

Barbican Centre Visitor Impact Management Plan for the benefit of Barbican Residents

(Revised July 2025)

Background

The Barbican Centre Visitor Impact Management Plan sets out the aims under which the Barbican Centre ('the Centre') manages its operation in order to uphold the responsibilities placed upon it under the terms of the Licensing Act (2003), in relation to the prevention of public nuisance. This document focuses in particular on residents of the Barbican Estate which neighbours the Centre, with some Houses at very close quarters or physically part of the same buildings.

Through these aims, the Centre pledges to carefully consider all events and activities as well as changes in those activities and their potential impact on the local community.

The upholding of licensing objectives and the impact on our neighbours is always considered in the planning stages of any event, activity, or change to the Centre's activities. This document therefore summarises the consistent processes and actions undertaken with regard to its arts and commercial events, whilst recognising that it cannot be a completely comprehensive list due to the diverse nature of the Centre's programme.

The Visitor Impact Management Plan follows the guidance of the City of London Corporation's Code of Good Practice for Licensed Premises (2022) to create a document bespoke for our premises, setting out our commitment to managing our activities responsibly, appropriately and in some cases voluntarily restricting activity beyond the Centre's Licence obligations.

The terms and conditions of the Centre's current licence can be found on our website at www.barbican.org.uk/residents and we reserve the right to operate to this licence.

The Centre holds thousands of events for the public each year and opens its doors to approximately 1.3 million visitors annually. It is recognised by residents that the vast majority of these events pass without causing any nuisance to residents. The Centre welcomes feedback should any activity cause undue noise or public nuisance, however it is important that the Barbican's artform and commercial events are allowed to operate within the scope of its licence.

The Centre and the Barbican Association (BA) will aim to review this document every three years, with interim updates to content if and when required (e.g. by a change in operations). Updates can be requested by BA representatives at the quarterly meeting or in writing.

1. Contacting us

Urgent complaints about noise emanating from the Centre should be reported to Silk Street reception on **020 7382 7308**. The Duty Manager will then be contacted by radio, investigate the incident and report back to the resident, if contact details have been given. When reception is closed, Security is the point of contact on **020 7382 7001**.

Non-urgent complaints, that have not already been reported, should be directed to residents@barbican.org.uk. An auto-response will be sent to confirm receipt and the complaints procedure. We endeavour to respond to emails within 5 working days, including details of any action taken, however this will not always be possible due to staff workload. Residents are encouraged to report something through one channel only to allow the Centre to respond efficiently.

Complaint Escalation

Should any issues not be resolved through standard channels, or any new noise management issues arise which are not addressed by this document, the Centre agrees to meet with representatives of the BA (and/or one of its member House Groups) in order to resolve any issues arising from disturbances caused to Barbican residents by events, activities or operations for which the Centre is responsible. These include events, activities and operations managed or controlled by its clients in locations for which the Centre is responsible, and encompass activities such as social events and the installation and get out of theatre productions and art installations.

The Centre agrees to work with the BA, as well as responsible authorities such as Environmental Health,

to find solutions to such issues and to take any measures to mitigate future disturbances as far as possible. If necessary, this document may be updated to reflect the solutions reached and measures to be applied in the relevant circumstances.

2. Communication Approach

The regular channels of communication between the Centre and BA are as follows:

- Regular contact between the Centre and BA.
- Quarterly Barbican Centre / Association meetings chaired by the Director for Audiences. These meetings serve to establish and maintain a positive relationship between the Barbican Centre and Barbican Association, providing a forum for collaboration and consultation. The remit of what is discussed covers all aspects of the Barbican Centre's activity that may, in any way, affect Residents living on the Barbican Estate.
- In certain circumstances temporary 'task and finish' sub-groups may be setup to address specific concerns or events. These sub-groups will report back to the main Barbican Centre / Barbican Association meetings.
- Email distributions via the Barbican Estate Office's weekly bulletin.
- In some cases hard-copy notifications may be delivered to flats and on noticeboards.
- Residents page on the Barbican Centre website updated as required.
www.barbican.org.uk/residents

Complaints or enquiries requiring an urgent response should be directed to Silk Street reception, as indicated in the previous section.

3. Centre-wide / External

The Barbican Estate is a City district which is home to a large resident population. These flats surround the Barbican Centre for Arts and Conferences, the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, the City of London School for Girls and St Giles Cripplegate church, all within close proximity to each other. The Centre strives to foster good relations with its neighbours.

As part of its normal operation, the Centre will take all reasonable precautions to avoid disturbing residents and will actively seek to prevent activities which may cause public nuisance or have an adverse effect on the local community.

