

Bristol Pole Championships

Competitor Guidebook 2026

Welcome to the Bristol Pole Championships (BPC) Guidebook!

Here you can find everything (that we could think of anyway), that would be useful for our competition entries and what we're all about.

Please have a read through of our lovingly prepared document and if you still can't find what you're looking for, drop us an email at BristolPoleChampionships@gmail.com.

As always, feedback is welcomed with open arms, so if you see something that doesn't seem quite right, or if you require the information in a different format, please let us know.

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The Venue

Here's some information we thought you'd ought to know:

- The live final is being held on Saturday 12th September 2026 at 1532 Performing Arts Centre, Elton Road, Bristol, BS8 1SJ.
- The competition will consist of six categories. The Showcase category will not be judged or have a category winner.
- The venue has a capacity of 245 seated.
- The venue is wheelchair accessible for both audience and competitors, including lifts and accessible facilities. A separate dressing room will be available for those who require a quiet space. Front row seats can be reserved on request to those with access requirements. Performers can detail access requirements in the application form however, if you have any questions about access or want to discuss this further please email us.

Directions

The Centre is just off Clifton Triangle on Elton Road.

There is on-street chargeable parking directly outside the venue and on adjacent roads. Charges may apply so please check signage. There are also nearby car parks located on Trenchard Street and Jacob Wells Road. Please see the [venue's website](#) for accessible parking booking.

2026 Timeline

Dates	Milestone
24th Jan - 24th March	Competitor video entry period
28th March - 25th April	Judging period
2 nd May - 30th May	Moderation period
27th May - 10th June	Moderator feedback and final checks
Week commencing 15th June	Finalists announced
12th September	Live Final

Categories

Each category is open to any level. We just ask that you feel comfortable and safe in the moves and transitions you wish to include.

Theatre

This is for all you theatrical lovers. Grab your best props and get thinking of a great story for this category. This is all about the entertainment factor. Give the audience the best time of their lives and a performance they will never forget.

Powerhouse

This category is all about the wow factor. Think big, bold, powerful moves, high energy, badass vibes, showing off your skills and just having a great time on stage. Whether you love fast-paced, trick-based or explosive movements, put on a show!

Stripper Style (SS) Inspired

One for all you SS and filth lovers. Here's the good stuff!

Whether you want to channel seductive slink, show off your tantalising twerk, tease us with mesmerising strip or just writhe around on the floor, this category is for you. Connect with your inner sensuality and our audience.

Expressive

Feel like you don't fit in a box? You don't have to! In fact, climb out and stand on top of it. Crush it to the ground! This is all about you! Show us what dancing and movement is to you. Feel free to incorporate other dance styles into your piece or make up your own. Move how your body wants to and captivate our audience.

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Freestyle

Like to live in the moment and connect with your audience and the music? This category is for you. Leading up to the competition, we will hold online surveys and build up playlists to fit each genre of music. On the day, we will ask you to pick a song out of a 'hat' and give it a listen before you head on stage. Show us the magic! This does not require a video entry. Names will be drawn at random out of a 'hat' from the applicants.

Showcase

Love to dance, but the stress of competitions is too much? Enter our Showcase category. This is for people wanting to perform and not compete. This does not require a video entry. Names will be drawn out of a 'hat' from the applicants. Performers can decide if they would like to receive feedback from our judges, but there will be no award given for this category.

Extra notes

- Double acts are welcome to enter any category.
- Each category is open to any human being(s) over the age of 18.
- All the above category descriptions are a guide to help you find the right fit. If you are unsure where you would place, please reach out to us to discuss.
- Please submit a video entry closest to the category you are entering.
- The top 5 scoring applicants will be offered a space at the live final.
- In the Freestyle and Showcase categories, video entries are not applicable. All entrants will be entered into a draw and selected at random.

Mark Scheme

The BPC mark scheme is broken down below. This is to give competitors, moderators and judges a guide on what marks to expect for each component.

Score / Mark	Description
0	Extremely poor. Unsafe performance and major adjustments required.
1 - 2	Poor. Major adjustments required.
3 - 4	OK. Below average. Some things of good merit, balanced with a number of noticeable faults.
5	Average. Neither poor or great.
6 - 7	Great. Only a couple of adjustments required, but nothing major.
8 - 9	Excellent performance. Only minor adjustments.
10	Outstanding. No adjustments. Only awarded for top performances.

Where scores / marks are tiered, for example, 6-7, judges will need to refer to the description of the score and award either a top or low mark, such as lower end of great or higher end of great.

No decimal points will be awarded.

BPC Scoring

The BPC scoring system is made up of three parts. Core Element, Multiplier Bonus and Category Bonus all totalling the final score.

