

Tower Hamlets Venue Hire Policy

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Tower Hamlets is one of the most vibrant and diverse communities in the UK and our residents value the rich cultural offer that comes with this mix. Tower Hamlets Council recognises the value and benefit that a diverse mix of well-designed and well managed events can bring to communities. The council is committed to supporting a diverse mix of events, including those that contribute to our vibrant culture, community prosperity, the environment and the economy.
- 1.2 Tower Hamlets Council owns, manages and leases a large portfolio of indoor and outdoor venues across the borough, which facilitate a significant number of events each year.
- 1.3 The Tower Hamlets Venue Hire Policy (the Policy) seeks to provide clear guidance on authorised hire and use of venues owned by the council. Council owned venues may be hired by persons, parties or organisations for public events, activities or meetings. This Policy sets out principles for how the council will authorise and manage the booking of events, applying consistent practice in doing so. These principles are based on a range of requirements which arise from legislation, guidance and other council policies.
- 1.4 The Policy applies to all events held in the borough that meet the definition outlined in section 4 of this Policy.

2. Aims and Objectives

- 2.1 The Policy covers the obligations, responsibilities and limitations in relation to hosting an event in a Tower Hamlets Venue. It is the intention of the policy to balance the interests of residents, event organisers and other stakeholders within the community.
- 2.2 The Policy seeks to enable a diverse mix of well-designed and well managed events across the borough, which deliver community, environmental and economic benefits, bring communities together and contribute to the promotion of a vibrant multi-cultural community. This includes events that align with the council's priorities, generate income that can be reinvested in maintaining and improving council services, and which comply with relevant duties, regulations and legislation. The policy also provides a framework to

ensure consistent practice in event bookings and ensure appropriate use of hired premises.

3. Scope

- 3.1 The Policy relates specifically to the hiring of venues for events, activities, and meetings attended by the public in a 'Tower Hamlets Venue', specifically:
- Council owned, operated or managed indoor and outdoor venues
- 3.2 This includes but is not limited to the hiring of venues for events in rooms, halls, parks and other event spaces. For example:
- Meeting, training and conference venues
 - Parks and Open Spaces
 - Community hubs
 - Arts and Community Centres
 - Youth Centres
 - Other community venues and event spaces
- 3.3 Any individual or organisation looking to make an event booking be it for personal, commercial, charitable or community use must adhere to the requirements of this Policy and principles set out in it. Hirers must also adhere to any relevant policies, procedures, conditions and codes of conduct specific to the booking concerned and pertaining to the hire and use of the venue.
- 3.4 Where council owned premises are leased, tenanted, sublet or let out at costs to a voluntary or community organisation or a managing organisation, the council will offer advice and support to the organisation to follow the Policy. This includes through issuing guidance, standard lease terms and hiring agreements. Where the council is advised of a proposed event that appears to contravene the principles set out in this policy, the council will offer advice and support to the organisation to determine whether the event should go ahead.

4. Definition of Events

- 4.1 A planned indoor or outdoor event, activity or meeting in a specific location.

5. Principles of Policy

- 5.1 Tower Hamlets Council, through the Policy, supports an appropriate use of its venues, where spaces are utilised safely and legally. Through good management, community benefits are delivered, and equal opportunities and community cohesion are promoted. This will also enable more residents, individuals, groups and community organisations to hold events in the borough. This includes for charity and commercial events.
- 5.2 Outlined in the sections below (5.3 – 5.9) are the core principles of the Policy. These principles provide a clear and systematic approach to the management of events, and describe in more detail, the council's position on event bookings, and the grounds by which an event application will be successful.

Events encouraged

- 5.3 Tower Hamlets Council welcomes events that support its strategic priorities and outcomes, including events that support community prosperity and good community relations and comply with the law and regulations. Further information on events that are encouraged by the council is in appendix 1b.

