

# Street Entertainment

Consultation on proposed Public Spaces Protection Order

Analysis of feedback survey  
and emails received

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THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF  
KENSINGTON  
AND CHELSEA

# Introduction

## Introduction

The streets are the world's biggest talent platform and we celebrate the vibrancy of our street entertainment scene. For Kensington and Chelsea and London as a whole, if we are to maintain our proud tradition of being a global powerhouse for music, more needs to be done to support and regulate our busking community. However, on average, we receive 1,200 complaints of noise pollution and anti-social busking within our borough. A consultation was launched so that we can work with residents, musicians and the wider local community to find a solution.

We need to strike a balance between what works for both residents and street performers. In the past, we have investigated busking licensing and conducted targeted enforcement pilots. Our goal is to ensure that street entertainment doesn't impact negatively on the quality of life of residents. The Council is considering making a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) to address excessive levels of noise, nuisance, annoyance, danger or risk of harm or injury caused by street entertainment activities to residents and businesses.

In an effort to understand the views of residents, businesses, street entertainers and other stakeholders a feedback survey was developed and launched in June 2018.



# Survey methodology

## Methodology

A short electronic survey was developed and launched on 4 June 2018. The survey was promoted to residents' associations, local businesses and organisations representing street entertainers and buskers in the Royal Borough. Organisations were encouraged to promote the survey and the Council promoted the survey via social media and its website.

By the closing date of 6 July 2018, a total of 413 responses were received to the survey. In addition, eight detailed email responses were received.

## Report

This report contains brief details of the emails received and an analysis of survey responses. Graphs show percentage figures, where graphs do not total 100 per cent – this will be down to computer rounding, where respondents have chosen not to respond or where respondents have been able to select more than one answer.

## Appendices

A separate appendix report accompanies this report. Appendix one contains all emails received in response to the consultation, appendix two contains survey data tables and appendix three contains all survey comments made by respondents.

## For more information

For information on the results please contact:

**Gary Wilson** on 020 7361 3616 or e-mail [gary.wilson@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:gary.wilson@rbkc.gov.uk)



# Emails received: Summary

Below is a summary of the eight emails received in response to the consultation, all responses can be read in full in appendix one.

- **Email 1:** Resident comments on the negative impact of buskers and beggars on Kensington High Street and on underground trains.
- **Email 2:** From the Earl's Court Square Residents' Association committee. Many of the committee appear in favour of busking and the benefits it brings. However, most would like to see a PSPO introduced or licensing of buskers in order to control busking. Many of the committee recognised the impact of busking on local residents.
- **Email 3:** From an organisation that works with buskers. Email comments on the survey design and that it focuses on the negative aspects of busking, rather than the positive aspects.
- **Email 4:** From Keep Streets Live. Email is not in favour of a PSPO and feels this is not the right legislation to use and would welcome an alternative approach. The emailer is also unhappy with the survey wording.
- **Email 5:** The email feels the consultation should also focus on the positive aspects of busking and a better description of a PSPO.
- **Email 6:** Residents' email shares experience of how busking is controlled in Japan and suggests licensing and auditions as a way of controlling busking.
- **Email 7:** The resident is unhappy with the survey's focus on the negative aspects of busking and feels the survey should be withdrawn.
- **Email 8:** From the Mayor of London Culture and Creative Industries Team. The email draws attention to the positive impact of buskers and suggests the Council should support responsible buskers and use existing legislation to enforce against irresponsible buskers. It suggests promoting the Buskers' Code as a tool to support best practice.



## Survey Results: At a glance

- **Impact of busking:** The majority of respondents reported that *'loud performances'* (79 per cent), *'repetition of performance'* (73 per cent), *'pavement or highway obstructions'* (65 per cent) and *'entertainers too close together'* (57 per cent) frequently or occasionally had a negative impact on them
- **Possible restrictions:** There was general support for a range of possible restrictions. Highest support was received for: *'prohibiting performances that pose a health and safety risk'* (77 per cent support), *'Prohibiting mains electricity or generator powered amplifiers'* (74 per cent support) and *'Prohibiting the use of microphones/loudspeakers/megaphones or similar'* (73 per cent support).

