

Guide for faith premises in Southwark

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Foreword

Southwark is one of the most diverse areas of London, as evidenced by the wide variety of religious beliefs held by many of its residents. The latest census figures indicate that almost three quarters of the borough's population identify with one religion or another all enjoying the fundamental human right to practice their faith freely, if they so wish.

Our faith communities clearly have their differences, in terms of practice and belief, but they are also united by a great many things. Not least of all among these is their collective desire to make a positive contribution to the wider community. Indeed they will be the first to testify that anything other than a shared tangible concern for the common good runs counter to their joint hopes and aspirations as well as their individual belief systems.

With rights come responsibilities. Some religions refer to this enterprise as "exercising stewardship". Others talk of it in terms of "communicating added value to the locality". In all cases it is about people of faith having due regard for the laws of the land and being mindful of the need to be good citizens as well as devout followers.

This publication is intended to assist faith communities in this process. It is not about unduly restricting the right to worship. Nor is it about singling out faith groups for any form of special attention. It is simply intended as a practical, informative guide, a way of helping those who gather for worship to do so in a manner that does not put their members at risk, nor impact adversely on the lives of those around them.

I heartily commend this publication to Southwark's faith leaders and their communities. As people who live, work, or worship in the borough, you are among our most valued natural assets. I urge you to see this guide as a measure of the high regard in which you and all our residents are held and to use it as a tool for promoting faith and community cohesion.

As the guide's authors point out, it is by no means an exhaustive account of how faith premises across the borough need to be established and maintained. But it will, I believe, prove to be a very valuable support to you as you seek to exercise your right to religious freedom in a manner that ultimately contributes to the good of all.

Councillor Adele Morris
Executive member for Citizenship, Equalities and Communities

Why is the council producing this guide?

There is a wide range of faith groups within Southwark. The council is responsible for regulating a number of their activities and use of premises. Some faith groups maybe unaware of the broad range of regulation and law that potentially effects their operations. By promoting better knowledge of the various legal requirements associated with faith groups the council seeks to increase compliance and assist faith groups in meeting their legal requirements.

What is a faith group?

A faith group is a group of people not belonging to the same family or household who congregate on a regular basis and at a particular place for the purpose of worshipping or the exercising of a particular faith or religious beliefs.

What are the duties of the faith groups and their leaders?

Every faith group and its leaders have a duty to ensure that they are not putting themselves their members and the public at risk. Additionally, the faith groups and leaders also have various other legal duties to ensure that they do not cause a nuisance to local communities, and that their activities do not adversely impact on the environment.

The following steps are suggested for faith groups to meet those legal duties that the council enforces

- Occupy premises suitable for use by a faith group and comply with any planning permission for the premises and planning law.
- Comply with legislation relating to the local environment, fire safety, food safety, waste disposal, licensing, public liability insurance and child protection.
- Seek advice from relevant bodies such as departments of the council, fire authority and health and safety executive

What is the purpose of this guide?

This guide is designed to assist people who are considering setting up a place of worship or who are in charge of operating an existing place of worship. It is advisory and is not a statement of council policy. It is an introductory document and is not intended to provide exhaustive advice.

The guide contains an overview of what might be required, it contains practical advice on issues that a faith group occupying a premises need to consider in order to comply with relevant laws. To ensure your faith group complies with the law you will need to obtain the relevant permissions and licences needed for the activities you intend to pursue and where appropriate discuss the matter with the appropriate council officer. Contact details are listed in the guide.

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Planning requirements

If you are looking for new premises, looking to expand your existing premises, or thinking about using your premises for more and different activities on more days of the week, there are a number of important planning checks that you need to make to ensure that what you intend to do in a particular building is lawful.

If your building was not designed as a faith premise you will need to check its permitted use and find out if planning permission is required.

Working out if you will need to get planning permission

In planning law the type of activities allowed in a building are grouped together in use classes. Premises in each use class group all tend to have similar effects on the surrounding areas, such as a steady flow of visitors, and they also have similar benefits for the people who use them. Faith premises belong to a user class group called D1. Other premises in this group include clinics, health centres, crèches, day nurseries, day centres, schools, art galleries, museums, libraries, halls, places of worship, church halls, law courts.

