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Play streets

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We're working with the local community to bring the fun back to the streets!

Play street events are temporary resident-led road closures that allow children to play safely outside within their neighbourhood for a few hours.

The events allow children to make friends, have fun, and learn and gain independence, all while enjoying the fresh air and freedom of outside play. They are an effective way to promote active lifestyles and safer streets.

With permission from Blackpool Council, residents can apply to legally close the road to through traffic for a short space of time to create a safe space for children to play outside.

Applications must be submitted at least **8 weeks before** the date of the first event so we have time to review it. Please note, Play Street road closures can only be requested for up to 3 hours.

Organising a play street

Following a successful first Play Street event in the Claremont area of the town in March 2023, we have now put a Play Street policy in place to enable residents to easily apply for one-off or regular Play Street sessions on their street.

Our guide below will provide useful information to help you organise one-off or regular Play Streets sessions on your street.

Please note, some roads may not be suitable for Play Street sessions e.g. bus routes or busy through roads. Other planned road closures in the area may also mean it's not possible to close your road due to the need to provide alternative traffic routes.

If you want to discuss the potential for your road to hold a Play Street session prior to submitting an application, please email traffic.management@blackpool.gov.uk

Guide to organising a play street

Talk to your neighbours

The first step in organising a play street is to discuss this with neighbours to get their support and find out any concerns they might have.

Easy ways to do this include talking on the street, knocking on doors, posting letters/leaflets and arranging an informal meeting. Visit the [Playing Out](#) website for material templates.

Once you are sure you have enough support from neighbours to organise a play street you will need to:

- Choose a date for your session

Road closure applications need to be submitted at least 8 weeks prior to the first session so we have time to process the request. Please note, play street road closures can only be requested for up to 3 hours.

- Agree volunteer roles

Volunteers are an important part of play streets. You will need marshals available on the day of the event to redirect traffic and ensure access is maintained for residents/visitors. They will also need to warn people on the street if traffic is entering the closed space. Marshals will need to be in place at each street closure point for the duration of the event.

Please note, the volunteers are not responsible for the children at the play street session, this responsibility remains with their parents and this should be made clear in all communication around the play street.

- Confirm who the organiser of the event is so the road closure application can be submitted.

Get permission and support

Once you have enough interest from other neighbours, you need to complete the play street application form to apply for a legal road closure.

As part of the application process, you will be asked to provide proof that you have contacted all residents in the affected area, addressed any concerns that have been raised and completed a risk assessment for the play street session.

All residents affected by the road closure must be contacted by the organiser in writing.

It is recommended that the organiser talks with all residents to explain the benefits of play streets and help overcome any concerns that are raised before submitting an application.

Any objections over the play street session should be raised with us so they can be taken into consideration when agreeing the road closure, please email traffic.management@blackpool.gov.uk to discuss.

Please note, once the application is approved this will be kept under review. If objections to the closure become an issue then permission to close the road can be withdrawn.

Insurance and liability

Organising an event on the public highway may put the organiser at risk of claims for injury, loss or damage which could result from accidents on the road or damage that could occur at the play street.

This **will not be covered** by normal house insurance. The council therefore strongly recommends that the organisers are covered by public liability insurance of a minimum of £5m and under no circumstances will the council be held liable for any injury, loss or damage arising from the organisation of an event.

Whilst the event organiser(s) does not have to obtain public liability insurance to have a play street, the applicant will have to agree to indemnify the council against any and all claims, demands and proceedings arising out of their event.

Organisers should encourage everyone to be respectful about other people and their property. Parents also need to be reminded (in writing and on the day) that they are responsible for their own children at all times.

Other things to consider when organising play streets include:

- Road safety - Children should be reminded that the road is not safe to play in under normal circumstances, and they should only do so at play street sessions when the signs and marshals are in place and parents have said it's safe to do so
- Noise levels – excessive noise should be minimised for those living or working nearby
- Fire Safety – it's important to have a clear plan in place for the event of a fire on the street during the event. Contact the fire service for free safety advice

Make people aware

You should advertise the event by a range of methods including distributing notices, posters, leaflets and flyers.

