



## **REQUEST      18049**

I've attached the previous FOI the requester is referring to (FOI 16171).

I would like to request a clarification of your answer to question 7. on political stalls.

- You say that you have a space for 'concessions' - would it be possible for these spaces to be used for free by a political campaign?

## **RESPONSE**

In Wigan Borough, utilising space for political campaigning is generally lawful, and is protected under the right to freedom of speech. However, this right is not absolute, and there are legal limits and conditions depending on the specific circumstances.

Wigan has a Public Space Protection Order that covers the towns centres of Wigan and Leigh, and which aim to address behaviours that negatively impact the quality of life for residents and visitors and include the consumption of intoxicating substances, begging and anti-social behaviour. Whilst political campaigning is not explicitly mentioned in the PSPOs, it is important to ensure that such activity does not inadvertently fall under behaviours considered anti-social or disruptive, such as engaging in behaviour that causes harassment, alarm, or distress, for example inciting hatred based on racial, religious, or sexual orientation.

Other factors that need to be considered when carrying out political campaigning is to be mindful of noise levels and public obstruction. Excessive noise, especially through amplification can be considered a public nuisance and whilst Wigan Council does not specify regulations regarding amplified sound for political campaigning, it is advisable to keep noise levels at a reasonable level to avoid complaints or enforcement action. Furthermore, you should not obstruct public pathways, entrances to businesses or impede the flow of traffic.

Political campaigning does not typically require a permit, but certain associated activities may, for example if you plan to collect donations during your activity you may need a [street collection permit](#) from Wigan Council. Similarly if you are selling items, even for fund raising purposes, this is considered [street trading](#) for which permission may be required from Wigan Council. Please access the Council website for more information regarding either of these permits using the links provided.

In summary if you wish to conduct political campaigning lawfully and respectfully in Wigan Borough:

1. Be respectful and non-confrontational by ensuring that your message is delivered in a manner that is respectful to all individuals, avoiding language that could be perceived as hateful or inciting.

2. Monitor noise levels by keeping amplification to a minimum and be attentive to the surrounding environment to avoid causing a public nuisance.
3. Avoid obstruction and position yourself in a way that does not block pavements, entrances, or the flow of pedestrian traffic.
4. Obtain any necessary permits if your activity is to include collecting donations or selling items.

By adhering to these guidelines, political campaigning can be conducted lawfully and effectively within Wigan Borough.