If a building is currently being used for a D1 class use you will still need to check that it's use is lawful. If it isn't you will need to apply for planning permission or a certificate of lawful development. You will not need planning permission to use a building for faith purposes as long as

- The current use is lawful i.e. it's use as a place of worship, or D1 use is either permitted by planning permission, or a certificate of lawful development

However, you will need to check if there are any conditions, preventing your use of the building. Examples of such conditions include

- A planning permission that is limited to a period of time, such as five years and which has expired
- A planning permission that permits one D1 use, such as a nursery, but limits the permission to that use alone, prohibiting change to other uses within the D1 class
- A planning permission that limits the hours of operation, to hours which you wish to exceed

What you will need to consider if planning permission is needed

You should see the council's website, for the information and fees that are required in order to submit a valid planning application. The factors that your application will need to consider will vary from case to case. Listed below are factors that have often been significant in determining applications for permission to use buildings as places of worship

- Some uses of buildings, in some areas of Southwark are protected by planning policies and change is often not permitted. For example there are locations where an industrial, or office use is protected, to try to preserve and create jobs and/or to allow areas in which industrial/commercial uses can operate away from residential areas. It is important to check if your intended building is within such a protected area.
- Change of use of a house or flat, to a place of worship is unlikely to be permitted due to the shortage of housing within Southwark.
- Some places of worship inevitably generate noise, due to the number of people attending and the nature of the activities being carried out. It's important to consider how noise can be contained, by insulation, as well as the proximity of your building to neighbouring uses such as housing where noise may be a nuisance.
- Travel. The volume of people using a building and their mode of transport, particularly if it is by car can be an adverse environmental impact for others in the area. It is important that an application to use a building as a place of worship demonstrates how this issue will be successfully managed. (See also the section of this guide relating to parking).
- Hours of operation. Depending upon where your building is located, it is possible that using it as a place of worship at some hours of the day may cause a nuisance. It may assist an application, if this issue is identified and proposed hours of operation intended to minimise disruption are suggested in the application.

Are you unsure of any of the above?

If you have any unanswered questions or are unsure of anything please contact Southwark Council's development management team on (020) 7525 5438.

Faith premises can also get independent and free planning advice from the Willowbrook Centre, you can contact Nadia Sylvester-Paul on 020 7732 8856.

Fire prevention and safety

It is important that you have a suitably qualified person assess your building for fire risk. You are advised to contact the London fire Brigade for assistance in complying with fire safety regulations.

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 imposes duties on the responsible person to ensure that the law is complied with. Some duties include

- To undertake a suitable and sufficient risk assessment
- Means of detection and giving warning in case of fire
- The provision of means of escape
- Means of fighting fire, maintenance of the firefighting equipment
- The training of staff in fire safety

How many fire escapes should the premises have?

There should be sufficient exits to allow all occupants to vacate the premises within two and a half-minute period at a rate of 40 people per minute. A minimum of two exits are recommended for small buildings, more for larger buildings. Each exit should be at least 750mm wide and 900mm so they can be accessed by wheelchair users.

Where should the fire exits be?

They should be spaced as wide as possible (meaning that it is unlikely for a fire to make all exits unusable) to allow people to exit in a direction away from the source of a fire. They should lead to separate distinct routes and assembly areas. All doors should open outwards.

What can you do to prevent fires in the premises?

You should carry out regular simple assessments to prevent accidental fires. This includes identifying possible hazards in your activities and/or building that could start a fire. Faulty electrical wiring and apparatus are common causes of fire. All electrical wiring should therefore be carried out by a qualified and registered electrician. Consider the use of candles and incense and ensure that they are correctly extinguished at the end of service. The same applies for any cooking or kitchen equipment, boilers etc.

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Are you unsure of any of the above?

If you have any unanswered questions or are unsure of anything please contact Yvonne Drake, Southwark Council's arson reduction officer on 020 7525 0821.



Health and safety

There are many different things that you should do in your place of worship to keep people safe. You need to take into account your particular building and your congregation when assessing health and safety risks. The people that use the premises could be very young, very old, disabled or have other needs that need to be taken into consideration.

What is health and safety?