Core element + multiplier bonus + category bonus = total scoring

Every category will be judged on the three Core Elements (concept connection and movement). A multiplier bonus is then added to one of the core elements that aligns with the category (doubling a chosen Core Element score). Finally, each category will also have its own individual set of scoring, which is the Category Bonus. The Category Bonus criteria will differ for each category, but all categories will have a total of 50 marks

Extra Notes

- This scoring system will be used for both video rounds and the live final.
- The Freestyle category does not require a video application.
- The Showcase Category will not be marked, however if you would like feedback from the judges, you can opt-in before the live final, otherwise feedback will not be offered as a standard.

Core Elements - 30 marks maximum

Below each of the three Core Elements are outlined: Concept, Connection and Movement.
These are what our judges and moderator will be looking for in both the final and video round.

Concept - 10 marks maximum

- Does the competitor's performance give a wow factor?
- Is the piece memorable?
- Is the concept / performance original?
- True to the category description?
- Does the overall idea/theme, costume and music fit well together?
- Have they used the space to complement and benefit their routine?

Connection - 10 marks maximum

- Is the competitor engaging with the audience?
- Can you feel their stage presence, confidence and energy throughout the performance?
- Do they take advantage of changes in music and moments of expression?
- Does the competitor have confidence and intention in their movement and tricks?

Movement - 10 marks maximum

- Does the competitor convey musicality?
- Do they use the tempo changes and tones of music to enhance their piece?
- Are they using an interesting technique or movements executed safely?
- Does the competitor control each movement?
- Do they demonstrate a variety of moves, poses and transitions?
- If a doubles act, we will also be looking at synchronisation.

Extra Notes

Please note, that heels can be worn in any category and are not compulsory in the SS Inspired category. If you wish to wear heels, you will also be judged on safe heel technique.

Costume is only considered for the live final.

Competitors will not be judged on the amount of tricks or difficulty of tricks used in their performance - if they are used, then you will be judged on your confidence in the tricks and safe technique. We will be focusing more on the performance and energy you can bring to the stage.

Category Bonus - 10 marks maximum

Below each category is listed with the applicable Category Bonus.

This is all about your movement quality, suitability to your category and how well your performance is perceived overall.

Theatre

- Does the competitor tell a clear storyline or message?
- Have they incorporated props both interesting in nature and use?
- Have they used props throughout and not just discarded them?
- Is there a clear beginning, middle and end or do they display highs and lows in their performance?
- Is their performance entertaining, does it provoke emotion and leave a memorable experience?

(Props are not mandatory for this category, but highly recommended to help portray your story / message).

Powerhouse

- Does the competitor display dynamic or explosive movements?
- Does the competitor portray a powerful presence / piece?
- Are moves and tricks carried out with ease?
- Do the moves and tricks link well together?
- Are the tricks suited to their performance?

SS Inspired

- Does the competitor display sex appeal?
- Is their performance true to stripper style and the style they wish to portray? ie. Strip, Twerk.

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- Do they tease the audience, use eye contact or body language and draw attention to parts of their body?
- Has their performance left you wanting more?

Expressive

- Does the competitor incorporate other dance styles into their piece?
- Does the competitor explore a range of alternative movements?
- Is their piece unique and innovative?
- Does their performance provoke emotion from the audience or move the audience?

Freestyle

- Did the competitors performance link together?
- Did they display fluidity between moves/transitions?
- Were their movements intentional?
- Do they show a variety of moves and transitions and keep repetition minimal?

Freestyle will only be judged at the live final.

As the Showcase category is not being marked, there will be no Category Bonus.

Multiplier Bonus - 10 marks max

The Multiplier Bonus doubles the score of one chosen Core Element most suited to the category. There is a maximum of 10 marks available for this.

Below you can find the different Core Elements, their Multiplier Bonus, which categories this applies to and how the scoring is calculated.

Core element multiplier for each Category

Category	Core element multiplier bonus
Theatre	Connection
Powerhouse	Concept
SS Inspired	Connection
Expressive	Concept
Freestyle	Movement

Concept Core Element Example

Below is an example of the Expressive and Powerhouse category score sheet.

Core Element	Mark	Multiplier Bonus	Total Mark
Concept	5	x 2	10
Connection	3	N/A	3
Movement	4	N/A	4
Category Bonus	5	N/A	5

Core element score (including concept multiplier bonus) = 20

Category Bonus = 5

Final Score = 25

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Connection Core Element

Below is an example of the Theatre and SS Inspired category score sheet.