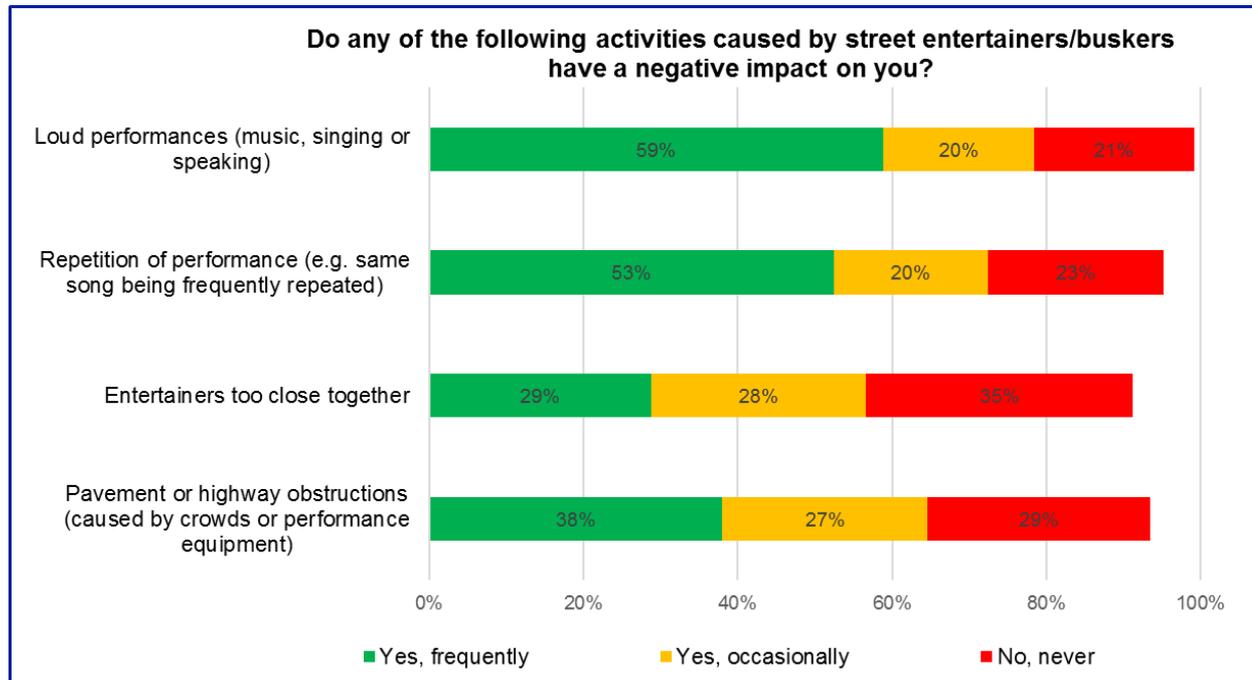
Restrictions attracting the highest level of opposition were: *'Prohibiting street entertainment/busking/amplified public speaking at all times'* (34 per cent oppose) and *'Prohibiting performances in the immediate area outside underground stations'* (21 per cent oppose).

- **Support for a PSPO:** Over two-thirds (69 per cent) of respondents feel that a PSPO is needed to control street entertainment/busking activities in the borough. A fifth (20 per cent) disagreed.
- **Area to be covered:** Nearly two-thirds (65 per cent) of respondents agreed to some extent that the Council should introduce the PSPO in the areas where most complaints are received from (locations were listed for respondents). However, almost a fifth disagreed to some extent that these were the correct locations.



# Survey Results: Impact of street entertainers/buskers

- Over three-quarters (79 per cent) of respondents reported that *'loud performances'* from street entertainers/buskers frequently or occasionally had a negative impact on them.
- Almost three-quarters (73 per cent) reported that *'repetition of performance'* frequently or occasionally had a negative impact on them.
- Nearly two-thirds (65 per cent) reported that *'pavement or highway obstructions'* caused by street/entertainers/buskers frequently or occasionally had a negative impact on them.
- Slightly less (57 per cent) reported that *'entertainers too close together'* frequently or occasionally had a negative impact on them.



Base: All responses (413)



# Survey Results: 'Other' issues that have a negative impact

Respondents that indicated an 'other' activity had a negative impact on them were invited to comment further. The comments made have been grouped together by theme. The most common themes are presented in the table below.

All comments can be seen in appendix 3. Some examples of comments made are provided on the following page.

Theme of comment*	Number of comments
Noise issues/amplified music too loud	46
Crowds/overcrowding/blocked pavements	20
Poor quality busking	18
Begging/aggressive begging	12
Impact on businesses/difficult to work	12
Health and safety issues - Slip/trip hazards, fire, etc.	12
Aggressive behaviour/atmosphere	9
In favour of buskers/street entertainers	9
Drumming/loud musical instruments	7
Street drinking/drugs issues	7

\* Themes shown with seven or more comments



# Survey Results: 'Other' issues that have a negative impact

## Noise issues/amplified music too loud

*Loud amplified noise - not genuine talent - the noise can be heard in my house and Earl's Court Gardens. It is disturbing to the peaceful enjoyment of our home.*

*The main problem is the over amplification of backing tracks and the performers lack of talent.*

## Crowds/overcrowding/blocked pavements

*Outside Earl's Court Station. At times, the standard is surprisingly good, however it needs to be regulated. Just yesterday, there were entertainers congregating on pavement outside the Co-op, not enough space.*

*Gathered street crowd so dense that difficult to make my way around them when shopping occasionally.*

## Begging/aggressive begging

*Street drinking and public drunkenness, aggressive begging, drug dealing, violence.*

## Poor quality busking

*Exhibition Road in South Kensington has become a haven for poorly performing individuals preying on the tourists that visit our National Museum.*

*Very poor standard of performances.*

## Impact on businesses/difficult to work

*Noise from buskers interrupting meetings and distracting from work.*

*The busker is just next to my stall on the middle of the road. The noise as well as obstruction of customer is adversely impacting my business and my health and my customers.*

## Health and safety issues

*The guy that blows bubbles leaves excess soap on the pavement which is incredibly slippery.*



# Survey Results: Possible restrictions

If a PSPO were to be introduced, it could contain a range of restrictions to help address excessive noise, nuisance, annoyance, danger or risk of harm to residents, visitors and businesses. Respondents were asked if they supported or opposed a range of possible restrictions.