Health and safety is about reducing the chance of someone being harmed. It is not about eliminating risk, but controlling it. Health and safety is about the way in which you manage risks in your situation.

What is a risk assessment?

Risk assessment is central to health and safety and is a requirement of the law. It is a fact finding exercise which can then be used to help you reduce the risks in your building. It will enable you to decide exactly what precautions you need to put into place to reduce the risks. Risk assessment is perhaps the most important part of health and safety because it allows you to find out about what could cause harm to people in your place of worship.

Suggestions for carrying out a risk assessment

The simplest form of risk assessment is known as the “five steps” method, which is perfectly adequate for use by places of worship.

The five steps are

Look for the hazards. Hazards are those things in and around the place of worship that could cause harm to staff, volunteers, visitors and other members of the public. They can be building structures, fitting and fixtures, equipment and tools or any other item that in on the premises.

Decide who might be harmed. Consider the people that use the building and how the hazard could affect them. While some parts of the building might be open to the public on a regular basis, other areas might only be used by one or two people on an occasional basis.

Evaluate the risks. Risk is the chance that someone could be harmed. It is useful to categorise them as "low", "medium" or "high" for convenience. As a guide, "low" risks do not need any significant attention (but do not rule out making any improvements). "Medium" risks need some attention to try to bring them to a "low" level. "High" risks should be prioritised as needing improvement to bring them down to a "low" level. Avoid the temptation of making all risks "low" as this can hide those things that need attention.

Record the findings. Risk assessment is a legal requirement and you might need to prove that you have done a risk assessment in the future. Risk assessments must be written down if you have five or more employees, and in churches and places of worship, this usually includes volunteers. In all cases, it is recommended that the risk assessment be written down.

Review and revise. Risk assessments should be reviewed occasionally to ensure that they remain valid. For most places of worship, a review every 12 months should be adequate.

Are you unsure of any of the above?

If you have any unanswered questions or are unsure of anything please contact Southwark Council's health and safety team on 020 7525 5718 or visit the HSE (health and safety executive) website on www.hse.gov.uk





Parking

Inconsiderate parking can be a major problem around faith premises. Double parking of vehicles and the blocking of entrances and exits can prevent emergency vehicles from attending, thus putting the lives and safety of residents and your members at risks.

In order to minimise noise and disturbance, on-site parking should be provided for religious meeting places when possible as it helps eliminate congestion in local roads.

If the parking and transport arrangement for your premises are not adequate, you might not obtain planning permission. You may also receive complaints from local people and the emergency services. Therefore, transport considerations are essential when choosing your premises and reviewing your premises use.

How many parking spaces should a premises have?

There should be sufficient parking to accommodate worshippers without causing a nuisance to people in the area. Numbers of parking spaces per worshipper are not specified and will depend on matters such as the number of worshippers that use the site, how far they have to travelling, the location of transport links in the area and other relevant matters.

What about special events?

There should be sufficient parking to accommodate worshippers without causing a nuisance to people in the area. Numbers of parking spaces per worshipper are not specified and will depend on matters such as the number of worshippers that use the site, how far they have to travelling, the location of transport links in the area and other relevant matters.

What is a travel plan?

A travel plan is a package of measures aimed at promoting sustainable travel, with an emphasis on reducing reliance on car journeys. Consider submitting a travel plan if you are making a planning application.

Suggestions to minimise parking and congestion problems

- Consider varying the times and days of the services to reduce traffic noise and congestion and holding services at times and days where the traffic is not heavy.
- Encourage your members to use public transport, cycling or walking to the service.
- Consider using/or relocating to premises that are easily accessible by walking and cycling and benefit from good public transport links, or with ample private parking.
- Consider using 'traffic marshals', they can help deal with illegal parking issues and ensure the minimum disruption is caused by the traffic associated with the premises.
- Consider suggesting the use of hired transit vehicles that drop off and pick.



Are you unsure of any of the above?

If you have any unanswered questions or are unsure of anything please contact the Southwark Council's parking shop on 0844 800 2736.



Noise

It is the duty of people running faith premises to ensure that noise does not escape from the premise at a level that will cause a nuisance to people in the area.

