

Busking Code of Practice



In partnership with



Busking and the Street Performers' Code of Practice

Busking, or street performing, is a time-honoured tradition that dates back to medieval times. Minstrels and bards would travel from place to place, acting as news reporters and message bearers as well as entertainers.

Buskers can provide pleasure to many people, both local and visitors. But for people who work or live in town centres, busking can become intrusive or annoying.

Code of Practice

We don't license busking, so anybody can set up and perform at any time. But in an attempt to minimise disturbance, we do ask buskers to adhere to a **voluntary code of practice**. The code sets a standard that, if complied with, will ensure busking can continue without the need for us to take action.

We do not have the power to require buskers to comply with the code. We may be able to visit a busker to explain the code and, if necessary, take formal action. It may be possible to deal with busking as a noise nuisance under statutory powers but this may require high volumes of music and lengthy stays.

Challenge a Busker Causing a Disturbance

If a busker is causing a disturbance, try speaking to them. Mention the code of practice and the time of their arrival. Ask them to move elsewhere after an hour, or to turn the volume down.

If the busker responds in a hostile or threatening way, you should **report it to the police**. Report the threat as a Public Order Act offence and ask for an officer to respond.

Contact Us

Dyfed-Powys Police	101
Pollution Control Team, Pembrokeshire County Council	01437 764551
Pembroke Town Council	01646 683092

Busking Code of Practice

What is Busking?

Busking is an art form that is practised by professional artists, amateur performers and those who are just starting out. Buskers put a lot of thought and effort into their act, they give a performance, entertain the public and receive tips in return.

Busking includes circus, dance, magic and street theatre shows as well as music, living statues and others. The three main types are:

Shows

Large shows attract a large audience. Small shows attract a smaller audience. People stop and watch for around 10 to 60 minutes.

Music

Music acts can be soloists or groups. Audiences tend to stop and watch for a few minutes.

Walk-By

Walk-by acts can be living statues, writers, close contact jugglers and other types of street theatre that are enjoyed whilst walking-by.

Where to Busk

- Busking is legal on public land and there are lots of great places to busk in town centres in Pembrokeshire.
- All pitches operate differently. Chat to local buskers to get the lowdown.
- If you are trying out a new area, talk to local busker, businesses and traders. You are less likely to get a complaint.
- Let people get past. There should be space to get past you *and* your audience - even at busy times. Think about children in push chairs and wheelchair access.
- If your audience blocks a doorway, pavement, ATM or loo, please stop and clear the blockage! You may want to try a bigger pitch or adapt your act for a smaller audience.
- If there isn't a suitable space, wait for one to become free. Ask other buskers if there's a queue you can join.
- If a performer is waiting for your pitch, please share it. On really popular pitches this could mean sharing after one hour or less.
- Avoid sound clashes. Acts involving sound should have lots of space between them.

Your Performance

- Your performance will have an impact on people nearby. Please be aware of this and be willing to move or adjust your performance if necessary.
- Please don't cause offence or humiliation.

Busking Code of Practice

Sound

- The biggest cause of complaints is sound. Sound can travel a long way and go high into the air. Many busking locations are surrounded by flats, shops, offices or holiday lets. Because the people inside can't walk away, please make sure your volume doesn't bother them.
- As a rule - keep your volume *just* above the level of background street noise and check that it is not distorted.
- Please don't repeat music in the same location. Acts with varied content are much more popular.
- Some sounds have a big impact on people. If your act has loud, bass heavy or percussive sounds, please monitor your volume regularly, vary your music and limit your time at each location.
- Keep backing tracks unobtrusive and turn them off when you're not performing.

Equipment

- Make sure no-one could trip over your equipment.
- Never leave equipment unattended.
- Keep it safe!
- If you use fixtures such as furniture, lamp-posts or railings, or you draw on the ground, please get permission beforehand and make sure nothing gets damaged.
- Please keep the pitch clean and tidy-up afterwards.

Collecting Money

- Performers can accept donations but the public must never feel obliged to pay.
- You can give away CDs or other items, but you cannot charge a fee for them. To sell items for a fee you need a street trading licence.
- If you are collecting for charity, **you'll need a permit (Contact Pembrokeshire County Council's Licensing Team on 01437 764551).**

Resolving Problems

Talking with the performer is the starting point for solving all busking related problems. Unless there is an imminent risk to the performer or others, they should be given the chance to change their performance so that it follows the Buskers' Code.

Enforcement action should only be taken once the following two steps have been taken:

STEP 1 Don't wait until you're irate! If a performer or group is causing a problem, it can usually be resolved quickly and amicably by talking. Where possible, wait for a suitable break before talking to the performer(s). Introduce yourself and explain the impact that their performance is having on you. Ask the performer if they know about the Buskers' Code.

STEP 2 If you have spoken to the performer(s) and the problem continues, please contact your local authority. They will decide what steps to take, which may be enforcement.

Busking Code of Practice

THE LAW AND ENFORCEMENT

Is Busking Legal?

Yes - busking on public land is legal in most places.

Anti-Social Behaviour

- If your behaviour is unreasonable and you are having a persistent, detrimental effect on the quality of life of people in the area, you will receive a verbal warning.
- If you carry on, you could be issued with a formal warning letter, followed by a Community Protection Notice under the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act (2014).
- If you breach the notice, you could be fined or have your equipment seized.

Noise Nuisance

- If you use amplification after 9pm you could be charged under the Control of Pollution Act 1974.
- If a sound is causing a persistent, detrimental effect on a person's quality of life, it could constitute a noise nuisance. If you are the cause of this sound and receive complaints you may receive a Noise Abatement Notice under the Environmental Protection Act (1990). If you breach this notice, you could be fined or have your equipment seized. The most common causes of noise complaints are: volume at an unreasonable level; playing the same music repeatedly; not moving regularly.

Obstruction of the Highway

- If you or your audience block people's path you may be causing an obstruction and told to stop. If you carry on you could be charged under the Highways Acts (1980).

Intimidation or Conflict

- If anyone is breaching the peace or intimidating others the police will take action. The person could be charged under the Public Order Act (1986).

Begging

- Busking shouldn't be confused with begging. Buskers put a lot of effort into their act, give a performance and entertain the public