## Restrictions attracting the highest level of support

- Prohibiting performances that pose a health and safety risk (77 per cent support)
- Prohibiting mains electricity or generator powered amplifiers (74 per cent support)
- Prohibiting the use of microphones/loudspeakers /megaphones or similar (73 per cent support)
- Prohibiting street entertainers/buskers/public speakers from being within 50 metres of each other (67 per cent support)

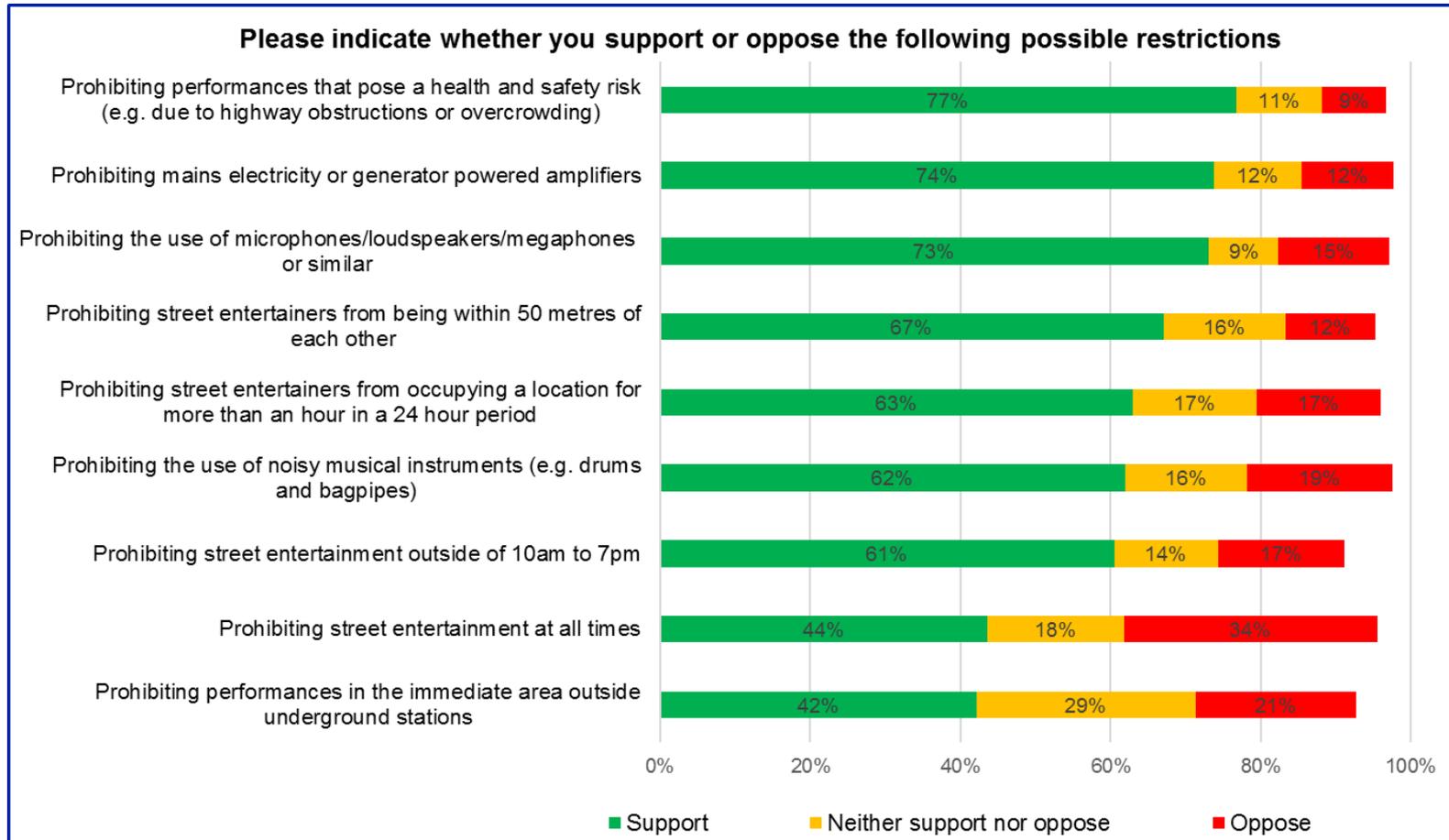
## Restrictions attracting the highest level of opposition

- Prohibiting street entertainment/busking/amplified public speaking at all times (34 per cent oppose).
- Prohibiting performances in the immediate area outside underground stations (21 per cent oppose).
- Prohibiting the use of noisy musical instruments (19 per cent oppose).
- Prohibiting street entertainment/busking/amplified public speaking outside of 10am to 7pm (17 per cent oppose).

