

There are a number of details to consider before making a formal application for a street closure.

1. Seek informal approval from the Council for the event

Before you invest too much time in developing the proposal, you can seek initial confirmation from the Council that the road is suitable, in principle, to be temporarily closed for a Play Street. Please specify which part of the street you would like to be closed by, for example, using house numbers.

Key criteria to be met include the street **not** being on a:

- main road (i.e. an A/B road),
- a bus route, or
- is on an emergency services route.

Email dave.wheeler@lewisham.gov.uk to establish whether your road is suitable.

2. Sell the idea to neighbours

Speak to as many of your neighbours as possible to gauge their interest and support. You should ensure that they understand how the event will work and that they have a chance to be involved and share ideas or concerns. It is important residents have an opportunity to register their support or objections. It is a good idea to hold a meeting.

Briefly the main purpose of your meeting should be to:

- Share the idea and explain why you are holding the event
- Discuss any questions or concerns
- Assess the level of interest and support
- Agree suitable times and dates – these are most commonly afternoon sessions. You will need to decide the day/time of the event and if it is a one off event or a regular event, e.g. first Sunday of the month between 2pm and 5pm.
- Highlight and consider any potential issues and look for their resolution.
- Recruit volunteers and discuss individual roles.
 - o Volunteers duties include:-

- Be the named contact as organiser
- Assist the organiser - to help and support the Organiser during planning and throughout the event
- to help and support with advertising and community support
- Manage the closure points as traffic marshals – responsible for redirecting traffic at the closure points, guide vehicles with access into the street.

3. Complete and submit your formal application

Apply using the online form on the [Council website](#).

As part of the application process, you must explain how you have consulted with local residents (neighbours) and include any objections.

Lewisham Council cannot guarantee that a closure will be approved if any of the application conditions are not met.

3.1 Application deadlines

Applications should be received at least 6 weeks prior to the date of the event. Late applications may be considered, at the discretion of council officers.

3.2 Objections and Concerns

Apply using the online form on the [Council website](#).

As part of the application process, you must explain how you have consulted with local residents (neighbours) and include any objections.

Lewisham Council cannot guarantee that a closure will be approved if any of the application conditions are not met.

3.3 Insurance and liability

You are not legally required to have insurance; however Lewisham Council strongly advises that you do take it out for your own peace of mind. Contact [Event Assured](#) or [Events Insurance Services](#) or another service to get quotes for public liability insurance for your event.

Please be sure the insurance covers both third party claims against the organisers for injury as well as damage to council assets caused during the event.

The national organisation Playing Out advises: “We are not lawyers but we have sought advice from lawyers and it seems that the liability situation is slightly uncertain. It is best to get advice on this from your council and also look at [FAQs - Playing Out](#) for more information. In general, the best way to prevent being held liable for anything that goes wrong is to make sure you do everything in a responsible way. Our main advice is that you take good care, prepare well and encourage everyone to

be sensible and respectful about other people and their property. In all publicity and on the day, please remind parents that playing out sessions are not 'risk-free' and that they are still ultimately responsible for their own children's safety, both during and after the sessions." Playing Out manual – Feb 2015.

Insurance companies offering quotes for street parties and events can be found online.

3.4 Noise Nuisance

Consideration should be given to those living or working nearby. Please try to keep noise to a minimal level.

3.5 Cleaner Lewisham

The closure area should be left clean and tidy before the road is reopened.

For additional information on adding a Cleaner Lewisham litter pick to your event please visit the [Cleaner Lewisham page](#) on the Council website or email cleanerlewisham@lewisham.gov.uk for more information.

3.6 Fire Safety

Free fire safety advice may be obtained from the London Fire and Rescue Service.

3.6 Risk Assessment

A risk assessment should be carried out and submitted to the Council as part of the application process.

4. Organisation and promotion

4.1 Publicity

Organisers should publicise the event by distributing leaflets, posters and/or flyers. The Council recommends keeping publicity within your own street and perhaps a few directly neighbouring streets that may be impacted by the closure due to traffic diverting.

4.2 Notification to affected properties

All residents and businesses in the affected road must be informed in writing by the organiser. To help support organisers it is no longer a requirement to collect names and addresses of those that support the application. However all objections must be logged and responded to, and included in the application.

4.3 Barriers & Signs

Please read the regulations for barriers, signs and access in the play street guidelines below. You can hire, buy or make them and www.streetparty.org.uk offer further advice on this.

To create your own barriers you could use red & white non-adhesive hazard tape and regulation Road Closed signs. You can buy hazard tape from any good DIY store or even online for a small cost. You can hire road closed signs from many hire shops or buy ready laminated signs which adhere to the highways regulations or you can follow the make-your-own instructions at www.streetparty.org.uk

The Council may be able to provide a limited number of signs, on a first come first served basis.