Core Element	Mark	Multiplier Bonus	Total Mark
Concept	7	N/A	7
Connection	6	x 2	12
Movement	8	N/A	8
Category Bonus	8	N/A	8

Core element score (including connection multiplier bonus) = 27

Category Bonus = 8

Final Score = 35

Movement Core Element

Below is an example of the Freestyle category score sheet.

Core Element	Mark	Multiplier Bonus	Total Mark
Concept	6	N/A	6
Connection	5	N/A	5
Movement	6	x 2	12
Category Bonus	4	N/A	4

Core element score (including movement multiplier bonus) = 23

Category Bonus = 4

Final Score = 27

Rules & Reqs

General

Double acts and heels are welcome to enter any category.

Human props are allowed in any category, however are not allowed to assist with pole work. You must use your own human props and cannot use the BPC Team.

Entrants must be 18 or over at the time of the event.

Legal names will be required on applications and will not be shared. An option to enter stage names and pronouns will be provided also.

Competitors may enter and compete in more than one category. If you are offered a space in one of the 5 judged categories, you will not be offered a space in the Showcase category if your name is drawn and another performer will be drawn instead.

You must be available for the live final on the 12th September 2026.

If you require any adjustments during the application process and / or the live final due to a health condition, disability or neurodiversity, please disclose this on the application form. This will be taken into account on your judging feedback and you will not be penalised.

Should anyone require any further support during our event or application process, please do not hesitate to contact us via email.

The scoring and judging criteria are the same for both video and live final, with some exceptions:

- Costume will not be taken into account during the video round.
- The Freestyle category will not require a video on the application and therefore will not be judged until the live final.
- The Showcase category will not be judged throughout the process. Performers can request feedback, but must do so ahead of the live final.

The application scores of the finalists will not be shared, but will be made available on request of the competitor after the live final. Live final scoring will be shared publicly when results are announced.

You must display pole work in your performances for both live final and video entry. This may consist of low flow, pole assisted floor work or tricks.

You will not be judged on the complexity of tricks used. Our judges will be looking at the safety, intention and quality of tricks performed if used.

First and second place will be awarded to the competitors with the top 2 highest marks in each category along with a cash prize (excluding Showcase).

We will not accept offensive, abusive, discriminatory music or music by artists that have caused harm or hold values that do not align with our own. Explicit language is allowed, however if your song contains racial slurs, this will need to be bleeped out - this is not applicable for black performers.

Please see below for specific live final and video round rules.

Video Entries

Please submit a video entry closest to the category you are entering. Your video must be no older than a year old and can be same or different to your final piece / concept.

Video submitted must be one continuous piece. This means no editing, zooming or overlay of music (unless it is a professional video from a previous performance). Video must be of good quality; our judges need to be able to hear and see you in frame at all times. Please ensure only you and your human prop(s) if applicable are visible (no people in the background).

Videos must be uploaded to Vimeo, Google Drive or Youtube. Ensure this is set to unlisted or public. Our judges will be unable to view your application if the video is private.

You may use spin / static / both and one or two poles for your entry.

You will be judged solely on your video application. Videos must be between 2:30 - 3:30 minutes. You may submit a longer video, however your video will not be judged passed the 3:30 mark.

Live Final

The final will use two 45mm poles installed on a Truss. The poles will be approx 2.5m apart and have an approx height of 3.2m.

As if you are facing the audience, the right pole will be static and left will be on spin. The stage is not lifted and is open-floor up to the judges table with plenty of floor space. You can use one or both poles.

Song selections are on a first come first serve basis. If another competitor has already submitted the song you have chosen, you will be asked to submit an alternative.

Performances must be between 3-4 minutes.

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Competitors are able to remove clothing during their performance, but must wear nipple pasties and a thong as minimum.

If you experience a wardrobe malfunction during your performance, you will not be marked down for this. However, if it is apparent that your outfit doesn't fit correctly and adjustments are being made continuously throughout your performance, judges will take this into consideration.

Please avoid costumes that may damage the poles.

Props can be used in any category. These must be a quick set-up/clean-up, no longer than 2 minutes.

We will not accept; live fire and / or animals, weapons or dangerous items, offensive material. If you are unsure on your props, please email us to clarify.

Human props and chaperones must buy a ticket to the live final. If you require a carer or support for assistance, please email us in advance so we can allocate a space.

Grip aids are allowed, however please be considerate and only use brands that won't stick to the pole. We recommend chalk based grip. If you are unsure, please email us.

Please avoid using tan, moisturiser and lotions. Ensure these are washed off before using the poles.

Competitors must not be under the influence of drugs and / or alcohol during the live event. You must warm up appropriately prior to your performance. Anyone not fit enough to perform will be asked to withdraw.

Competitors are able to join the audience and spectate their own category if they wish.

