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1. What are 'Streets for People'?

Have you ever wanted to host a street party, gather outside with your neighbours or simply wondered what the street space could be used for if there weren't any cars?

You can apply to close the street you live on (or part of it) to traffic for a few hours during the day for people to use differently. People who live there still have access: the closure simply stops non-residents from driving through, so that residents can use their street as a social space.

Here are a few ideas:

- Host a street party to mark a historic, cultural or religious celebration.
- Do something for Car Free Day, Clean Air Day, or any other day .
- Set up a pop-up garden with movable planters and parasols.
- Host a 'Big Lunch'.
- Share and swap: food, plants, clothes...
- Get active (exercise class, crazy golf, dance, yoga...).
- Organise music, art or street theatre.
- Set up a Dr Bike corner to fix those bike niggles.
- Keep it low-key: put some garden chairs out and leave people to it.

(When this is done specifically for children, it is known as a '**Play Street**'.)

You could:

- Do this as a one-off, for a morning, an afternoon or for a whole day.
- Organise several dates at once, either regular or ad-hoc .
- Open nearby streets at different times, or at the same time.

Opening street space can have a transformative effect on community spirit and on health and wellbeing. People without gardens can spend time outdoors. Neighbours get to know each other across generations. Those who are isolated have a chance to interact and experience what the street is like as a social space. It's friendly, fun and inspiring.



2. How to organise a road closure

You need to ask the Council for approval to close the street to through-traffic. The good news is it's straightforward, free, and anyone over 18 can apply.

We suggest starting small, to see how things go. If you're in any doubt about how it would work where you live, contact us first to talk it through. *NB – not all streets (those on bus routes for example) will be suitable.*

Allow at least six weeks in total. The more you can plan ahead, the better.

- A couple of weeks or so to consult your neighbours.
- At least four weeks for us to deal with your application.

Talk to your neighbours

We need to know that everyone who is likely to be affected by the event knows what is happening. **The event should not come as a surprise to anyone.** The more people feel included, the more they'll support you. Communication and common sense are key!

How you go about this is up to you and depends to some extent on how well you already know your neighbours.

Here are some suggestions:

- Informal chats. Knock on doors and tell people what you're thinking of doing, and when. Ask them what they think. Taking a child along is a great way to introduce the idea. You may even get some offers of help!
- Drop your neighbours a line with details about what you're thinking of doing.
- Set up a group on social media.
- Hold a meeting.

"I put a slip of paper through all the letterboxes on our street... which meant our neighbours knew what to expect. That took the edge off a bit when I went to talk to them. Speaking to everyone individually really helped... There's someone on our street who sometimes needs urgent healthcare so I was able to reassure her that of course a vehicle would be able to get in if she needed healthcare." Sarah Priestley, Leeds.



Objections

You should be able to answer most queries and solve any issues yourself. If someone raises a concern you are unable to resolve together, please refer it to us and we will see what we can do to help. It's rare that we are unable to find a positive solution. If necessary, we may give you permission to hold a shorter 'trial' event, as this often helps to reassure people.

Do a risk assessment

It's your event. You need to think about what could go wrong, and you need a plan about what would happen in those circumstances. We suggest you adapt our template risk assessment. You must not do anything that could cause damage or be dangerous. You need to be able to clear the street quickly should an emergency vehicle need to get in. Use common sense! We do need to know about any issues such as potholes, exposed wires, broken manhole covers and so on; please highlight any such issues on the application.

Apply for permission

Fill in the application form and send this to us at least four weeks before your event.

The form asks for:

- Details about the closure.
- Assurance that you've run a consultation.
- Assurance that you've done a risk assessment.

Contact us if you have any questions about this.

When the approval comes through, let neighbours know and remind them of the dates.

3. On the day

At the start of the legal closure, place wheelie-bins at each closure point. The number you need will depend on the size of your street and the nature of your event.

Once the street is closed, you can then set up.

Wheelie bins, stickers and the law

Streets for People is a physical closure under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 Section 16 (A). In Leeds, this means that you must use wheelie-bins with official 'Road temporarily closed' stickers for this to come into effect.

We'd like you to use our **free 'Cone' and 'Streets for People' stickers** as well, but these are optional.

Please arrange to pick your stickers up beforehand from Merrion House in Leeds – you'll need to contact us first.



Volunteers

A responsible adult must supervise each closure point at all times. Whether this means having someone standing near the wheelie-bins will depend on the nature of the street and the event. It's up to you to decide what is safe and appropriate. It helps if volunteers wear high-viz jackets. Volunteers can explain why the road is closed and assist with safe access to the street if required, but they do not have any legal powers to enforce the closure.

Access

If someone who lives on the street needs access, they should either drive at walking pace, escorted by a volunteer, or you may need to clear the street. It depends what the situation is as to the safest approach, and so you should think about how this will work when you're planning the event.

Share your event!

If you're on Twitter, we'd love you to tag us on:

@ConnectingLeeds (Highways and Transportation)

@LeedsCC_CEAQ (Climate Emergency and Air Quality)

Please leave the street clean and tidy: allow time to clear up.

Once the closure time is over, move the wheelie-bins off the street.

How did it go?

We're keen to hear back from you about how things went, and so please let us know. We will use your feedback to improve our support and share your experience with others.

4. The bigger picture

Leeds wants to become a 'city where you don't need a car'. We want travel to be as safe, healthy and pleasant as possible for everyone, so that more people can choose to walk and/or cycle; this helps to cut carbon emissions, improve air quality and cut congestion. Streets are the main public spaces in cities, and Streets for People are a fantastic opportunity for neighbourhoods to use streets as social spaces. They help people to connect, have fun, stay active and imagine what a city where you don't need a car might be like to live in.

You can read more about this in our draft Transport Strategy.