If a planned event may have an impact on residents, such as events on the Lakeside Terrace or Sculpture Court or those involving activity outside of normal operating hours, the Centre will consider if the event is reasonable by taking into account duration, timing, level and frequency of disturbance.

The Centre will ensure that information about any event, activity or change in the Centre's operation (including our catering operation and commercial events) predicted to impact on residents is communicated to residents through the appropriate established channels (see section 2, above).

The Centre will give as much notice as possible and facilitate discussions relating to any external events that may risk causing nuisance to residents. This includes any event that the Barbican is responsible for in areas beyond their licensed premises e.g. St Giles Terrace, Highwalks, Beech Street Tunnel.

Notification will take place at the quarterly Barbican Centre/Association meetings and if this is not possible, email contact will be made with attendees of these meetings.

If there are problems on the day, the Centre should be contacted using the details in section 1, above.

4. Garden Room

Amplified music is only permitted up to 95dB (as per our licence agreement with Environmental Health) due to the proximity of residents. A decibel limiting device is installed to ensure all musicians and DJs comply with this regulation. The noise limiter cuts off power to speakers when the sound levels in the room reach 95dB. If the device is activated or "tripped" once, the Operations Manager will be called to reset the device. If the device is tripped a second time the function continues without the use of amplified music.

Staff will ensure that the emergency exits from the food preparation area remain closed and are only used in an emergency.

Where music is performed in the Garden Room for events running after 10pm, the doors into the Conservatory will be closed to prevent noise spill into the Conservatory. The exit doors from the Garden Room will also be closed to prevent noise spill onto the Sculpture Court. Most events require no music after 11pm and the room cleared by midnight.

The Garden Room balconies to Lakeside Terrace will be kept locked; exceptionally the doors may be opened to allow for photos for wedding parties or for special events in which situation the music will be turned off.

The Operations Manager will inspect and agree any music in the Garden Room with the organiser prior to the start of an event and will be present during the sound check to ensure appropriate sound levels. All speakers will be positioned facing away from windows/balcony doors.

The event supervision and management of activities within the area are the collective responsibility of the Operations Manager, Event Manager and Catering Manager. The Operations Manager will make regular visits to the Garden Room. It is the responsibility of the Event Manager and Catering Manager to support the Operations Manager in ensuring that the events taking place in the Garden Room do not cause disturbance to Barbican residents and are conducted within the terms of the licence.

At the end of an event staff will manage the dispersal of guests to minimise dwell time in the level three lobby and staircase and to ensure all guests leave via Silk Street exit only.

When an event is taking place, window blinds will be lowered within 30 minutes of dusk to prevent unnecessary light pollution (in line with the City's Lighting Strategy).

5. Sculpture Court

The smoking area on Level 3 is staffed by security during events with music and customers are not permitted to drink in the enclosure. Special attention is given to minimising the impact of both smoking and drinking on the nearby residents. Drinking in the Sculpture Court will be prohibited, unless prior agreement has been reached for bespoke events and in line with our licensing conditions.

Doors to the Sculpture Court from Level 3 Foyer and Conservatory will be staffed to prevent exit by guests after 11.00pm, in line with the limited public access at night time.

All affected Barbican Residents will be informed about activities in the Sculpture Court that may impact them through one of the established channels. In the event of specific events being planned in the Sculpture Court, the Centre will set up the appropriate working party to include Frobisher Crescent residents.

The Centre operates an outdoor cinema on Sculpture Court for a period of the summer. This is a 'silent cinema' with audiences provided with wireless headphones, which are also provided free-of-charge to Frobisher Crescent residents to watch from their balconies. The Centre will communicate through pre-visit emails and signage on the day that audiences are in a residential area. It will also avoid programming films which might be expected to lead to noisy audience participation.

6. Conservatory/Terrace

Amplified music is not permitted in the Conservatory or Conservatory Terrace apart from pre-recorded secular music for wedding ceremonies (which must not exceed 70 decibels) and background music for bespoke events (which must have prior agreement with agreed decibel limits). Non-amplified music will be allowed only when it can be demonstrated that it will not cause disturbance to residents.

Doors from the Conservatory will be kept closed during events apart from allowing people to enter/exit (see section 4 for details in relation to Garden Room events).

7. Lakeside Terrace

Under normal circumstances there will be no Barbican-related activity likely to cause disturbance on the Lakeside Terrace before 8am. Residents will be informed if there are any exceptions. On rare occasions work may need to be carried out prior to 8am, without notice, for health and safety reasons e.g. snow clearance, gritting, extreme weather preparations etc.