The council has a duty to investigate complaints of noise nuisance and take action against the person or persons responsible for causing the noise disturbance. This can result in a notice being served, a fixed penalty notices and prosecution. The council can also seize the equipment causing the noise.

The council assess nuisance by listening to the noise from a complainants premises and assessing whether the noise would prevent normal activities for that time of the day. In the daytime this might be assessing whether the noise interferes with watching the TV at a normal level, or prevents normal conversation, and at night preventing sleep in a bedroom.

What can you do to prevent noise escaping from the building?

Ensure that the building that you are using has thick walls (brick or concrete) a substantial roof which is "complete", double glazing with heavy curtains and lobbied doors. This will prevent sound from escaping from the building. This is something that will be assessed when you apply for planning permission. Submitting a report from an acoustician, showing how insulation and other techniques can contain noise may reduce the possibility of a planning application being refused on the ground that noise would adversely effect local amenity.

You should assess your noisiest activities from all around the perimeter of your premises, and from outside the nearest residential or business premises. If the level of noise is high then it is likely to cause people in the area a nuisance.

What happens if someone complains about noise?

Enforcement officers will visit the complainant's property and assess the noise from inside. If the noise is a nuisance then action will be taken to stop the noise from being a nuisance. This could include negotiating a reduction in volume from the people making the noise, serving an abatement notice, or prosecution and seizure of equipment.

What is an abatement notice?

An abatement notice is a legal document that can be served on a person, persons or an organisation to prevent their noisy activities from being a nuisance and to prevent the noise nuisance happening again. If noise from your premises is causing a nuisance, or is likely to cause a nuisance, enforcement officers can serve an abatement notice on you preventing noisy activities such as live or amplified music, use of instruments and other measures in order to prevent nuisance being caused.

What happens if I don't comply with the notice?

If further nuisance is witnessed after a notice has been served, you can be prosecuted in the magistrates court and if found guilty could be fined up to £20,000, have your noise making equipment seized or receive a fixed penalty notice of £400.

Suggestions for controlling noise

- Consider using non-amplified noise equipment rather than amplified, for example an acoustic guitar instead of an electric guitar.
- Make sure that if you are holding gatherings at night or early in the morning, there are no noisy activities taking place, and that no noise is escaping from the premises.
- Noise from people congregating outside and talking and laughing can also cause a nuisance to nearby residence. Remind your congregation to arrive and leave quietly and to be considerate to any people in the area.
- Converting single glazed windows to double glazed and replacing the vents with air conditioning units will help to contain the noise. Care must be taken in the positioning of the air conditioning units so that they are furthest away from residents. Also you should seek units with low noise levels as possible.
- Consult with any nearby residents. You should provide a contact number for residents to register any complaint they may have. Let them know the measures you are taking so as not to cause a nuisance.
- Regular checks and assessments of the noise levels generated from the premises should be carried out around the perimeter or premises boundary. Adjustment should be made where the level is considered to high.
- In some cases the person in charge of the church can vary the times of worship with the service likely to attract the largest congregation taking place near to midday or early afternoon or at times where the natural background noise levels are normally high.
- In cases where most of the equipment is amplified the use of sound limiters can be a way of scientifically setting the equipment to an agreed level.

Are you unsure of any of the above?

If you have any unanswered questions or are unsure of anything please contact Southwark Council's environmental enforcement team on 020 7525 5777.



Licensing

The Licensing Act 2003 requires that certain activities are licensed, such as the supply of alcohol and the performance of regulated entertainment. This law might apply to some activities that take place in places of worship.

It is important for you to know whether you need to have a license as certain activities such as 'regulated entertainment' or marriage ceremonies cannot legally be carried out without a license.

Religious worship is not covered by the Licensing Act 2003, therefore a premises licence is not required for religious services. Additionally, playing music in the background does not need a licence, nor does 'incidental' music or showing broadcast television (providing it is being shown at the time of broadcast).

What is regulated entertainment?

Regulated entertainment includes (but is not limited to)

- Giving performances of, or providing facilities for live music, dance or recorded music
- Staging plays
- Showing films and
- Hosting indoor sporting events.