Events not permitted

- 5.4 Whilst the council will support events where possible, it will not accept applications to hire a Tower Hamlets Venue for events which are political campaigns, may be damaging to community relations, are illegal, breach the Council's Equality Policy¹ or the Public Sector Equality Duty stipulated by the Equality Act (section 8 below), or conflict with any of the council's statutory duties. The council will not accept applications from organisations or

¹ [Tower Hamlets Council Equality Policy](#)

individuals that carry out or promote activities or agendas that may be injurious to good community relations.

- 5.5 Further information on venue hire applications that will not be permitted is included in appendix 1b. This list should also act as a guide to those hosting and facilitating events in a Tower Hamlets Venue.

Council responsibilities

- 5.6 The council will balance its decisions for venue hire on a range of factors. This includes equalities, cohesion, human rights considerations, regulation and legislation. It will assess applications to ensure they are in accordance with existing priorities, commitments, policy and booking conditions. Further information on the council's process in relation to council owned premises is detailed in appendix 1b.
- 5.7 The council reserves the right to ask for additional information about bookings and to approve/ reject accordingly.
- 5.8 The Council also reserves the right to refuse to hire a council venue and to terminate any booking if it determines this appropriate.
- 5.9 The council will review, set and publish its fees and concessions on venue hire annually.

6. Event application, booking and approval process

- 6.1 Detailed in appendix 1a, is a list of Tower Hamlets Venues available for hire and the supporting council webpage which advises on the booking process.

7. Strategic Context

7.1 In supporting the Tower Hamlets Strategic Plan² Vision of 'Working together with the community for a fairer, cleaner and safer borough', the Tower Hamlets Venue Hire Policy will also support delivery of the following Strategic Plan (2019-2022) priorities and associated outcomes:

- **Priority 1** - People are aspirational, independent and have equal access to opportunities
- **Priority 2** - A borough that our residents are proud of and love to live in
- **Priority 3** - A dynamic, outcomes-based council using digital innovation and partnership working to respond to the changing needs of our borough

7.2 The Policy also aligns with priorities as set out in key corporate strategies.

8. Equality and Diversity

8.1 In the application of this Policy the council will adhere to all relevant sections of the Equalities Act 2010 including Section 149 of the Act, which places a general duty on public authorities to, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

² [Tower Hamlets Strategic Plan 2019-2022](#)

9. Other Legislation

9.1 All events must conform to relevant legislation, including but not limited to:

- Representation of the People Act 1983 (section 95 & 96)
- Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
- Health & Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- Public Order Act
- s.145 Criminal Justice Act 2003
- The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- RIDDOR 1995
- Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2006
- Town and Country Planning Act 1947 and 1990
- Licensing Act 2003
- The Children's Act 1989
- Fire Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Firework Regulations 2004
- Safety at Sports Ground Act 1975
- Private Security Industry Act 2001
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Noise Act 1996
- Tower Hamlets Council Byelaws
- Human Rights Act 1998

Additional Covid-19 legislation:

- The Coronavirus Act 2020
- The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (All Tiers)(England) Regulations 2020
- The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Steps)(England) Regulations 2021
- The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Local Authority Enforcement Powers)(England) Regulations 2020

All bookings must adhere to the latest Covid-19 guidance provided by government and related industries.

Please also refer to the contractual terms in the booking of a Tower Hamlets venue.

10. Decision Making

10.1 Where an application for venue hire contravenes the principles of this Policy it may be escalated to the Venue Hire Advisory Group (VHAG) for advice and support. Feedback from the group will be reflected when the council's decision is conveyed to the applicant.

10.2 The council will not return any deposit already paid, if the council decides not to permit the application.

11. Complaints and Appeals

11.1 Information on the complaints and appeals process is available in the venue hire documentation, appropriate to type of booking and venue.

12. Appendix

- Appendix 1a – List of Venues
- Appendix 1b – Tower Hamlets Venue Hire Policy – Principles in more detail.