

Revised road closure guidance to boost children's outdoor play

- updated guidance will make it easier to close streets for community events
- government has written to all councils to advise on how more 'play streets' can be created
- move will increase the opportunities for children to play outside

More children are set to enjoy playing outside safely away from traffic after government rules around closing roads for community events were simplified.

[Guidance](#) issued by the Department for Transport (DfT) is being updated today (23 August 2019) making it easier for residents who want to turn their quiet neighbourhood roads into occasional 'play streets'.

Play streets, where roads are closed to allow for small events and sports, are not only good for children's health and happiness, they give them a sense of belonging and encourage other residents to get together, creating greater community cohesion.

Roads Minister Baroness Vere said:

Play streets offer wonderful opportunities for children to get outdoors and for families and communities to get together.

A generation ago, it was common to see young people playing out in the street but today it can be a rare sight.

That's why today I'm delighted to be making it easier for those who want to create Play Streets, boosting the health and wellbeing of children, families and communities.

Alice Ferguson, Director of [Playing Out](#) which supports the street play movement, said:

We are delighted that the government has now issued guidance for councils to support play streets. Children need the chance to play out freely near home, as was the norm a generation ago. Heavy traffic and other conditions have made this increasingly difficult.

We hope this guidance will enable all councils to get behind the idea and that we will see many more children having the chance to play out and make friends on their own streets and estates over the coming years.

Long term, we want children to be safe to play out every day,

without intervention, for their health, happiness and sense of belonging. This announcement is a great first step towards that.

The process for making Play Street Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) has been a costly barrier for parents because of the requirement to advertise them.

But the DfT has found an easier way to help people create regular play streets.

The department has today issued advice to councils, enabling them to make 'special event' orders, which mean roads can be temporarily closed to enable children's play – and these do not need to be advertised.

Jenni Wiggle, Senior Director at [Living Streets](#), said:

Removing traffic from our streets creates a safer environment and improves local air quality, which can help families feel happier to let their children play out.

Not only does this mean that children can enjoy being more active and sociable, our streets transform into cleaner, safer and more welcoming places for people of all ages.

There is still a way to go to ensure our streets are safe and welcoming all the time, but this updated guidance shows a commitment from the government to create friendly and thriving communities.

While consent is needed for multiple closures, to make the process easier, councils can use a single consent application to close several roads repeatedly for children's play over any 12 month period rather than submitting individual applications for each closure.

This should help to break down some of the barriers that have in the past prevented children from having the freedom to play out where they live – just like their parents or grandparents did.