4.4 Risk Assessment

A written risk assessment must be completed to ensure, as far as practicable, that the event goes according to plan without incident. Whilst it is impossible to eliminate all risk, as the organiser of a play street it is important to think through all potential risks and how you will manage them well ahead of your first event – and you can use our risk/benefit template to help. Many experts on childhood now recognise that risk-taking in play is beneficial for children in terms of their physical development, self-esteem and happiness. Accidents such as children falling off scooters or tripping over will happen in play streets, as they do in parks, playgrounds and streets on any normal day. Clearly it can never be guaranteed that incidents won't occur but careful planning can reduce the likelihood.

The most serious risk to manage is from cars/drivers entering at speed, but this is minimised by having stewards who follow the procedures around road closures and stewarding – see information on stewarding below. We also recommend doing a walkabout of your street to identify any particular risks – e.g. are there any entry points to flats with car-parks? If so you might want to think about how you will manage this, perhaps having an extra steward stationed here to stop cars driving out at speed. If there is a steep hill you may decide you want to reduce the risk of children riding down very fast, maybe having an agreed area for bikes and trikes which you could mark out with chalk. In addition do a final walkabout of the street just before the session starts - looking out for any extra risks - e.g. broken glass in the street – and remove any obvious hazards. Each time you do a play street – review your risk assessment and update to reflect any new risks or extra steps you've found to help manage the closure.

There is plenty of useful information on the link below regarding risk assessments - <http://www.resourcecentre.org.uk/information/risk-assessments/>

5. The Event

5.1 Licensing

No activity requiring any form of licensing (under the Licensing Act 2003) may be undertaken during a Play Street closure.

5.2 Dates and Times

A Play Street closure can be held for a maximum of 3 hours during daylight hours and on the dates and times agreed within the application..

In the event of conflicting road works in the vicinity of the event, the Council reserves the right to refuse an application or suspend the event for any given time.

Any existing Traffic Management Orders or other statutory provision on the street(s) to be closed will remain in force during the closures unless specified to the contrary on the Play Street Traffic Order notice.

5.3 Marshalls

Marshalls are required to be in place for the whole time the play street is in operation. They have an important job and should be very clear on what their roles are, therefore it is imperative that they are briefed before the event begins. All those acting as marshals must wear hi-visibility clothing.

Each closure point should be staffed/managed at all times during the closure by the marshals. Any resident wishing to gain vehicular access through the closure must be accompanied by a marshal, walking ahead of the vehicle warning children and parents. The maximum speed in a closure area is 5mph.

Some drivers may occasionally be unhappy, or even aggressive, so it is important that the marshals are capable of dealing with this and that they know how to get help if needed.

5.4 Access Requirements

Access must be provided during Play Street events for residents, businesses, pedestrians, utility companies and emergency vehicles during any closure period. On street parking cannot be refused or restricted during the event and the layout must be such that a clear route along the road can easily be made available particularly for emergency vehicles. A Play Street notice is made entirely for the purpose of children's play and may not involve the placement of any structure on the highway during its hours of operation.

5.5 Closing the Road

Road closure signs must be placed in such a way that the writing on them is clearly visible to approaching drivers. Once in place the marshals should not leave their posts except to let vehicles of residents and visitors in and out. Once the road is closed, all vehicles other than emergency vehicles, and residents who live on the street may be breaking the law if they go through.

Clearing Up

The Council will require that all portable signs, cones and barriers are removed and all rubbish cleared up before the road is reopened. Please go to the [Cleaner Lewisham webpage](#) for more information.

Appendix

6.1 Example letter to neighbours

Play Street Co-ordinator

Your name, address and contact details

DATE

To: Residents / Businesses ofRoad, SEXX

Dear Neighbour,

Re: Play Street Closure

I am writing to inform you that I am in the process of applying to Lewisham Council to close the road for a Play Street event on the following road(s):-

.....
.....

The Closure is subject to Council approval. The closures will only take place at the following periods / times:

.....

The road will be fully closed to through traffic at the points of closure. Residents will be allowed full access but are expected to drive at walking speed when within the closure area. It is not necessary to move parked vehicles from the street, although this would be preferable and achieved on a voluntary basis. Access will be maintained for emergency services at all times in all parts of the street.

The street part is being organised to celebrate.....

Please contact me if you have any concerns regarding this proposal. Or if you would like to get involved with organising the event. I will respond to any questions and if for any reason I am unsure I will refer your query on to the Council to ensure you are given the correct information.

