

FACTSHEET

NOISE DISTURBANCE

Noise disturbance such as noisy neighbours is by far the most common anti-social behaviour reported to the Police, Local Authorities and Housing Associations.

Report noise issues to the Environmental Health department of your Local Authority.

Don't let a situation get out of control – if not dealt with quickly, it can escalate and end up involving the Police.

Often we do not know our neighbours or even see them. This means it is much harder to talk to our neighbours about any noise they might be making that we think is unreasonable (see our factsheet Let's be Reasonable for an idea of what that might be).

Poor Insulation

Poor sound insulation is a problem in many homes. It often means you can hear domestic noise from your neighbour such as footsteps, talking, dropping objects or children playing. That can be stressful but it may be that you will have to learn to live with that noise because legally they are entitled to go about their life creating normal amounts of noise without having to worry about how it affects you.

Statutory Noise Nuisance

Noise that is unreasonable is:

- Loud noise after 11pm and before 7am
- Loud music and other household noise at an inappropriate volume at any time

If your neighbour is making a noise that is causing you distress we would **strongly recommend you DO NOT RETALIATE**. If you get into a 'tit-for-tat' situation (eg. They play loud music at 2am, so the next night you Hoover at 5am, so then the next day they start banging on the walls, etc.) it can quickly get out of control.

You will also find it much harder to get help from the authorities and an end to the problem because there is fault on both sides.

So what can I do?

When a problem with a neighbour starts, take note (using some form of diary sheet) of the date and time of the noise. Include a description of what the noise is, how long it lasts and how it made you feel. This will help build up evidence for your case.

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Neighbour disputes are often one person's word against another so it can be hard to prove. Speak to other residents to see if there are other people who can support your version of what is happening. You may need an independent witness to confirm that the noise is happening and that it is unreasonable. See our factsheet Tips for Getting Evidence page for more assistance on this.

Alternatively you could explore Mediation which can help both parties to work together to resolve the problems. More information can be found in our factsheet: Tackling the Problem.

Where the offender is vulnerable

Another area where you may struggle to see proper action taken is if the perpetrator of anti-social behaviour is a vulnerable adult. This is most commonly for people with mental health problems, learning difficulties or elderly. Agencies can be over-cautious about getting involved. A Community Trigger may end up being the most effective way to get the Mental Health Department involved so don't be scared to use it. See our Community Trigger factsheet for more information.

Focus on the issue rather than the person. The aim should be to STOP the anti-social behaviour, not make someone homeless through eviction. Both Injunctions and Community Protection Notices can be very specific in what behaviour they prohibit (and in the case of Injunctions require such as attendance on drug/alcohol rehab).

Agencies can use the legislation flexibly to protect vulnerable people but also stop ASB.

Other Noise

As well as noisy neighbours, there are many other types of noise that can be annoying and a big nuisance. They include:

- Construction noise
- Noise coming from businesses and industry including pubs and clubs
- Noise coming from alarms
- Excessive vehicle noise
- Constant dog barking (guard dogs as opposed to pets)

As with noisy neighbours, problems with these types of noise should be reported to the Environmental Health Department of your local council.

To find out more about how agencies measure noise, see our factsheet Measuring Noise.