If this 'entertainment' is performed in front of an audience and for the sole purpose of entertaining that audience it may be considered as 'regulated entertainment' and would require a license. It does not matter if a fee is charged or if it is for charitable purposes. It does not matter if the event is big or small or aimed at a private audience. The same rules apply whether or not activities are organised by a faith community or charity, or the premises are hired to an outside group or an individual.

Do you need a premises licence?

If alcohol is regularly sold or supplied at your church premises or the premises regularly hosts any of the types of regulated entertainment as shown above a premises licence should be applied for. The licence can cover both alcohol and regulated entertainment. Premises licences stay in effect until they are surrendered; or the life of the organisation or business comes to an end; or the licence is revoked following a review requested by one of the "responsible bodies" under the Act (police, environmental health, fire brigade etc) or the local community. If you sell or supply alcohol at any event, the person who authorises the sale or supply will also require a personal licence.

Do you need a premises license for one-off special events?

If you only have occasional one-off special events at which alcohol is sold or supplied, or which feature entertainment, it may be possible to give a temporary events notice (TEN) without obtaining a premises licence. These might be used, for example, for a one-off film night or dance for less than 500 persons. A TEN is usually given to the person organising the event, for that event only. One premises can hold up to 12 TENs in one year. Ten full working days notice must be given to Southwark Council's licensing team and to the police. The police can object to the event if there are crime and disorder concerns.

What happens if I hold an event with regulated entertainment without a license or TEN?

The council and the police will consider taking appropriate enforcement action. This could result in the premises being closed or a prosecution, which can result in a fine of up to £20,000 and six months in prison.

Things to consider when applying for a premises license or temporary events notice

When you apply for a premises licence or you give a TENs you need to consider the four licensing objectives below and should carry out a risk assessment for each.

Ensuring public safety

This can be achieved by identifying those hazards and risks that exist for members of the public coming onto your premises. You should consider current practice for fire precautions, especially means of escape in the event of an emergency, and other aspects of safety. Likely precautions will include clear exits and exit routes; illuminated internal exit signs; and trained stewards.

The protection of children from harm

Protecting children from harm is an important consideration especially when alcohol is made available or the content of a show or film might not be suitable for children it is important to prevent children having access to alcohol and to restrict entry to plays, films and such like, to those who are under age (such as following the age certificate on a film). Children might also be more at risk from physical hazards, and increased supervision will be necessary.

The prevention of crime and disorder

This is an important consideration for many events, especially where alcohol is involved. While many events held by churches and places of worship may be unlikely to give rise to crime and disorder concerns, this must still be considered in every case, and particular consideration should be given to any hire of the premises to other parties.

The prevention of public nuisance

Nuisance can be in the form of noise from sound systems, light pollution, odour from refuse or anything else that could affect residents nearby. Car parking is an essential consideration for any special event to prevent any inconvenience and nuisance to those nearby. Providing that the above four objectives are met, there is no reason why a premises licence or TEN cannot be obtained.

Are you unsure of any of the above?

If you have any unanswered questions, are unsure of anything or wish to apply for licences please contact Southwark Council's licensing team on 020 7525 2000.



Food safety

Many places of worship handle food, whether that is on a routine basis preparing daily meals or an annual fund-raising event. The same basic food safety rules apply to all situations.

Do you need to register your premises?

Faith groups have a duty to register their premises under the Food Safety Act if they are to serve and or prepare any food, whether it is for sale or otherwise. This also applies if vending machines are located within the premises. You need to register with the food team in Southwark Council.

It is very important that you contact the food team and inform them of what you are doing or intend to do. It is vital that you make contact before you start any food related activities because if you are required to register as a food business, registration should be done 28 days before you actually start.

What facilities do you need if you serve and prepare food

Any room where food is handled should be large enough to ensure that food can be handled safely. There must be adequate ventilation in the room, for instance by window that can be opened or by an extractor fan.

The layout of the room should help prevent cross contamination of ready to eat products by bacteria from raw foods. It should have a separate wash hand basin with hot and cold water and soap and a separate sink used for preparation and cleaning activities.

The ceiling, walls, floor and all work surfaces must be in good condition and made of smooth non porous and hard wearing materials so that they can be easily cleaned.

What is food hazard analysis?

