

EVENTS: LICENCES AND LEGISLATION

Introduction

Holding an event of any kind can take a great deal of planning and preparation. This factsheet aims to help you to plan your event and to consider any laws or licences that you need to abide by.

The law covers a long list of public entertainment that is regulated under the Licensing Act, including: the performance of a play, a film showing, an indoor sporting event, dance or music performances and the playing of recorded music. Here are a few starting points to consider:

Before you start

The first thing you need to do when planning any kind of event is to take a look at your governing document or constitution. You must check that any event fits in with your stated objects and the powers that you have to carry out those objects; for instance, would your event be considered trading and does your constitution allow you to trade? If the constitution contains any restrictions on the kind of event that you can hold then you must abide by these restrictions.

The Licensing Act 2003 covers all aspects of licensing law including six pre-existing licences – for selling alcohol, public entertainment, cinema, theatre, late night refreshments and night cafes. If you want to do any of these things and the premises you are using is not licensed, then you may be able to get a temporary licence for a special event. For more information, contact the licensing department of your local authority.

As well as the following guidance, you should also consider your budget and resources – have you got enough money and people to help run the event? Who is your event aimed at? Have you got enough time to spread the word? Are there any similar events by other organisations that you can tie in with? Will you charge for your event and how much are people likely to pay or donate? Having a suggested donation may be one way to deal with the costs by telling people exactly what the money would go towards.

Film screenings

If you are holding a film night outside your own home or the cinema, you will need a screening licence to ensure that you are not breaching any copyrights. Screening a film

without a licence is an infringement of copyright law (under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act of 1988). It is a civil and, in some cases, criminal offence to show a film in public without the permission of the copyright holder or their representative, even if the film is your own or a rented copy.

There are different licences that you can get, depending on whether you are planning a one-off screening of a film, or a number of film nights throughout the year. However, there is a charge for these licences depending on how many venues you use, how many people are expected to attend and whether you intend to charge for the event.

Films are a great way to bring the community together, raise awareness of certain issues and raise money for your group or organisation. There are many independent film distributors in the UK which may offer a licence with the film that you are seeking.

Music

If you play music at a public event (or to promote your organisation to the public) you need a music licence to show that you have permission from the owners of that music. The cost of a music licence can depend on various factors, including the type of premises, the size of the premises, and the nature and extent to which the music is used. You can obtain a licence from the Performing Rights Society (see details below).

Campaigns, demonstrations or marches

If you are organising this type of event then you must inform the local police of the proposed date, route, starting time and at least one organiser of the event at least six days before the event is due to occur.

Festivals, street parties, and public meetings

Your local authority or police may have local byelaws, which require you to inform them if you are holding a public meeting or event, or if you want to obtain a 'public entertainments licence'. If you are unsure of anything, it is important that you get in touch with their licensing department as they will be able to advise you. It is a good idea to check with them in any case, as there may be things you are unaware of; for instance, the police may impose certain conditions for safety reasons if they feel it is necessary.

Raffles, bingo or roulette

It is important to check that your raffle or fundraising activity abides by the following rules:

- Must be run for charitable, sporting or cultural purposes

- Proceeds must not be used for private gain
- No more than a specified amount of money can be spent on purchasing prizes
- No money prizes can be awarded
- Tickets can only be sold during the course of the event or entertainment and on the premises in which the event is being held

If your activity may be considered as gambling and does not fall within the above boundaries, then you will need to register it with the Gaming Board for Great Britain.

Food and alcohol

If you are preparing or selling food at your event or on your premises, you must make sure that you comply with food hygiene laws. If you are using an outside caterer, it may simply be a case of checking they comply. Under EU regulation, most food businesses or caterers now have to register with the local authority. Food hygiene covers things like ventilation and waste disposal, as well as obvious matters like keeping things clean and at the correct temperature. There is plenty of guidance available, with your first point of call being the 'Food Hygiene legislation' section of the Food Standards Agency website.

If you are serving or selling alcohol at your event, then local licensing laws must be applied. Under current licensing law it is fairly easy to get an occasional licence to run a bar at an event. An organisation can have no more than 12 of these in a year though and you must apply at least three weeks in advance to the local licensing magistrate.

Health and safety

You have a duty of care to ensure the safety of everyone involved in, and attending your event. Make sure that any equipment you are using is safe, appropriate and that several people know how to work it. It is very important to make sure that you are properly insured when you are planning large-scale events. You may want to check if you are using another premises or venue that their insurance will cover you for any risks or safety issues. Do you have a first aider on hand if they are needed and have you worked out where the fire exits are in case there is a fire or emergency? You should also think about security of cash and equipment as well as individuals.

Further support and links:

- Performing Rights Society (PRS) for Music and MCPS – a not-for-profit organisation that enables you to access the world's music. They have over 40 tariffs covering everything from music in shops to music on hold when you are on the telephone, to ensure a fair charge for your music use.
<https://www.prsformusic.com/>
- Food Standards Agency – for food hygiene and health visit:
www.food.gov.uk/foodindustry/regulation/hygleg/
- To search for UK legislation: www.legislation.gov.uk



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