

BOTHERED BY NOISE?



Noise from neighbours is a common source of disturbance and persistent noise nuisance is a form of anti-social behaviour. People who cause disturbance are often unaware of the effect that their actions are having on their neighbours.

Remember that no house or flat is totally soundproof and so it is not possible to stop all noise from travelling between attached properties so everyone can expect some noise from the people who live around them. There is some confusion about when noise is and isn't acceptable. It is not true that people can make as much noise as they like up until 11pm. A nuisance can be caused at any time of the day.

Before you contact the council to complain about noise, approach your neighbour and explain politely what is disturbing you. Most will be glad to do what they can to reduce noise. However, approach the matter carefully if you think your neighbour might react angrily to a complaint. You may choose to let them know by letter rather than face to face. In cases where you might feel threatened, or where previous personal approaches have not worked, contact the council directly.

If the problem continues, start a diary recording dates, times and cause of the noise, and the effects it has on you. Keep a record of any conversations you have or letters you write.

Noise Nuisance / Anti-Social Behaviour

If you contact the council about noise our Environmental Health Service will deal with your complaint. The Housing and Community Safety Team may also deal with the complaint if you or the subject of the complaint is a council tenant or there is an element of anti-social behaviour to the complaint. Firstly we will talk to those involved and try and see if the problem can be resolved through mediation. A letter will be sent to the person causing the disturbance to alert them to the fact that their behaviour is causing concern. In the vast majority of cases, a warning letter is sufficient to prevent further disturbance and most complaints are resolved in this manner. The council, together with its partner agencies is committed to tackling noise nuisance and anti-social behaviour. Sometimes it may be necessary to involve partner agencies such as Social Services, the Police and Probation Service to help deal with issues.

If talking does not resolve the issues, then the complainant would be asked to keep a record of what disturbs them. If these records show that the problem is still ongoing then Environmental Health would undertake monitoring.

If the noise is considered a nuisance a notice would be served on all those responsible for the noise. The notice explains what actions need to be taken to stop causing a nuisance. Not taking these actions may result in the matter going to court, where a fine may be ordered. If the nuisance continues Environmental Health may remove from the property any equipment which may be causing the nuisance e.g. TV's, stereos or even computers.



An Acceptable Behaviour Contract (ABC) may also be used to attempt to moderate a person's behaviour. Failure to comply with an ABC may result in the council seeking an Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) from the court.

The council will commence eviction proceedings against its tenants who consistently cause anti-social behaviour.

How to avoid causing a disturbance

Loud music and TV

- Keep the volume down; particularly in the evening and late at night.
 - Consider using headphones or listen to music on a personal device.
 - Place speakers away from partition walls, floors or ceilings. Try to place speakers on an insulating material such as thick rubber or foam to reduce sound passing through to your neighbours property.
 - Make sure the bass control is set at a low level.
 - Check if you are likely to be causing a disturbance to neighbours by going into another room in your property with the door shut. If you can clearly hear your music or TV, your neighbours are likely to be able to hear it too so turn the volume down.
 - Avoid playing music outside. If you are playing music outside keep it to a level that cannot be heard by your neighbours.
 - When playing music or watching TV keep your windows and doors shut.
 - If you are having a party, consider inviting the neighbours (or at least give them a telephone number to contact you on if they are being disturbed. Have the phone with you on vibrate during the party). Keep windows and doors shut, and keep the volume at a reasonable level.
- It is useful to step outside of your home when the party is happening, if you can hear the music it's too loud so turn it down. If someone complains, be polite and turn it down.



Dogs

- If your dog barks when in the garden don't let it go out alone and don't leave your dog to bark excessively.
- Don't leave your dog outside if it's barking to be let in and try not to leave it out when you aren't at home.
- If your dog barks at things outside your home keep it away from windows or shut blinds/curtains so it can't see people or other animals.
- If your dog barks at the same time every day, like when people in the home are going to work or school, try to keep it busy at that time.
- Try to keep your dog calm. If it barks when it's excited, don't play with it at sensitive times like at night.
- Ask a friend or relative to look after your dog when you go out, or take it with you.
- Exercise your dog before you go out. A tired dog barks less.
- A quiet radio can be used to keep your dog company if it barks when alone.



DIY noise

- Most people work during the day and so do DIY in the evenings and at weekends. Keep noisy activities to less sensitive hours e.g. 08.00 - 18.00 and avoid late evenings and early weekend mornings. Do the jobs that don't create noise during sensitive times.
- Let your neighbours know of any work you are about to do and how long it will take.

Laminate flooring/floorboards

- Avoid laminate flooring/floorboards if you live in a flat other than on the ground floor.
- Choose laminate flooring with acoustically treated backing.

Contact

For further advice please contact the Environmental Health Service on 01455 238141