



**WATFORD
BOROUGH
COUNCIL**

STREET PERFORMANCES AND BUSKING IN WATFORD

OUR CODE OF CONDUCT

2023

OVERVIEW



Streets and public spaces in Watford are brought to life by busking and street entertainment. This includes musicians, magicians, comedians, artists, dancers and others who come to the town to showcase their talent. We welcome busking and street entertainers who can be an important part of the town's vibrancy and diversity.

However, along with the liveliness and fun, busking and street entertainment may impact on others including loud noise, obstruction and public safety.

We want Watford, including our town centre, to be welcoming and enjoyable for everyone. This means we want to balance the interests of buskers and street entertainers with those who live, work and visit Watford by promoting a voluntary Code of Conduct. This supports performers by setting some guidelines on areas like noise and where they could be at risk of causing disturbance or nuisance.



WHAT IS BUSKING AND STREET ENTERTAINMENT?

Busking and street entertainment is a form of performance art, where artists entertain people in a street or public places. It usually involves music, dance or street theatre and is often done for donations of money. Buskers or street entertainers are not paid or hired directly for their performance. Street entertainment is a lawful activity and if a street performer is following this Code of Conduct, they are unlikely to be in breach of any legislation.

In terms of this Code of Conduct, there are some activities that are not covered:

- the sale of goods and/or services, for example portrait artists, balloon sellers. These are regulated by Street Trading regime and are subject to separate controls.
- entertainment performed as part of a street party, community festival, charitable fundraising event, protest or similar activities.
- entertainment related to a religious meeting, procession or service, or traditional seasonal festivities, including carol singing.
- entertainment organised as part of our (or other approved organisation's) event programme.

If you are not sure if your art or performance is a busking and street entertainment activity or any other type of activity, please contact **01923 226400** / customerservices@watford.gov.uk



WATFORD'S BUSKING AND STREET ENTERTAINMENT CODE OF CONDUCT

We have identified six principles in our Code of Conduct.

If you're performing anywhere in Watford you should take this code into account. It sets out how you can perform responsibly and be considerate of other performers, surrounding residents, businesses and other users of the shared public areas.

1. Think safety!

All buskers and street entertainers should be confident that both they, and their performance, is safe for watching or taking part.

- you must make sure no one could trip over your equipment
- never leave your equipment unattended
- don't perform in a way that could cause danger such as with any naked flame, pyrotechnics, fireworks, knives, sharp objects or anything similar
- no animals should be used as part of the performance or accompany you when you are performing

2. When and where to perform

All busking and street entertainment should only take place between 10am and 8pm.

Watford has a dedicated event's space in the Parade, which, if not already booked, is a great place to perform with a crowd.

There are no other dedicated performance spaces in the town centre or wider town. Some spaces work better than others (less disruption, impact on residents and businesses)

3. Don't cause a nuisance or concern, think about others

Avoid causing a nuisance or concern through your performance. Buskers and street entertainers should make sure their performance does not impact or upset those around or watching them.

This means:

- not creating a nuisance
 - ♦ sound from any performance (such as music or voice) should not be so loud that it can be plainly heard at a distance of 50 metres
 - ♦ generator-powered / extra battery pack amplification is not allowed
- not performing anything that might upset or be unsuitable for the general public. This includes age-inappropriate content, language or imagery
- not performing in a manner that is dangerous or likely to cause alarm or distress

- being aware of other buskers and street entertainers in the area and space yourself far enough away to avoid sound clash. A good space between performers is around ten car lengths (50 metres)
- managing the length of your performance:
 - ♦ entertainment should not:
 - ♦ last longer than a maximum of one hour in any one place (pitch)
 - ♦ be repeated in the same place or within 50 metres within two hours
- restricting particularly noisy entertainment (e.g., bagpipes, drums) to a maximum of 30 minutes in any one place
- respecting other buskers and street entertainers
- keeping in mind that your audiences may make noise too

4. Keep your performance area clear of obstructions

You should make sure your performance and audience does not cause an obstruction to pedestrians, road users and neighbouring property. An obstruction is likely to be caused if a wheelchair or double pushchair cannot comfortably move past

This means:

- ♦ not blocking any entrances or exits to property
- ♦ making sure pedestrians don't have to spill out onto the road to get past you or your audience
- ♦ not displaying any sign inviting payment for a performance (except where a collection for charity has been authorised by the council or the Charity Commissioners) or for the sale of any goods or services (such as CDs, t-shirts)

5. Respect the performance area

You should not use street furniture, such as public seats, lampposts and railings for your performance.

6. Work with the council and the police

If asked to stop performing by the council, police or police community support officer you must do so.

Council staff, the police or police community support officers may at times ask you to adjust your performance or move locations in the event of an emergency, public disorder, planned events or to prevent a nuisance.

We would always hope to resolve any concerns through discussions and cooperation.

If issues cannot be resolved, we are able to take legal action to lessen the nuisance and prohibit or restrict it from happening again. This may include the issue of FPN, seizure of musical instruments or prosecution.





**For more information on busking and street
entertainment in Watford contact:**

01923 226400

customerservices@watford.gov.uk



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