A graph detailing all results can be seen overleaf.



# Survey Results: Possible restrictions



Please note graph text has been shortened from street entertainment/busking/amplified public speaking to 'street entertainment' for brevity

Base: All responses (413)



# Survey Results: Comments on possible restrictions

Respondents were invited to comment further on why they support or oppose the range of possible restrictions. The comments made have been grouped together by theme. The most common themes are presented in the table below.

All comments can be seen in appendix 3. Some examples of comments made are provided on the following page.

Theme of comment*	Number of comments
Negative impact of buskers/noise caused	72
In favour of prohibiting amplification	33
Positive comments about street entertainment/busking	16
In favour of prohibiting busking at all times	15
Against the PSPO	13
Against restriction around underground stations	8
Designated areas	8
Poor quality	8
In favour of prohibiting outside of 10am - 7pm	6
In favour of prohibiting outside underground stations	6
Repetition	6

\* Themes shown with six or more comments



# Survey Results: Comments on possible restrictions

## Negative impact of buskers/noise caused

*I strongly object to amplification. Residents living near busking 'hot spots' such as underground stations should not have to suffer continuous music or singing.*

*As a resident the noise is constant, buskers play the same thing over and over.*

## Positive comments about street entertainment/busking

*Speaking only on behalf of Earl's Court where we do not have much street entertainment, so I am rather pleased with the few performers that we attract to our area.*

*Please don't be mean and stop these lovely people, when I hear their sounds it cheers me up.*

## In favour of prohibiting busking at all times

*Prohibiting busking outside 10 am to 7pm implies it is OK 10-7pm. In some locations busking will never be appropriate.*



## In favour of prohibiting amplification

*Prohibiting amplified noise would be a start.*

*I'm not against buskers. Just against heavily amplified music and totally against amplified speaking, which draws large crowds.*

## Against the PSPO

*I do not agree with the restrictions proposed with regards to PSPOs. As I believe that the existing law and its respective use is adequate to address problems.*

*Street entertainment is and should remain free and unrestricted to enhance streets and areas that would otherwise be drab. Keep streets alive.*

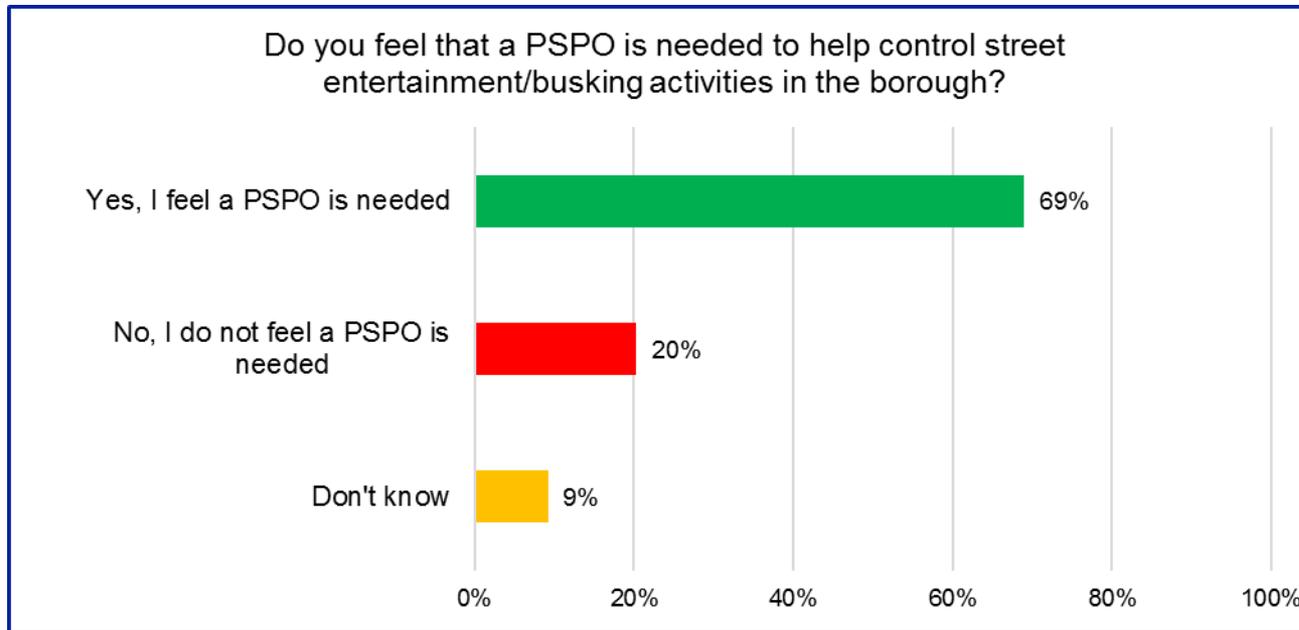
## Designated areas

*Buskers should all be licenced and only allowed to "perform" in approved locations and at agreed times.*



# Survey Results: Support for the introduction of a PSPO

- Over two-thirds (69 per cent) of respondents feel that a PSPO is needed to control street entertainment/busking activities in the borough.
- A fifth (20 per cent) did not feel a PSPO was needed.
- Nearly one in ten (nine per cent) did not know.
- Those responding from a business were more likely to feel that a PSPO is needed (79 per cent) than residents (63 per cent).