Hazard analysis is an assessment to ensure that you have adequate controls in place to prevent hazards from food activities. Hazards may be from bacteria, chemicals or physical problems like broken glass in food. Hazard analysis involves looking through each step of the food preparation process from buying foodstuffs through storage, cooking, serving and storing prepared foods along with any other steps in between. Controls can then be put into place to reduce any risks.

What do people handling food need to do?

- Wear suitable protective clothing, like aprons. These should only be worn in the food preparation area, and must be removed before the person leaves the room
- Remove any jewellery. They can present a contamination risk
- Securely tie back long hair
- Protected any cut to the skin with a brightly coloured plaster (blue is normally used for kitchen use)

What is temperature control?

Temperature control is important to prevent food poisoning, either by killing off harmful bacteria through cooking, or, by reducing the multiplication of those bacteria through refrigeration. Refrigerators and freezers should be regularly checked to ensure that the temperature is cold enough, and food probes can be used to check the temperature of cooked foods.

Key temperatures for food refrigeration and cooking

Refrigerators must be set so that food is kept below eight degrees celsius.

Freezers should be below -18 degrees celsius.

Foods requiring thorough cooking to the centre should reach

- 70 degrees celsius for two minutes or
- 75 degrees celsius for 30 seconds or
- 80 degrees celsius for six seconds

What should your cleaning and disinfecting regime be?

In a kitchen, only food-safe cleaning chemicals should be used otherwise they can contaminate or taint foods. As an example, bleach and products containing bleach should not be used in a kitchen because they are not food safe. Cleaning should be done regularly and all items must be cleaned as soon as possible after they have been used. Rubbish must be removed from the kitchen regularly. Only small containers must be used in a kitchen and these need to have a close-fitting lid and is must be possible to easily clean them.

Do you need food hygiene training?

All food handlers must be trained to a level that is appropriate to the work that they do (this includes volunteers in faith communities and places of worship for events like coffee mornings). A basic food hygiene course is usually recommended, Southwark Council's food team can give you details of accredited courses.

Do you need to label and price foods?

In some cases, foods might need to be labelled. Items like one-off cakes, loose buns and jars of jam are usually exempt from this requirement, however, if you regularly sell these, you might need to label the foods. Any label that appears on the item must be accurate and must display details including the name of the food, a list of ingredients, a best before or use by date, details of any special storage requirements and a metric weight indication. In addition to this, it is usually required to display a price list of the items that you have on sale in some prominent position, or each product must carry its own price tag (depending on the situation).

Are you unsure of any of the above?

If you have any unanswered questions or are unsure of anything please contact Southwark Council's food team on 020 7525 5777.



Waste and litter

Disposing of your waste

You need to make sure that your premises disposes of waste in a legal way. You can either take your waste to an authorised waste facility and keep all of the waste transfer notes to show this, or you can get a trade waste agreement with a registered trade waste company.

You are required to produce your waste transfer notes or your trade waste agreement to the council on request and must keep your waste documentation for at least two years.

You will need to consider how much waste is produced from your premises, and also if extra waste is produced at certain times, for example on a Sunday, or if events are taking place. If you have a trade waste agreement, it will need to cover these times as well.

Fly tipping

It is your responsibility to contain your waste within your premises until it is collected or taken to an authorised waste facility. You must make sure that you do not allow waste to escape onto the highway as this can result in either a fixed penalty notice or a prosecution. Waste is only allowed to be placed on the highway if it is inside a trade waste bag or bin and it is placed out on collection day.

Litter

Please make sure that the area both within and outside your premises is kept free of litter, including cigarette litter. Individuals can be fined on the spot for dropping litter, and your premises could be served a notice if litter either escapes from it, or is unsightly to the local area.

How much rubbish do you produce?

This includes any waste generated from the premises, both inside the premises and any outside areas of the premises. If you have a function room, waste generated from functions needs to be considered in this. Your waste arrangement must be sufficient for the amount of rubbish that you produce.

Are there any times when a lot of rubbish is produced?

If you have a function room where people have parties, more waste will be produced on these occasions. You need to think about how this waste will be disposed of and make sure that it is done in a responsible way. If you have a trade waste agreement, you need to make sure that this is covered.

How can a premises get a trade waste agreement?

