

### **Note to the reader:**

This code is currently undergoing a period of review, during which time Worcester City Council will seek to ensure that as many stakeholders or stakeholder representatives are consulted as possible. You will see that certain information is to be confirmed, this will be updated as soon as possible before the code is publicised in early January 2017.

Please provide feedback to Helen Mole, Local Centres Officer on [Helen.mole@worcester.gov.uk](mailto:Helen.mole@worcester.gov.uk).

## **BUSKING IN WORCESTER**

### **A CODE OF BEST PRACTICE**

#### **Introduction**

This code of practice relates to busking which takes place in Worcester City Centre. Busking is important to the vibrancy of our city centre and Worcester City Council is keen to encourage live music and performance which enhances the experience of visitors to the city centre. However, it is crucial that this is in keeping with the local area and not causing a nuisance to local residents and businesses.

#### **Definition**

For the purposes of this code, 'Busking' means performing music, dance, street theatre or art in a public space for the purpose of receiving contributions from members of the public. Buskers are not typically paid or hired directly for their performance. Spaces are not pre-booked and performances should not be advertised in advance.

The City Council does not have a "licence" scheme for approved buskers. However buskers are asked to abide by this Code of Practice, which is subject to review.

#### **Complaints**

Most complaints about busking usually relate to noise levels, repetitive performances or obstruction. Most issues can be resolved amicably if they are dealt with before they escalate and in most cases a formal complaint will not be needed. If buskers are following the advice set out in this code, there should be no issue but in case of any problems, please contact **01905 722309**.

#### **The Code of Conduct for Buskers in Worcester City Centre:**

##### **1. Noise Levels**

- 1.1. It is crucial that noise does not become an issue other users of the area, for example shops and businesses located within the proximity of the performance.
- 1.2. It is not possible to dictate a decibel level as the acoustics are different in each area of the city, but as a guideline, the performance should be able to be heard just above the level of ambient street noise but not be so loud as to be intrusive.
- 1.3. Buskers should, where reasonably possible, make contact with local businesses and agree a mutually suitable level for noise. It is important to work together in this aspect to avoid issues.

##### **2. Location**

- 2.1. The site (pitch) should be chosen to satisfy the criteria of this Code and should not be so near to public telephones or ATM machines as to prevent people from having privacy whilst using the facility, nor should a busker be sited within 50 metres of another busker.
- 2.2. If crowds are likely to gather, the performer is responsible for ensuring the free passage of persons not wishing to view the performance (i.e. don't let the crowd block the pavement between you and the shops).

- 2.3. Buskers should not make use of street furniture, e.g. public seats, lampposts, railings or trees.
- 2.4. Buskers should not obstruct traffic lanes and should be mindful that although the city centre is largely pedestrianised, a number of vehicles are still allowed access throughout the day.

### **3. Timing**

- 3.1. The entertainment is not to be provided for more than 45 minutes in any one place (pitch) and not repeated in that place, or within 50 metres of it, within two hours unless such authorisation is given by the City Council so to do.
- 3.2. This code applies to busking in Worcester city centre every day of the year
- 3.3. Performances should begin no earlier than 8.00am and cease no later than 9.00 pm.

### **4. Collection of Money**

- 4.1. No sign should be displayed inviting payment for the performance.
- 4.2. Money may only be collected for charity if a street collections licence has been awarded in advance.
- 4.3. CDs or other merchandise may not be sold on the street, without a street trading licence. If such items are on offer to members of the public, it must be clear (by way of a sign) that this is in return for donations only.

### **5. Public Safety**

- 5.1. All equipment being utilised by the busker MUST be kept in safe working order (including PAT testing where appropriate).
- 5.2. Buskers' belongings and equipment must be stored neatly during the performance so as not to cause an obstruction or trip hazard to either themselves or members of the public.
- 5.3. No performers should behave in a manner which, in the opinion of a Police Officer or an authorised Council Officer, is dangerous to themselves or the public, or dress, act or say anything which is likely to cause alarm or distress the public.
- 5.4. No animal should be used as part of the entertainment.

### **6. Ceasing the performance**

- 6.1. Buskers should cease or move on if requested to do so by a police officer, City Council officer or employee of Worcester BID.
- 6.2. If the reason for this is the receipt of a complaint about excessive volume, it may be possible to reach a compromise by reducing the noise level.
- 6.3. After 45 minutes, buskers must move to another location which is not within 50 metres of their original pitch.

### **7. Enforcement**

- 7.1. If performers are following this code, it is very unlikely that enforcement will be necessary.
- 7.2. It should be noted that a range of statutory powers can impact on buskers; however these will only be used as a last resort.
- 7.3. Noise from busking may be a statutory nuisance and this can be reported to Worcestershire Regulatory Services.
- 7.4. Judgement will be made by the responding officer as to whether someone is a genuine busker or is begging with the aid of a musical instrument.

## **KEY CONTACTS**

This busking code is managed on behalf of Worcester City Council by the Local Centres Officer  
Tel 01905 722309.

It has been written in liaison with Worcester BID, Keep Streets Live and local musicians.

Street trading and street collections licences (for charity) are awarded on behalf of Worcester City Council by Worcestershire Regulatory Services, who can be contacted on 01905 822799 or [wrsenquiries@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:wrsenquiries@worcestershire.gov.uk)

## **REVIEW**

If you are a busker, resident, tourist, or work in the City Centre and wish to comment on this Code, please contact:

Local Centres Officer  
Worcester City Council  
Guildhall  
High Street  
WORCESTER  
WR1 2EY