Base: All responses (413)



# Survey Results: Reasons for being against a PSPO

Respondents that were against the introduction of a PSPO to help control street entertainment and busking were invited to comment on why this was.

The comments made have been grouped together by theme. The most common themes are presented in the table below.

All comments can be seen in appendix 3. Some examples of comments made are provided on the following page.

Theme of comment*	Number of comments
Not needed/street entertainment does not cause an issue	34
Against regulation/or against the use of a PSPO	24
Benefits of music/entertainment	19
In favour of PSPO	13
Take other measures	12
Issues caused by busking/buskers	5
Enforcement	4

\* Themes shown with four or more comments



# Survey Results: Reasons for being against a PSPO

## Not needed/street entertainment does not cause an issue

*I don't see it as a problem therefore enforcement is not needed.*

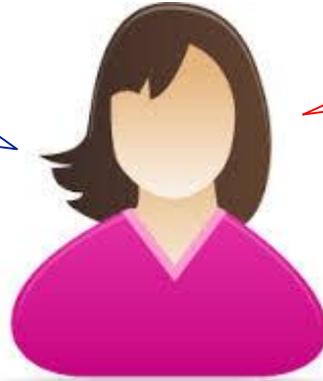
*It isn't necessary. I've never been bothered by busking - in fact, the quality of some of the musicianship is beyond question.*

## Benefit of music/entertainment

*It is a great asset to attract tourists to this area. People, especially children, love the music and various acts on show. They engage with the performers and seem to enjoy every aspect of the shows. It provides valuable exposure for the entertainers themselves and provides an extra source of income for the entertainers themselves.*

## Take other measures

*I would prefer licensing busking.*



## Against regulation or against the use of a PSPO

*I've never come across any problems in this area, and in general am not in favour of more regulations.*

*Don't need a sledge hammer to crack a nut.*

## In favour of PSPO

*It would make the issue of unreasonable busking noise/performance and others the responsibility of a clearly responsible department/operation which is not currently apparent.*

## Issues caused by busking/buskers

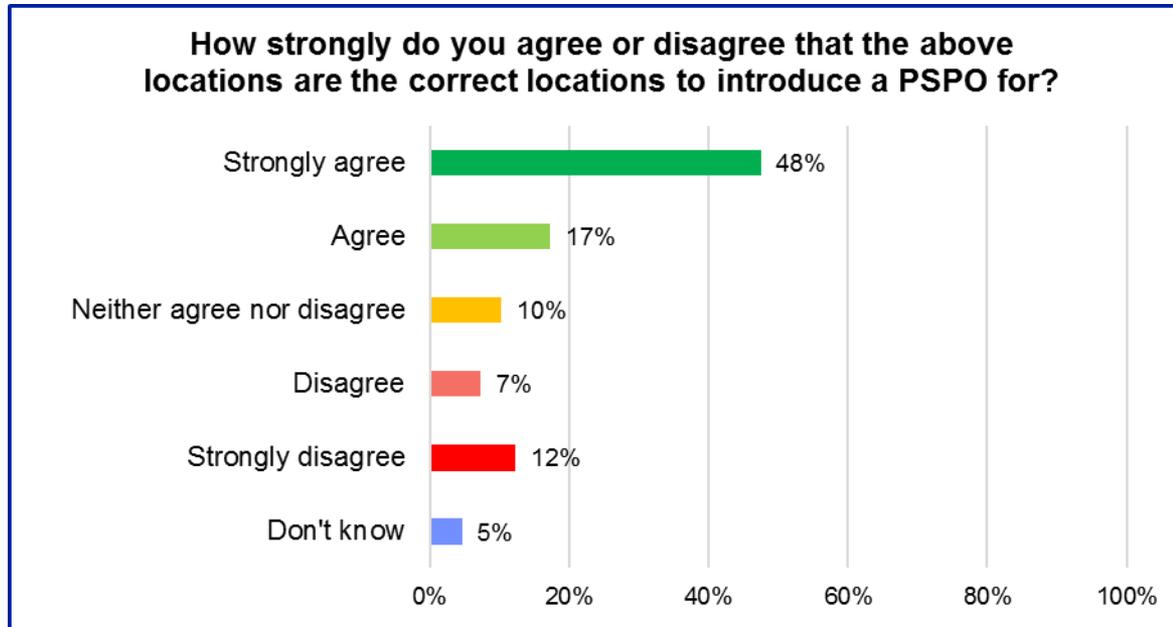
*I support the introduction of a PSPO because I am regularly disturbed in my workplace and this is disruptive to concentration and motivation. I think it will be hard to find locations that do not disturb residents or workers.*



# Survey Results: Locations

If the Council adopts a PSPO, it is considering introducing it in the locations where the Council receives the most complaints from<sup>1</sup>. Respondents were given these locations and asked how strongly they agreed or disagreed that these were the correct locations to introduce a PSPO for.