Competitors will be offered the choice to purchase videos and photos post event. Further details will be shared on how to purchase these post-event.

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The Finer Details

Here's all the important bits and terms and conditions!

Competitors must be available to attend the live final on the 12th September 2026 at 1532 Performing Arts Centre, Elton Road, Bristol, BS8 1SJ.

In order for your application to be fully completed, both application form and payment must be received before the deadline 22:00 GMT on the 24th March 2026.

Payments are to be made via bank transfer. Details will be available once your application form has been submitted via our website www.BristolPoleChampionships.co.uk.

We offer a 'pay now, submit later' scheme. You can pay the fee and submit your application first, with the option to email your video link separately before the deadline. Your application will not be complete until both payment and application form have been submitted.

Payments are non-refundable and non-transferable.

Competitor live final information

Arrival times, running order and stage practice times will be confirmed with competitors nearer the event.

A Google Drive will be shared with competitors containing competition information, photos of the venue and other general bits for the day.

What does your application fee cover?

This goes towards the venue, detailed feedback from our expert judges, fair working wages for our staff, equipment and allows us to offer low-income applications and tickets to those who need it.

Disqualifications

Applicants found discussing the application process with our judges, threatening or bribing our judges will be disqualified from the competition and future years. Our judges will report this to the comp organiser and the moderator will be made aware.

Anyone found to be creating an unsafe environment, causing harm to staff or other competitors will be asked to leave.

How we use your information

Any information submitted to us will be kept confidential between the admin team. We will collect personal information in order to contact you for necessary information (mentioned below) and to contact next of kin if required.

Judges will be sent your video along with stage names (if being used) and any health conditions if flagged previously. Our moderator will receive the same information.

We will not use your information to send any marketing and you will only be contacted in regards to your application, comp entered and post comp information (photos, videos, feedback).

We will only keep this information only for as long as we need to, however if you would like us to dispose of this, please email us to do so, in line with GDPR. We are still required to keep some data for administrative and security purposes.

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How To Apply

Applications are to be completed via a form on our website www.BristolPoleChampionships@gmail.com and will be available via the 'Application Form' page, visible from the 24th January 2026.

Entry fees per entry are below:

Solo £40

Low-income / SWer Solo £30

Doubles £64

Low-income / SWer Doubles £46

Our Freestyle and Showcase applications are selected at random. Therefore an admin rate only of £15 is applicable to apply. If you are chosen, you will then need to pay the remaining application fee to take part in the final. If the remaining fee is not paid, the space will be offered to the next person. See below for pricing.

Freestyle / Showcase applicants will be selected w/c 15th June via a live draw to be announced on our socials.

Showcase / Freestyle applicant type	Application / Admin fee	Remaining fee if chosen
Solo	£15	£25
Low-income / SWer Solo	£15	£15
Doubles	£15	£49
Low-income / SWer Doubles	£15	£31

Each application will be screened before the judging period to ensure we can access the video. Should we require a new link, we will email you and a new video link must be submitted before the final deadline. Any videos sent in the final 24 hours will not be screened and if the link is inaccessible, will be deemed as a failed application.

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Pay now, submit later scheme

We offer a pay now, submit later scheme. If you want to make sure you have an application place submitted, but still want to work on a video, this option is available.

(Your application will not be complete until both payment and application form have been received).

Please complete all information and include a link to your video. This will need to be uploaded to either YouTube or Vimeo. Please ensure your video is not set to 'Private', otherwise our judging team will be unable to view your video.

Application support scheme (SWers / Low-income)

New for 2026, this scheme will be funded by sponsor donations, offering the chance for a free entry for SWers / Low-income applicants only.

When applying, applicants have the choice to use for this scheme, up until the 7th March.

(Video links can still be sent until the comp entry deadline of 22:00 GMT 24th March).

On the 8th March, the successful applicants will be chosen in a random draw. Those not selected will be informed and will need to pay the entry fee as standard if they wish to proceed with their application entry.

Please note, applying for this scheme does not guarantee you a free entry. As this scheme is funded by sponsor donations, spaces are limited.

Thank You!

We've poured our heart and soul into creating this competition, guidebook and everything in between.

We hope that you are just as passionate about the contents of this guidebook and our BPC values as we are.

Thank you for taking the time to read through this document and we hope that you are now ready to start your competitor journey with us.

We would also like to thank all of the consultants who have contributed to the development of this document. Your experience and knowledge is invaluable and helps us strive to a more diverse and whole community.

As always, if you have any questions, concerns or would like to chat more about BPC, please drop us an email at BristolPoleChampionships@gmail.com.

Remember, have fun!

Lots of love,
BPC