Monitoring of activity on the Lakeside Terrace will take place by the relevant teams with spot checks as required. All teams are responsible for upholding licensing objectives. Spot checks are carried out by Security, Centre management and Catering during opening hours, and by Security via CCTV out of hours.

After the Barbican Kitchen has closed at 8pm (as per current standard opening hours), the Centre will begin restricting customers' use of the area and notices to that effect will be positioned at the outside seating area, with barriers put in place. Existing customers in this area are permitted to stay and finish their food/drinks without being asked to move. Staff begin packing away the outside chairs/tables to close the area at 8.30pm and restaurant lights and signage are turned off to discourage people from sitting in the space.

The doors from Level G to the Lakeside Terrace will be closed at 11pm and the public directed to leave the building via Silk Street.

Signage is displayed beside the North Stair entrance to Gilbert House to highlight the proximity of residential properties.

Customers on the Lakeside Terrace will be encouraged inside the building or to leave from 11pm. Monitoring of the Terrace takes place overnight with spot checks as required.

8. Restaurants on levels 1 and 2

The Restaurant Manager will monitor customer behaviour to ensure that licensing objectives relating to sensible drinking and public nuisance are upheld.

The Level 1 terrace will be cleared of customers no later than 9.30pm at which point the terrace will be closed, the terrace doors locked, and windows shut. The onsite restaurant duty manager will take responsibility for ensuring that this occurs and that there is no external noise after this time. It is anticipated that the months of April to October will see the most use of the terrace.

Notices are prominently displayed on the terrace reminding diners of the residential nature of the area.

The end of the terrace closest to Gilbert Bridge is not used.

The dining area nearest to Gilbert Bridge is designated a non-smoking area. The capacity of the Level 1 terrace will not exceed 70 covers.

The Level 2 restaurant is being used as a gallery space from May 2025 for a period of one year. The Centre will engage with BA representatives ahead of further change of use of this space, which is expected to return as a restaurant following Renewal works.

9. Silk Street vehicle activity

The Barbican is committed to tackling the noise and air pollution caused by idling vehicle engines and supports the City Corporation's approach of raising awareness and enforcing compliance. Drivers are asked to switch off their engines when parked for a minute or more and can be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice of £20 or Penalty Charge Notice of £40 for non-compliance (subject to certain restrictions). See cityoflondon.gov.uk/services/environmental-health/air-quality/engine-idling for details.

The relevant Barbican teams will assist residents by approaching vehicles servicing the Centre when advised (or when they themselves spot) that drivers are not keeping noise to minimum or switching off their engines. This may not always be operationally possible, so Residents are encouraged to also notify the City Pollution team directly on 020 7332 3030 or email cityair@cityoflondon.gov.uk.

The Barbican Security team continues to liaise with the City of London Police on a regular basis in relation to illegal coach activity in Silk Street. The City of London Police have advised that they will provide resource, if operational commitments permit, to attend and security will continue to make contact with them whenever possible. The City of London Police have advised that, as this is a crime, it is more effective if Residents make contact directly (as indicated above) when an incident occurs, and they will provide a response.

A coach protocol document is issued to all commercial clients and group organisers, of which the Centre is aware, requesting that coach drivers keep noise to a minimum and switch off their engines when dropping off on Silk Street.

On a daily basis, details of coach traffic of which the Centre is aware are discussed at a 4.30pm planning meeting with all front of house teams to ensure awareness of any risk of potential disturbance.

10. Internal roadway deliveries

Where possible, all un/loading will take place within the internal roadway or Beech Street tunnel loading bay. Silk Street will only be used for unloading if all other options have been exhausted. Rubbish/skip lorry movements take place between 7am–6pm, Monday– Friday (9am–6pm, Saturday).

All catering suppliers must adhere to a delivery window of 7am–6pm Monday–Saturday and the Centre will enforce this policy in collaboration with its caterers. A number of business events each year require earlier access critical to the setup of the event. In such circumstances an event manager or equivalent will be present to monitor the operation, and all involved will be briefed on controlling any potential noise nuisance.

11. Theatre get-in/get-outs:

Whenever the theatre has a get in or a get out a senior member of the theatre team will be present for any loading or unloading activity at street level to ensure that all noise is kept to a minimum.

We endeavour to limit the amount of trucks in Silk Street at any one time by requesting that all visiting companies stagger their arrival to reduce any unnecessary noise.

All drivers are told to turn their vehicle engines off unless they are driving onto or driving off of the theatre lorry lift, which is situated to the left-hand side of Silk Street main entrance. Once the truck is on the lorry lift the trailer drops 30ft to the stage level. This is where all the set and equipment is loaded or offloaded. There is no noise penetration through to street level.