- Nearly two-thirds (65 per cent) of respondents agreed to some extent that these were the correct locations.
- However, almost a fifth (19 per cent) disagreed to some extent.



*Base: All responses (413)*

<sup>1</sup>Locations the Council receives the most complaints from: Thurloe Street, Exhibition Road from the East Lawn (at its corner with Cromwell Road) of the Natural History Museum to the borough boundary with Westminster, Kensington High Street from Derry Street to Wrights Lane, outside of entrances and exits to all nine underground stations in the borough, Talbot Road Toilets at Portobello Road, Denbigh Terrace at Portobello Road, Dunworth Mews at Portobello Road, Chepstow Villas at its junction with Portobello Road, Tavistock Square, outside Earl's Court Station (Earl's Court Road side) and King's Road junction with Royal Avenue.



# Survey Results: Comments related to possible locations

Respondents that disagreed with the proposed locations were asked to explain their response.

The comments made have been grouped together by theme. The most common themes are presented in the table below.

All comments can be seen in appendix 3. Some examples of comments made are provided on the following page.

Theme of comment*	Number of comments
Against being introduced in particular locations or against being introduced altogether	55
Addition of extra streets/locations	47
Move the problem	4
Support area defined	3

\* Themes shown with three or more comments



# Survey Results: Comments related to possible locations

## Against being introduced in particular locations or against being introduced altogether

*I would prefer not to live in a totalitarian state that even considers such fascistic regulation of musicians.*

*Portobello Road benefits greatly from street entertainers as do other parts of the borough. The exits from tube stations are improved by street entertainers, how many people were killed by crowds outside RBKC tube stations in the last decade - none.*

*Again disproportionate to the issue. For example, there is plenty of room outside Earl's Court Station. People actively encourage the buskers there.*

## Move the problem

*The danger of a PSPO related to specific locations, will only encourage 'street entertainment' to migrate to another location - where the problem would be replicated.*



## Addition of extra streets/locations

*All Portobello Road should be free of any buskers and street performers as they negatively affect legitimate businesses who are trying to make a living.*

*Area omits lower end of Exhibition Rd (SW7 2HE) where there is constant noise.*

*I agree with all the locations but why is Notting Hill Gate not on the list? I have called RBKC many times to complain about musical beggars there.*

*I would add the whole of Portobello Road.*

## Support area defined

*These all seem to me good locations for buskers, especially outside stations.*



# Survey Results: 'Other' comments

Respondents were given a final opportunity to comment further.

The comments made have been grouped together by theme. The most common themes are presented in the table below.

All comments can be seen in appendix 3. Some examples of comments made are provided on the following page.

Theme of comment*	Number of comments
Negative impact of buskers/busking	49
In favour of PSPO	48
Area to be covered	21
Against PSPO	18
PSPO restrictions	17
Positive impact of music/busking	16
Quality of buskers	14
Enforcement	11

\* Themes shown with eleven or more comments



# Survey Results: 'Other' comments

## Negative impact of buskers/buskers

*I think it would be fantastic to introduce the PSPO to give peace and allow us to sit in our gardens and open windows without the non-stop annoyance of amplified music and busking. It is very hard to work or relax with the nonstop noise that can go on all day, long into the evening.*

*Thank you for taking this seriously. These nuisances have had an adverse effect on our productivity and job satisfaction for a long time.*

## Area to be covered

*A PSPO must also cover Notting Hill Gate and can only be good.*

## PSPO restrictions

*All amplification, mains or battery, should be banned.*



## In favour of PSPO

*Definitely need a PSPO for traders' sanity.*

*I dearly hope that this is brought in and we can start to have a proper residential place to live again.*

*Just please stop the buskers, oh and the beggars and the drug users whilst you're at it.*

## Against PSPO

*Leave buskers and street performers alone free to express their art wherever and whenever they want as they improve the mental health of the entire community.*