A number of different waste companies can dispose of your waste. You can find them in the telephone directory, names of companies used by some businesses in the borough include Veolia, SITA, BIFFA, PHS and Cleanaway.

Are there enough bins on your premises?

If you have an outside area as part of your premises where people congregate, you might want to put bins here to prevent people dropping litter on the floor. If the area becomes unsightly and rubbish accumulates, this may become a problem and the council may have to take measures to ensure the area is kept clean.

Suggestions for waste issues

- Consider asking anyone that hires the premises to make sure they dispose of waste responsibly and makes sure that the outside of the premises is left clean and litter free
- Reminding people to respect the environment and keep it clean on their way in and out of the building
- Consider doing a regular sweep on any area that people smoke in

Are you unsure of any of the above?

If you have any unanswered questions or are unsure of anything please contact Southwark Council's environmental enforcement team on 020 7525 5777.



Signs and advertisements on the highway

The council do not permit advertising boards or signs to be attached to structures, trees or works on the highway, or for signs to be put on the streets. This is because street clutter can cause a nuisance to people using the highway, signs can obstruct the view of the road and signs attached to street furniture also attract other fly posting.

If you want to advertise your premises or your services, you must use designated notice boards. Depending on the size, location and type of board you intend to use at your premises, you may require planning permission. You are advised to check if permission is required by contacting the council's development management team. You are permitted to give fliers to people but you need to make sure that these do not cause a litter nuisance.

Checklist for signs and advertisements

Where can signs, advertisements, posters and other materials be displayed?

They can be displayed on your land or on an authorised community notice board. They cannot be displayed on the highway and cannot be attached to any surface of the highway or upon any tree, structure or works on the highway.

What should I do if we already have signs attached to something on the highway?

You need to remove these immediately.

What happens if we do not remove them?

The council will remove any sign, picture, letter or other mark attached to the highway. You could be liable for a fixed penalty notice of £75 or prosecution. The council can also remove anything from the highway that is causing a danger and charge a fee for the removal.

Can we hand out free literature for our faith premises?

You can hand out free literature for religious purposes. Please make sure that you only hand it to people that request it and that any discarded copies are picked up from the streets.

What about someone handing out fliers for an event at our premises?

If the event is not for religious purposes then the organiser should obtain permission from the council before being allowed to give out fliers.

Suggestions for signage and advertising

- Consider advertising your services and events in local publications, on community notice boards or on your own land
- Consider asking anyone that hires the premises to make sure they don't put out boards or attach any signs to the highway

Are you unsure of any of the above?

If you have any unanswered questions or are unsure of anything please contact Southwark Council's environmental enforcement team on 020 7525 5777.

Child and vulnerable adult protection

It is essential that faith groups look closely at protecting children and vulnerable adults from abuse. There should be written guidelines as to how the community will manage and investigate allegations of abuse.

Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults

- Recognise and become familiar with the requirements of the Children's Act.
- Set up system to look after the welfare and safety of children under the age of 18.
- Adopt a child protection policy explaining how to respond and report if there are concerns/suspicions of abuse.
- Everyone whether paid or unpaid that is given the responsibility to look after children in your organisation should fill in an application form, stating their address, employment history
It is also important to have workers references checked with previous employers or organisations they may have volunteered for.
- Workers should have a new enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) disclosure before they start employment.
- Workers should be interviewed to demonstrate their suitability for dealing with children.

Are you unsure of any of the above?

If you have any unanswered questions or are unsure of anything please contact Southwark Council on 020 7525 5000.





Property misdescription

Faith groups appear to have increased in number in recent years. Recently established faith groups, or those looking to move to bigger premises, may be offered unsuitable premises. It is possible that some faith groups may be offered properties, which an agent, vendor or landlord describes as being suitable for use by a faith group, but which for various reasons may not be able to be used for this purpose.

Whilst renting a building maybe cheaper than buying a building, you may not be able to stop your liability to pay rent under a tenancy or lease, because you are prevented from using a building either partly or fully for the purpose you acquired it for.

If you use a solicitor or licensed conveyancer to advise you in respect of any property transaction, they will be able to advise you if you can use the building for the purpose you intend. Furthermore, if the advice is inaccurate the professional bodies regulating solicitors and licensed conveyancers will provide a means of complaint and possible redress.