On a very small number of occasions and in exceptional circumstances it may be necessary to load at street level due to a failure of the lorry lift. In this situation, only small set/equipment would be loaded as there is no lifting equipment at street level for anything larger.

All staff are aware that the Centre is situated in a residential area and that any noise will adversely affect residents. Staff are aware that they must keep noise to a minimum whenever they are at street level in the evening or early hours of the morning.

12. Late Events

Whenever the Centre holds a late-night event (finishing after 12 midnight) the Operations Manager will ensure that customers are escorted off site to Silk Street. Customers waiting for taxis will be encouraged to remain inside the Centre rather than waiting on Silk Street.

A separate procedure is implemented for late night 'Club Stage' events, whereby audiences exit through the car park roadway into the Beech Street tunnel, with security on hand to facilitate quiet dispersal.

Late night events on the Club Stage are managed according to a plan agreed with Environmental Health. This includes use of baffles to prevent sound escaping and limits on the volume of the sound system, which is continually monitored and controlled by the technical team. Residents should not be able to hear the music from Club Stage events within their properties.

13. Timings for Centre Activity

(Subject to change depending on operational or event requirements)

Fountains (Fountain pumps, fountains by flag poles on lakeside terrace):

- 10am–8.30pm every day

Aerators (fountain sprays in the middle of the lake):

- 1 Oct–31 Mar, 4pm–8.30pm, Mon–Fri. Weekends & school holidays 10am– 8.30pm
- 1 Apr–30 Sep, 4pm–8.30pm Mon–Fri. Weekends & school holidays 10am–8.30pm

Waterfall

- 10am–8.00pm every day

Timings for the water features have been agreed after consultation with all interested parties. Any requests to change the fountain timings are to be directed to the Chair of the Barbican Association who will consult all Barbican residents and organisations adjacent to the lake prior to submitting the request to the Barbican Centre.

Catering Fans:

- Level -2 (main kitchens); 6.30am–10pm every day
- Level G kitchen; 8am–9.00pm every day¹
- Level 1 kitchen; 8am–11.30pm every day
- Level 3 kitchen & restaurant is event dependent, i.e. if there is an event in the Garden room, conservatory, terrace etc., the kitchen & restaurant plant is scheduled according to the event

¹ Please note level G & 1 restaurants do not have air handling units - they have ceiling mounted heater / cooler fan coil units that do not make any noise

start / finish time.

- Catering general (i.e. toilets, offices, staff rooms); 7am–11.00pm every day

Restaurant opening/closing times:

All current opening and closing times can be found on the website: www.barbican.org.uk/restaurants-bars/opening-hours. Associated areas' closing times are detailed in the management plan.

Beech Street Cinemas

Management controls will be in place to ensure that the cinema operation does not cause nuisance to residents. The Cinema Visitor Management Strategy follows.

14. Cinema Visitor Management Strategy Plan

1. Where possible the start times of screenings will be staggered to provide a phased entry and exit of audiences.
2. No alcohol will be permitted to be taken outside of the venue. Customers will be discouraged from consuming drinks around the main entrance to the cinemas to minimise dwell time in this area. This will be managed by venue staff.
3. The area around the main entrance to the cinemas will be designated a no smoking area to minimise dwell time in this area.
4. The hosting team and café/bar staff are present in the foyer when the cinema auditoria are open to the public to welcome and assist customers whilst monitoring customer behaviour. A member of the Barbican Customer Service team will be present in the main lobby at the outgoing of any public activity within the cinema auditoria to monitor customer behaviour.
5. Customers gathering outside after exiting the venue will be encouraged to move on by venue staff.
6. Prominent signage will be displayed in the cinema foyer requesting that customers leave the area quietly. These signs will include directions to the nearest public transport.
7. Urgent complaints about noise emanating from the Centre should be reported to Silk Street reception on 020 7382 7308. Last orders for catering outlets will be 10.30pm.
8. Waste/recycling bins will be placed in the foyer area to ensure that any customers leave any rubbish behind and do not litter the local highway area.
9. No refuse or bottles will be put or prepared outside the building before 8am or after 8pm (Monday–Saturday) and before 12 noon or after 6pm (Sundays and public holidays).
10. The delivery and collection area will be the existing loading bay area behind Exhibition Hall 1. All deliveries and collections will take place between the hours of 8am–8pm (Monday–Saturday).
11. Deliveries on Sundays and public holidays will only take place, if necessary, between 12 noon–6pm.
12. Noise from any music, or amplified sound from PA equipment, will not be audible outside the premises.