We recommend keeping publicity within your own street and directly neighbouring streets. It is advised to avoid it being seen as an

event for the wider public, which may have implications for liability and road closure procedures.

Regular sessions will need to have regular promotion, to help keep people aware of the closure and the need to plan to avoid it.

Signage and barriers

To ensure that the road closure is completed safely, signage and barriers will need to be in place to make drivers aware.

Residents can use existing resources to mark the road closure, such as wheelie bins, however signs will need to be clearly displayed on these.

Official highways 'Road Closed' signs can be used to reflect a legal road closure in force alongside other barriers.

These are available to purchase from Blackpool Council at a cost of £20 per banner. We also have a small number of signs which can be loaned by organisers for Play Streets.

When applying for a play street please confirm if you wish to purchase or loan signage from the council's highways department on the application form. Alternatively, organisers can purchase their own 'Road closed' signs elsewhere if preferred.

Organisers will be responsible for storing their own signage and barriers between events.

[Find out more information on signage options](#)

Risk assessment

The aim of a risk assessment is to ensure that your event goes according to plan without any incidents. You can never guarantee that an incident will not happen but careful planning can reduce the likelihood of it happening and help you deal with it if it does occur.

Identify all the hazards that may be part of your event and decide how much risk they are individually or in combination; 'hazards' are things with the potential to cause harm and 'risk' is how likely it is for something to happen because a hazard is present.

You must then either remove the hazard completely or if this is not possible, reduce the risk of this hazard to an acceptable level. There is no set way of writing a risk assessment, all situations are different. It is good practice to clearly document what the hazards and risks are, how serious they may be and what you intend to do about reducing or eliminating them.

You must do all this in writing and keep a copy safe just in case something does go wrong.

Please remember:

1. As the event organiser, it's your responsibility to do the risk assessment because you should be more familiar with it than anyone else
2. On the day of the event, check the whole street to make sure that all the risks are controlled properly. If you find any more, put them right before the event starts and make a note of what you have done
3. You should date and sign your risk assessment
4. Before your event is approved, we may want to come and visit your street with you to discuss practical issues and possibly comment on your risk assessment. We will not do the risk assessment for you, but we may spot something that is wrong or missing. This does not mean that we accept responsibility for your risk assessment

The play street session

On the day of the event, it's important to brief the marshals on their role. Hi-visibility clothing should be worn by those acting as marshals.

Occasionally, drivers may be unhappy that they can't use the road as normal. It's important the marshals are capable of dealing with this and they know how to get help if needed.

Closing the road

When starting the play street session:

- Put all road closure signs into place as simultaneously as you can, with the writing clearly visible to approaching drivers
- Ensure extra barriers are used on wider streets if necessary. Be sure you can move these swiftly if an emergency vehicle needs access
- Marshals must remain at their posts throughout the session except to escort vehicles of residents and visitors in and out, which will need to travel at walking speed
- Ensure access is provided at all times for residents, pedestrians and emergency vehicles during the closure period
- Ensure on-street parking remains available during the play street event, this cannot be restricted

After the road is closed, vehicles, except residents requiring access and emergency vehicles are breaking the law if they go through. Take the license number of anyone who disregards the signs and report it to the police.

Reopening the road

Before reopening the road please follow these basic steps:

- Tell everyone the play street session is over and the road will be reopening
- Clear away all equipment that has been used and pick up all rubbish
- Reopen all road closure points at the same time to avoid any traffic problems

[Apply for a play street road closure](#)

Further information

Playing Out is a not-for-profit national organisation set up by parents in Bristol, supporting neighbourhoods to organise play street events nationally.

[Find guidance, useful resources and advice](#) or email hello@playingout.net

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