Many thanks in advance for your cooperation.

Yours faithfully,

X

6.2 Example risk assessment

Risk/Benefit assessment: [INSERT YOUR STREET NAME]

Date: [DATE OF YOUR PLAY STREET]

Completed by: [INSERT YOUR NAME]

Please review and adapt to your own requirements. Consider any other risks that may be particular to your street – e.g. is there a bend in the road, steep hill, or small turning from flats where cars could exit from. Also think about extremes of weather and how this might affect things. Identify what the risk is, as well as any benefits associated with this, and any actions you can take to reduce the risk.

Hazard	Risk(s)	Benefits	Actions to reduce risk
<i>Moving vehicles</i>	Injury to volunteers when setting up road closure, or to children when playing.	Residents are able to access their cars and to come in and out of the street if necessary, minimising disruption to residents. Children learn about road safety and to be cautious when moving vehicles are nearby.	All volunteer stewards must wear high visibility jackets. Road closure points to be clearly marked with appropriate signage on wheelie bins and traffic cones. Road closure notices and door-to-door leafleting prior to events to warn neighbours in advance of the road closure. Children and adults told to stay out of the road until ALL road closure points in place. Stewards to use whistles to gain attention of children/adults. Floating steward on duty to look out for cars trying to leave.
<i>Playing beyond the barriers</i>	Injury to children by vehicles passing beyond the road closure barriers		Stewards posted at the barriers. They are briefed to watch for children playing on the road beyond the barriers and will instruct them to move on the pavements if they see this.
<i>Collisions with parked cars</i>	Child may collide with parked car (eg on scooter) causing damage to themselves and/or car	Children enjoy being able to ride in the street more freely and develop skills. Children can develop spatial awareness by having to negotiate obstacles. Children develop resilience & confidence through minor scrapes and knocks.	Organiser will monitor activity and talk to child(ren) if it becomes necessary, about the need to be aware and allow space around parked cars. Notice put on cars before the event reminding drivers about the event and suggesting they could move their cars (but not compulsory).
<i>Children arguing/getting upset/physical violence between children</i>	Bringing groups of children together in unstructured way may lead to confrontations,	Opportunity for children to learn coping skills and ways to deal with confrontation	Organiser and steward will keep overview and will intervene if they judge it is necessary to do so.

	upsets, possibly physical violence between them.	without parental/adult input.	Stewards and organiser instructed to intervene if they see any children acting violently or inappropriately - and parent should be informed.
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<i>Personal injury to those people (children and adults) attending including accidents whilst playing</i>	Collisions between scooters/bikes /skateboards; collisions between children running around. Slips, trips, falls, broken limbs, collisions involving adults or children in the course of play.	Fun, freedom and enjoyment of playing. Children develop social, physical, intellectual and creative skills. Riding scooters, bikes and skateboards makes children happy, active and boosts their confidence and independent mobility skills. Children develop resilience and confidence through experiences of minor scrapes and knocks – they also learn to assess and modify their risk-taking. Adults and children get to know their neighbours, increasing neighbourliness and community cohesion.	Parents and carers attending to be informed via flyers and word of mouth that children with them are their responsibility at all times. Monitor numbers of children and types of activity to ensure that possibility of bumps is kept to a minimum. Advertising limited so that only children from school and immediately neighbouring streets likely to be come. Stewarding arrangements in place as described. Lewisham Council has approved the road as being suitable for temporary street play closures following the recommended guidelines.
<i>Damage to houses</i>	House windows damaged by balls or other thrown objects (eg frisbees)	Ball and other throwing/kicking games develops children's hand to eye coordination. Ball games are particularly great for engaging dads in play with their children.	Parents and carers attending to be informed via flyers and word of mouth that children arriving with them are their responsibility. Organiser/stewards to monitor activity and talk to children/parents where necessary – e.g. if kicking balls to hard.
<i>Disturbance from non- residents</i>	People come to the street and create problems – eg noise, inappropriate behaviour		Organiser to monitor numbers and activity, talk to people/children about what's happening and that it's a low key community event Call for assistance from local police officer if became necessary
<i>Disturbance to night shift residents or those working from home</i>	Noise disturbance	Children being loud and exuberant, sometimes is a normal part of playing freely. Many adults enjoy the sound of children playing.	Reminder posted in street in week running up to event to make neighbours aware. Invitations controlled so that only children from street and immediately neighbouring streets invited.

			Monitor noise levels and where appropriate intervene.
<i>Strong sun</i>	Sun burn, heat stroke	Being outdoors is good for health and wellbeing.	Stewards briefed to look out for children getting too hot or showing signs of sunburn. Ask parents to provide jugs of water for their children.