

# GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE FOR PUBLIC ROOM HIRE AND BOOKINGS



This guidance is for managers of Burnley Council owned community venues in Burnley and Padiham.

Visitors to these venues have the right to enjoy services and facilities without fear of intimidation, harassment, extremist or threatening behaviour.

This policy provides practical assistance and support to venues in ensuring that local service users are not subjected to messages of hate or intolerance.

When hiring venues for events, consideration should be given to health and safety, responsibilities under various legislation, potential for reputational risk to the council and to your organisation, and the potential impact on the wider community as well as visitors to the venue.

Where a booking has been made which causes concern, it is expected that the booking be passed on to the relevant agencies for further checks.

The recommended steps for managing booking of venues are outlined below:

- Receive and identify booking requests
- Gather and assess the information and the level of risk posed by the event
- Communicating the process to the applicant and make a joint decision with partners on whether the event should or should not be allowed to go ahead.
- Review event and consider future booking requests.

Detailed guidance on how to conduct information gathering, analyse the data, seek advice, raise concern and respond is provided.

## Who is the Guidance for?

This guidance provides practical assistance and support to venues in ensuring that local service users are not subjected to messages of hate or intolerance.

The recommended steps for the booking process are outlined and it is anticipated that the following users will be expected to refer to this document:

- Venue booking staff / volunteers.
- Centre Managers
- Governing Bodies/Trustees
- Caretakers

The types of venues covered by this policy include any Burnley Council owned and operated premises such as:

- Business centres
- Community centres/ community assets
- Leisure centres

Please note that this list is not exhaustive, and any person concerned with the booking or hiring of council owned and operated property should consult this guidance.

## Why is this Guide Important?

There are several important issues that must be considered when using community venues, some examples of these are listed below:

### Regulatory enforcement framework

A range of regulations are relevant to events (e.g. licensing, environmental health, noise pollution) and must be considered by the venue management.

### Reputational Risk

Local authorities and venue owners will need to be made aware if there are concerns about speakers who have a history of expressing extremist views and/or views that aren't consistent with British values. Consideration should be given to exposure from media coverage (this encompasses both journalistic reporting and online posts).

### Charities

Those organisations registered as a Charity should be aware that trustees have specific duties under charity law which are relevant to the protection of their institutions. The Charity Commission has a variety of guidance available for trustees, including Chapter 5 of the Compliance Toolkit 'Protecting Charities from abuse for extremist purposes'.<sup>1</sup> Amongst other information, this provides guidance on managing risks associated with speakers, events and publications.

### Illegal activities

It is important that venues pay due regard to preventing illegal activities i.e. fundraising for unlawful purposes, criminal activities or discriminatory actions etc. This should also include actively limiting the effect of leafleting by extremist groups in or around their premises.

## Legislation Guidance

The main legislation/guidance governing this issue is:

- Statutory guidance issued under s29 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 makes explicit reference to the 'Use of local authority resources' and outlines expectations of partnership working and that "local authorities should ensure that publicly-owned venues and resources do not provide a platform for extremists and are not used to disseminate extremist views;" through the establishment of a responsible booking policy for public venues.
- As a responsible authority under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, Burnley Council has a statutory duty to work in partnership with other agencies to reduce and prevent crime. Maintaining public order is a priority for the Local Authority and the Police, therefore when an event poses a risk to the general public, there are grounds to review and reconsider venue hire. Where the property is not under Local Authority control, they can provide advice to the property owners/occupiers.
- The Human Rights Act 1998 sets out the fundamental rights and freedoms that everyone in the UK is entitled to. In some limited situations, certain freedoms are qualified meaning that public authorities may interfere with them. This is only possible where the authority can show that its action has a proper basis in law and is necessary and 'proportionate' in order to protect public safety, public order, and the rights and freedoms of other people.
- The Equality Act 2010 requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act as well as advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not. The latter relates to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

## VENUES BOOKING CHECKLIST

<p><b>STEP 1: EVENT DETAILS</b> Obtain information on the event from the hiring party.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Details of the hiring party including name of organiser / group, address, company or charity registration.</li> <li>• Event information i.e. agenda, format, name of speakers, who will be invited, seating arrangements etc.</li> <li>• Copies of promotional literature / social media marketing (confirm booking only once received).</li> </ul>
<p><b>STEP 2: RESEARCH</b> Conduct checks on individuals / groups hosting an event in Burnley Council owned and operated premises.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check online- using a variety of sources to find information on event/speaker or organisation.</li> <li>• Consider Primary &amp; Secondary source data – is it valid, reliable?</li> <li>• Local knowledge from council staff / Councillors/ Local police etc</li> </ul>
<p><b>STEP 3: ASSESSMENT</b> Public buildings must ensure all activity is inclusive and equal for all members of the community. Any information found should be critically analysed with this in mind.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speak to the hiring party and obtain further details, if you do not have sufficient information to assess.</li> <li>• Is there evidence of the speaker / organiser previously promoting messages of hate or intolerance?</li> <li>• Ensure the speakers / organiser have not been banned or prohibited from speaking elsewhere.</li> <li>• If you have any concerns or queries in relation to a speaker / group, event or venue booking, contact: The Prevent Team on 01254 585263 / 01254 585268 or Prevent.Team@Blackburn.gov.uk or Burnley Council's engagement officer Naveed Ahmad nahmad@burnley.gov.uk</li> </ul>

## Event/Speaker of Concern reporting form

The purpose of the form below is to record details of any planned events happening in Burnley & Padiham, about which there are concerns about content, speakers, the group organising the event.

Please note: Where the venue in question is not Burnley Council owned, the role of Burnley Council is to assist and advise the managing organisation. Burnley Council will not make the final decision in this situation.

<https://forms.office.com/r/0hsUXifeLQ>