## Positive impact of music/busking

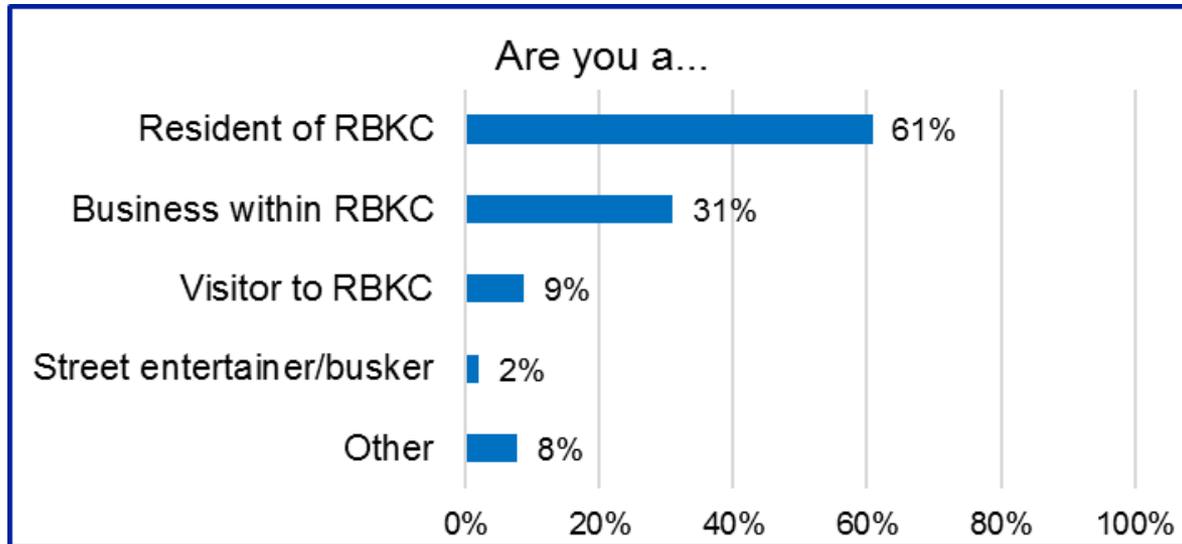
*Quality buskers can provide a lot of pleasure!*

*I think well managed street entertainment adds to the vibrancy of an area. I would not want to see a PSPO used to sterilise the streets.*



# Survey Results: Profile of respondents

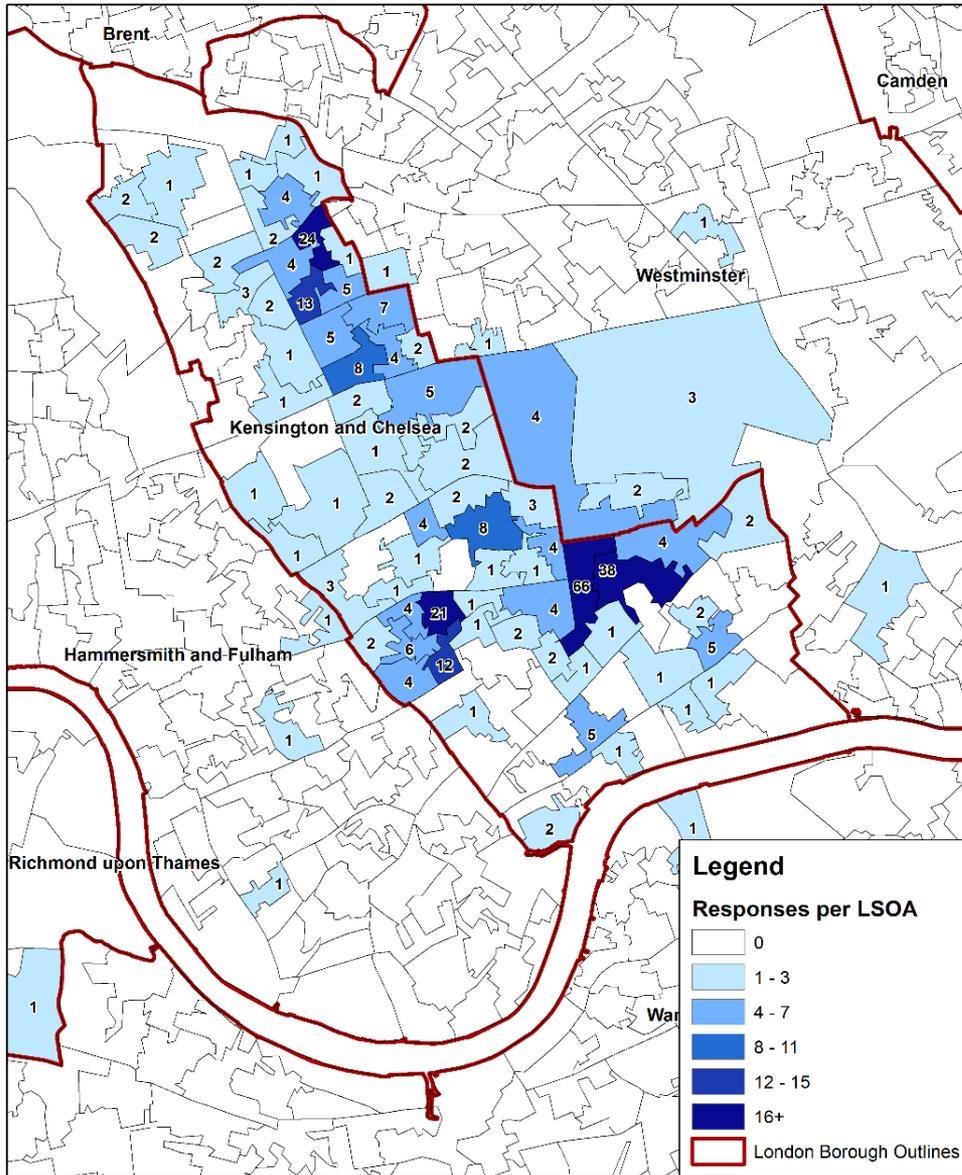
- The majority (61 per cent) of respondents to the survey were residents.
- Almost of a third (31 per cent) of responses came from businesses.
- Nearly one in ten (nine per cent) responses came from visitors.
- Whilst two per cent came from street entertainers/buskers.



