

FACTSHEET

NEIGHBOUR DISPUTES

What are Neighbour Disputes?

Neighbour Disputes are where two neighbours disagree about something that then becomes a source of distress and frustration. It is common for both sides of the dispute to have done things to annoy the other person. As a result it can be difficult for agencies to unpick the situation and work out who is the victim and who is the perpetrator. Often both are victims and both are perpetrators.

Mediation is often the best way forward to get both sides to talk and try and find a way to resolve the issues. Both neighbours will need to agree to this and so it is not always possible to use this method. Where mediation is refused or unsuccessful, agencies may choose to take action against both parties to stop the problem.

Noise is a common reason for neighbour disputes - see our factsheets on Noise and Measuring Noise for more information about issues with noise and what makes it anti-social behaviour.

Gardens, hedges, parking, etc.

Sometimes there are disputes between neighbours over boundaries - garden hedges, trees and where you park your car. It is worth stating the law for these issues. These are common problems and not anti-social behaviour, unless being used as a form of harassment or intimidation.

Trees

If your neighbour's tree hangs over your property and it bothers you, ask them to trim it back. If the neighbour refuses and it is in a dangerous condition, ask the Council to get involved and deal with it. You can also check with your Council to see if the tree is subject to a tree preservation order - if it is, you could be fined for cutting it. Otherwise, you do have the right to trim the tree back to your boundary line but you must offer the trimmings back to your neighbour.

Hedges

If the height of your neighbour's hedge is too high, you should not cut it without seeking advice. The best way forward is to talk through the problem with your neighbour if you can, or try mediation. The same is true of fences and walls that are the boundary between your property and their property. Papers related to the house should stipulate who has responsibility for which boundaries.

FACTSHEET**Parking Spaces**

When it comes to parking your car, you do not have any rights to the section of road or pavement outside your property (unless there are local parking restrictions giving a right to a particular space). This means you do not have the right to park there yourself or prevent anyone else from doing so. You cannot put cones down to reserve the spot. You also cannot stop someone parking on your grassy verge if you have one. This can be very frustrating but there is nothing the Council can do about it. We would suggest you talk to the car owner kindly and ask them if they could leave the space for you to park, or avoid parking on the grass.

Obstruction

If someone else's car is blocking access to and from your property there are a number of steps you can take. The local authority and the police have general powers to remove vehicles that are illegally parked, causing an obstruction or have been abandoned. If it is an area with restrictions on who can park, then traffic wardens can enforce those restrictions by issuing fines. Again, you can check with your local authority about this.

These are a few of the things that can cause frustration and neighbour disputes. Our advice is to keep calm in dealing with these issues and keep a record of all incidents. For more information on how to tackle a problem yourself, see our factsheet [Tackling the Problem](#).