

# **PUBLIC TOILETS UK A MATTER OF URGENCY**



## **CAMPAIGN TO IMPROVE OUR HEALTH & WELLBEING**

### **COMMUNITY TOILET SCHEMES\***

*[\*Some Councils may use a different name]*

#### **What is a Community Toilet Scheme?**

“A Community Toilet Scheme allows members of the public to use the toilet facilities in a range of approved local businesses and other organisations during their opening hours”<sup>1</sup> It is designed to increase/enhance the Council’s current toilet provision

#### **Why should we have a Community Toilet Scheme?**

A Community Toilet Scheme extends the public toilet availability within an area and contributes towards the health and social inclusion of residents and visitors alike. It also supports local businesses, economically, by making the towns and villages more accessible and allows visitors to increase their length of stay.

#### **Does the public pay for this service?**

The service is free for the public to use. There is no obligation to make a purchase at participating businesses

#### **Are the toilets clean and well maintained?**

Businesses and organisations participating in the scheme agree to keep their toilets clean, well maintained, safe and easily accessible.

#### **Are businesses / organisations paid for this service?**

There is generally an annual payment made to participants in return for allowing the public to use their facilities.<sup>2</sup> This amount is variable across different schemes  
Payment of public liability insurance should be agreed between the parties

#### **What kinds of businesses are likely to participate in the scheme?**

Pubs, restaurants, cafes, community centres, shops, supermarkets, council offices libraries and museums, transport hubs and hotels

#### **Who ensures that there is a range of facilities available and the standards of the facilities on offer?**

The Council. The Council should have a monitoring procedure in place to ensure the facilities in the Scheme are - and continue to be - suitable

The businesses involved should have an agreement with the Council to keep the facilities well maintained.<sup>3</sup> Spot checks must be carried out periodically

Councils should make it clear that businesses can refuse admission to their premises

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<sup>1</sup> *Improving Public Access to Toilets: Guidance on Community Toilet Schemes and SatLav* Communities and Local Government [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk) November 2008

<sup>2</sup> Ibid: ‘Community Toilet Scheme Self-Billing Agreement’

<sup>3</sup> Ibid: ‘Public Use of Private Toilet Facilities Agreement’ & ‘Terms and Conditions of Community Toilet Scheme’ & ‘Member Statement’

**Do the facilities include toilets for disabled people and baby changing areas?**

Not every business will include such facilities but the Council should ensure that an adequate number of publicly accessible units are available and that they are clearly signposted

**Are all facilities available at all times?**

Not necessarily. However a good Community Toilet Scheme will have facilities available at all times of the day and sufficient cover during the evening

**How does the public know where to find Community Toilet Scheme facilities?**

Businesses display prominent window/door signs to indicate their involvement in the Scheme and the Council installs suitable street signage to clearly indicate that the scheme is in operation – or the location of a single specific facility

Staff of participating businesses should be aware of the Scheme and the need to ensure that the public has an unrestricted access

Councils should promote the scheme by providing leaflets and maps in public buildings describing the Scheme and the location of participating businesses

**How do we set up a Community Toilet Scheme?<sup>4</sup>**

- Conduct a feasibility study to gain a level of support for a scheme
- Obtain support/assurances from participating businesses / organisations
- Develop a wide network ensuring coverage of key areas
- Publicise the Scheme (local media/signboards/leaflets/maps/displays)
- Operate the Scheme (briefing all council employees; setting up spot-checks)
- Monitor and Evaluate the Scheme

**ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

*A Community Toilet Scheme can only be successful if:*

- 1 It is properly managed by the Council – and careful selection and monitoring of the selected sites is undertaken
- 2 It receives the full support of the Council at inception – and a long-term contract / budget is agreed
- 3 The Council maintains adequate public toilet provision in addition to the Scheme to cope with closures, holidays and the night time economy
- 4 The Council promotes the Scheme eg via a local toilet map; the Council website; Tourist Information Offices, public buildings.....
- 5 The Council provides additional toilet provision when there are major events that might cause problems with increased footfall / demand

*A Community Toilet Scheme will not be successful if:*

- 1 The Council closes its public toilets and expects the Community Toilet Scheme participants to take full responsibility for toilet demand
- 2 Participating shops and companies (a) close and move away (b) only remain open during business hours (c) close for public holidays
- 3 Signage is poor or there is a 'no signage' store policy eg M&S; BHS
- 4 No additional toilet provision is made during events, festivals etc as many shops will struggle to cope with the demand.

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Public Toilets UK [www.facebook.com/ptukcampaign](http://www.facebook.com/ptukcampaign) wishes to acknowledge the assistance of The British Toilet Association [www.britloos.co.uk](http://www.britloos.co.uk) in compiling this document

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid