

Newham Council - Play Streets Resident Guide

1. What is a Play Street?

A Play Street is when a street is temporarily closed to through traffic for 3-5 hours so that children can play safely outside, adults can meet with their neighbours and everyone can enjoy a traffic-free street.

Residents can bring out bikes, scooters, skipping ropes, chalks or any other equipment for children to play with on their street.

Play Streets can be held between April and the end of October on weekends only, between 11am and 4pm. Residents can apply for a Play Street to take place fortnightly, monthly, quarterly or as a one-off event.

2. Why host a Play Street?

Some of the benefits of Play Streets include:

- Children can spend more time playing outside and being physically active
- Children and adults can get to know their neighbours better
- Support mental health and wellbeing, in particular for more isolated residents, by providing an opportunity for people to interact outside their homes
- Temporarily creating a nicer and safer street, with lots of activities taking place
- Temporarily improving air quality on the street
- People can safely walk and cycle on a traffic-free street

3. Getting started

3.1 Eligibility for a Play Street

Some streets may not be suitable for Play Streets such as main roads and streets that are bus routes or key routes for emergency services. To check whether your street is eligible for a Play Street email the Council at: playstreets@newham.gov.uk

3.2 Speak to your neighbours

If you want to apply for a Play Street, you must speak to your neighbours beforehand to make sure that residents on your street know about your plans, can share their views and have an opportunity to get involved.

Before you apply, you will need to:

- Chat informally to a few neighbours to see if they like the idea of a Play Street
- Let everyone on the street know about your plans to have a Play Street. You can do this by putting a flyer in every letterbox on your street and inviting everyone to an online or in-person meeting. You can use the template flyer [here](#) or create your own.

- At the meeting you will need to agree on a start date, timings and how often the Play Street will take place, if you are having more than one. The meeting is also an opportunity for neighbours to ask any questions about the Play Street and share their views. Use the Comments Sheet [here](#) to record all issues and suggestions made.
- Once the timings and frequency of the Play Street event(s) have been agreed, inform all residents on the street that you will be applying to the council for permission. You can use the template letter [here](#) or create your own.
- Consider setting up a WhatsApp or an email group to update neighbours on the Play Street
- Keep a record of meetings held, attendance and any issues or concerns raised about the Play Street

4. How to apply?

The Play Street application form below must be completed at least **eight weeks** before the date of the first Play Street event and should include the names of at least **two** organisers. Your application must be approved by the Council before you can hold your first Play Street.

Play Street Application Form

Send your completed application form to: playstreets@newham.gov.uk

5. Preparing for your first Play Street event

- Once the council has approved your Play Street application, arrange another meeting with your neighbours. The purpose of this meeting is to share the final details of the Play Street event and confirm who is available to help with any preparations beforehand and on the day.
- Closer to the date of the Play Street, promote the event via emails, social media and by talking to your neighbours. You can also put up posters or circulate flyers on your street. You can use this template flyer [here](#) or create your own.
- For the day of the Play Street, you will need to have an agreed rota of stewards who will stand at the road closure points for the entire duration of the event.

6. What to do on the day of the Play Street

Running a Play Street is simple! Close the road – watch children play and people meet – open the road again.

Before closing the street:

- Have a quick meeting with your on-the-day team to confirm who is doing what and when. The main role for adults is to make sure that there is always someone present at the road closure points. The council can provide high visibility vests and whistles.
- Check the street for glass or any other hazards
- Once everyone is ready, close the street to cars and open it for play! The council will provide 'Road Closed' signs and these should be placed at all junctions and street access points.

During the event:

- Stewards will need to explain to motorists arriving at the barriers that a Play Street is taking place. If a resident or visitor in a vehicle needs to access a property on the closed section of the street, they will need to be escorted at walking pace by a steward through the Play Street area. Before any vehicle can drive into the Play Street area, the road will need to be cleared and any children or adults on the road will need to move to the pavement.
- Access for emergency vehicles must be maintained at all times. Stewards should act quickly to clear the street completely to allow immediate access.
- Children can bring out bikes, scooters or any other play equipment. There is no need for organisers to provide anything, but you could leave out chalks, ropes, cardboard boxes or even old sheets to encourage play.

Reopening the street:

- As it gets close to the end of the Play Street event start tidying up so that you are ready to re-open the road on time.
- Before removing the 'Road Closed' signs, ensure that the road is completely clear of toys, games, rubbish and people! Make sure everyone is aware that the street is reopening.
- Remove the signs and store these securely ready for the council to collect.

7. Help & resources

We are here to help with your Play Street. If you have any questions or queries email us at: playstreets@newham.gov.uk

For more information on Play Streets, visit London Play's dedicated Play Streets website for lots of free games and downloadable resources and tips for Play Street events:

www.londonplaystreets.org.uk