Base: All responses (413)



# Survey Results: Postcode data



- Respondents were asked to supply their full home or business postcode to help understand where responses had been received from.
- Of the 413 received, 385 supplied a full postcode that could be matched.
- Of these, 331 were postcodes in Kensington and Chelsea.
- The map to the left shows a count of the number of responses from Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA). Typically wards contain four to six LSOAs.
- A large number of responses were received from the area around Exhibition Road (in particular from staff from the Natural History Museum).
- There were also a large number of responses from respondents in Colville and Earl's Court wards.

0 0.2 0.4 0.8 Miles



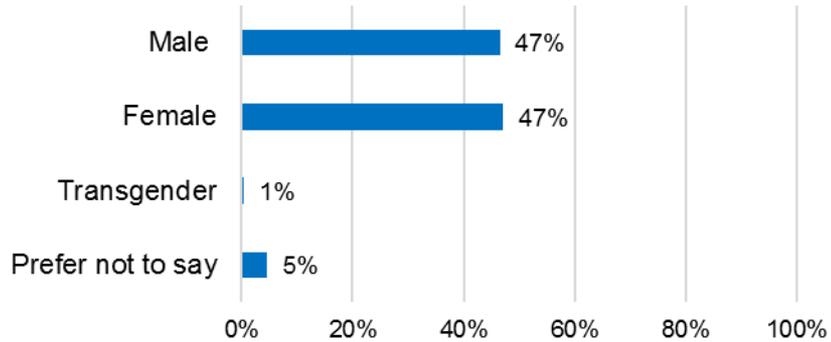
Date: 11/07/2018

Community Engagement Team  
The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea  
Town Hall, W8 7NX

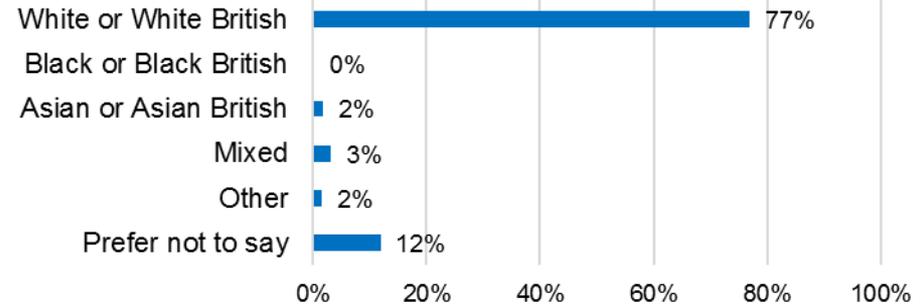


# Survey Results: Profile of respondents

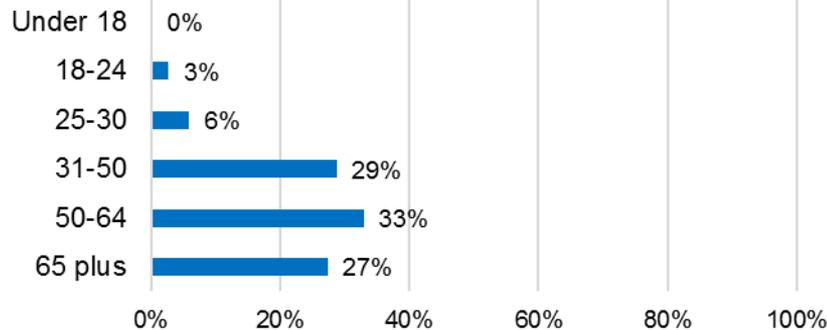
Are you...



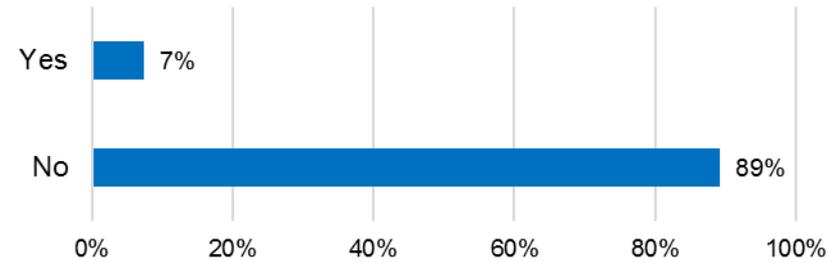
How would you best describe your race or ethnic group?



How old are?



Do you have any long term illness, health problems or disability which limits your daily activities?



Base: All responses (413)