If an estate agent, or property development business falsely describes a property, they may be guilty of an offence under the Property Misdescription Act 1991. If you are offered a property and discover that a statement made about it is false or misleading, you should report the matter to Southwark Council's trading standards department to investigate. They can be contacted on 0207 525 2000.

Action plan

Contacts

In view of the information provided in this guide, the council urges every faith group to make an action plan to address the main issues. The contacts for these issues are below.

Department	Contacts for advice and contact details	
Regeneration and neighbourhoods	Development management, Southwark Council PO Box 64529 London SE1P 5LX	Tel: 020 7525 5438 Fax: 020 7527 5432 planning.enquiries@southwark.gov.uk
Fire safety	London fire service 266b Queen's Road London, SE14 5JN Yvonne Drake Arson reduction Officer, Southwark Council	Tel: 020 7587 4975 Fax: 020 7587 4981 southwarkgroup@london-fire.gov.uk Tel: 020 7525 0821
Health and safety	The health and safety executive Rose Court 2 Southwark Bridge SE1 9HS Health and safety team Southwark Council	Tel: 0845 345 0055 / 020 7556 2100 Fax: 020 7556 2102 www.hse.gov.uk Tel: 020 7525 5718
Parking	Parking shop Southwark Council 364 Old Kent Road London SE1 5AA	Tel: 0844 800 2736 parking@southwark.gov.uk
Food safety, licensing, noise, waste, advertising	Community safety and enforcement Southwark Council Chaplin Centre Thurlow Street SE17 2DG	Tel: 020 7525 5777 csc@southwark.gov.uk
Child and vulnerable adult protection	Health and social care Mabel Goldwin House 49 Grange Walk London SE1 3DY	Tel: 020 7525 3838 pals@southwarkpct.nhs.uk
Community involvement and development unit (CIDU)	Multi faith forum Southwark Council East House 35 Peckham Road SE5 8UB	Tel: 020 7525 5504 cidu@southwark.gov.uk
Willowbrook Centre	48 Willowbrook Road London SE15 6BW Nadia Sylvester-Paul	Tel: 020 7732 8856 www.willowbrookcentre.org.uk nadia@willowbrookcentre.org.uk
Community Action Southwark	Lorenzer Fenton Voluntary Sector Resource Centre 8th Floor Hannibal House Elephant & Castle London SE1 6TE	Tel: 020 7703 2368 Fax: 020 7703 9393 info@casouthwark.org.uk

This brochure contains information about Southwark Council services. If you require information in your language, please call 020 7525 5000.

يحتوي هذا الممتور على معلومات عن الخدمات التي تقدمها بلدية سونرك (Southwark). إذا كنت ترغب في الحصول على معلومات بلغتك الأصلية الرجاء الإتصال بالرقم المبين.

Arabic

Este folleto contiene información sobre los servicios del ayuntamiento de Southwark. Si requiriera esta información en su propio idioma, por favor llame al número de teléfono indicado.

Spanish

Ce dépliant contient des renseignements sur les services de Southwark Council (municipalité de Southwark). Si vous avez besoin d'obtenir ces renseignements dans votre langue, veuillez appeler le numéro ici.

French

Bu broşur Southwark Belediyesi'nin servisleri ile ilgili bilgi içerir. Eğer kendi dilinizde bilgi edinmek isterseniz, lütfen gösterilen numarayı arayınız.

Turkish

“Tò ròi này chứa đựng thông tin về các dịch vụ xã hội của Hội đồng quận Southwark. Nếu quý vị muốn yêu cầu được dịch ra ngôn của mình, xin gọi số điện thoại trên đây”

Bengali

“Warqaddaan yar waxaa ku qoran macluumaad ku saabsan adeegyada Guddiga Dowladda Hoose ee Southwark. Haddii aad u baahan tahay macluumaad ku qoran luqaddaada, faadlan wax lambarka muuqda.”

Somali

Tò ròi này chứa đựng thông tin về các dịch vụ xã hội của Hội đồng quận Southwark. Nếu quý vị muốn yêu cầu được dịch ra ngôn của mình, xin gọi số điện thoại trên đây

Vietnamese