

BUSKING IN ALTRINCHAM



CODE OF CONDUCT 2021-2024



Foreword

Trafford Council recognises that busking can make a valuable contribution towards the cultural life of a town, and can also make the streets more attractive and entertaining for visitors, businesses and residents. However public space is there for all to enjoy and sometimes the interests of different parties come into conflict with each other.

This code of conduct is aimed at balancing the interests of all legitimate parties so that the public can enjoy their time in the town centre, musicians and artists can perform live and businesses can carry out their activities without undue disturbance.

Failure to comply with this code of conduct where conduct is having a detrimental effect of a persistent or continuing nature on the quality of life of those in the locality, and is unreasonable may result in the council issuing a community protection warning/notice. If this is subsequently breached then a fixed penalty may be issued.

This code is in draft format and is being published for consultation purposes at this stage only. We welcome views from all members of the community.

Cllr Graham Whitham
Executive Member

What is busking?

Busking means music, dance, street theatre performance and art offered live within public spaces for the purposes of entertaining and interacting with members of the public in exchange for receiving voluntary contributions.



Aims of this guide:

- To give clarity around what is reasonable in relation to busking in Altrincham.
- To manage the conflict which sometimes arises from the different uses of public spaces.
- To promote a positive relationship between buskers and those who share public spaces with them.
- To give people confidence that most disputes can be resolved amicably through community consideration and negotiation.

Code of Conduct for buskers:

- No act consisting of more than 2 buskers is permitted. For acts with more than 2 performers, you must obtain written permission at least 7 days in advance by emailing safer.communities@trafford.gov.uk
- You must play at a reasonable volume to avoid causing a disturbance for local shops and businesses.
- You must not cause any kind of obstruction, including paths, roads and entrances to premises or services, such as cash machines.
- You may only perform between 10am-6pm. Even during these hours you should stop playing or move to another location if you're asked to do so by local residents or businesses.
- You must move to a new location, at least 50 metres away, every 60 minutes and not return to the same location within the same 24 hours.
- You must not perform in an area where a previous busker has performed in the preceding hour, known as the "fallow period".
- You must not under any circumstances use amplification or drums when performing as they create lots of noise and complaints.

- You must not perform in a way which could be considered dangerous or inappropriate or in a way likely to cause alarm, distress or offence.
- You may not use any street furniture as part of your act. This includes not putting up posters or adverts on street furniture.
- You should consider your location carefully. Your act may be more welcomed around the al fresco eating areas in Altrincham rather than directly outside retail premises or offices.
- You should also comply with any instruction given in relation to your act by council staff or the police.

Considerations for a pitch location:

There are no fixed pitch locations within Altrincham and as such this is a guide of things to consider when choosing a location.

- Do not obstruct windows, doors, entrance or thoroughfares.
- Do not obstruct the Highway.
- Make sure there is plenty of space for people to walk past or around you and allow for Social Distancing.

- Buskers must maintain a 50 metre gap between one another.
- Be aware of the time of day and nature of the space you intend to perform in.
- Be prepared to change the location should your act impact adversely the people around, many office locations within Altrincham town centre use office spaces within which double up as training venues for their staff.
- Be prepared to adjust your volume if asked, appreciate some people are more sensitive towards noise than others.
- Due to new COVID19 legislation many shops and businesses have now been advised to maintain open front doors for ventilation reasons so be understanding as this may temporarily impact their tolerances to what they deem acceptable volume levels.
- Understand people in neighbouring shops and business cannot simply walk away, so consider the impact your performance has on them and take appropriate if/when required.
- If you are busking in order to collect money for charity, you'll need to apply for a street collections licence.
- If you want to sell something while busking, such as CDs, you'll need to apply for street trading consent.

Performance times per Busker should not exceed a maximum of 1 hour and there will be no returning within an hour of the performance ending. The ‘fallow period’ of 1 hour on any pitch must be observed.

Acceptable noise levels:

There is no precise decibel guidance in relation to what would likely contribute to a negative impact, as this depends on prevailing background noise and other local circumstances, but whilst a Busker needs to be heard above the level of ambient street noise if their performance is to be effective, it should not generate an intrusive noise that is disruptive to other business activity.

Considerations for businesses/residents:

- Should you wish to raise an issue with a Busker please wait for an appropriate moment in their set to make yourself known.
- Speak calmly and politely to explain your issue and do not wait until you're irate to speak as this will probably have an adverse outcome.
- Offer a solution.
- Consider consulting other businesses first to gauge others opinions.

- Accept most Buskers will be unaware they are causing you an issue and it may be helpful to draw the Buskers attention to this guide.
- Whenever possible talking to the Busker should be the starting point in resolving any issues.

Enforcement:

Please be aware that formal enforcement action CAN and WILL be taken by Trafford Council where performers fail to follow this guidance.

This most likely will result in an Officer attending in order to assess the Busker/performance and discuss the issues which have arisen however before deployment we would expect this guidance to have been adhered to and all lines of resolution explored and exhausted.

The officer will firstly speak with all parties to ensure they fully understand this guide and educate them if necessary on its content. A written warning will be issued if buskers fail to comply with what is being asked of them.

Once the officer is satisfied that all involved have a full understanding but the issues persists, a Community Protection Notice (CPN) will be issued for non compliance. CPN's are issued as a warning with any breaches resulting in a £100 fine.

Please also be aware that multiple breaches may result in court proceedings being filed.

The Community Safety Team are here to help and will be able to offer assistance between 9am – 5pm Monday to Friday.

Email: safer.communities@trafford.gov.uk

For any issues arising over a weekend which require a more time critical response please consider contacting Greater Manchester Police on 101 or by using their web chat at www.gmp.police.uk

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