



Raven
Housing Trust

Neighbourhood Noise

What to do when a complaint has been made about you

April 2023



Noise from neighbours is one of the most common reasons for disturbance in communities. The most frequent complaints we receive are about animal noise, loud music or TV, the banging of doors and cupboards, heavy footfall, or DIY activities.

Whilst everyone has the right to enjoy peace and quiet at home, it's not possible to make properties completely soundproof. So we should all be aware that there will always be some noise transfer between properties, especially places like flats where there's not as much space between homes.

The quality of sound insulation has changed over the years and, in older homes or where certain

building methods were used, you can often hear your neighbours more than you may want to. Examples such as footsteps, talking, dropping objects or children playing are everyday noise and there will be little that we or the local authority can do about them. Legally, neighbours are entitled to go about their life creating normal amounts of noise without having to worry about how it affects others.

What to do if you're approached by your neighbour about noise

1. The first thing you should try to do is stay calm. You may not realise that what you're doing is causing a noise disturbance in another property. Sometimes things such as children playing, or heavy items being dropped can cause quite a lot of disruption.

Knowing that someone is affected by your noise can be upsetting, but you shouldn't take it personally. By coming to you directly, the person may just wish to solve it with you informally. Consider what has been said to you, and if you think there is truth in it, quickly take steps to reduce the noise.

Make sure you keep a note of any discussions you have with your neighbours, including the dates and times they take place, and any agreements made, as this information may be needed later.

2. We understand that people have different lifestyles and may not feel entirely comfortable discussing things with their neighbour, in these cases we would encourage the use of mediation services.

Mediation is an effective way of resolving disputes without the need to go to court. It involves an independent third party - a mediator - who helps both sides come to an agreement.

Surrey:

Mediation Surrey

Website and online form:
www.mediationsurrey.org

Call: **0330 134 0260**

Sussex:

West Sussex Mediation Services

Website and online form:
www.wsm.org.uk

Call: **0300 200 0025**

We encourage people to try to resolve noise issues between themselves before contacting us. However, if the complainant alleges that the noise is continuing, we'll investigate, and an officer will contact those involved.

Tips on how to be a good neighbour

We often receive complaints about noise from loud music or TVs, DIY, barking dogs and sometimes household appliances or musical instrument practice. The best advice is to use common sense and try to be considerate of your neighbours.

- Reduce the bass or wear headphones
- Keep your music or TV volume as low as possible, especially late at night when people may be trying to sleep
- Put speakers away from adjoining walls and ideally on rubber mats

When you're at home:

- Avoid slamming cupboard doors, this can also be annoying, especially when on adjoining walls
- Soft close hinges or impact dampeners will reduce the chances of noise
- Avoid slamming doors, especially if you live in a flat with a shared entrance, and late at night or early in the morning

If you're planning a party or other celebration, then a one-off a party will rarely be a legal nuisance; however always try to be reasonable. If you can, let your neighbours know in advance and give an idea of what time it will finish. Let them know that they can come round if the noise is a problem.

Always act to reduce the noise if you receive complaints.

- Keep your windows and doors closed when having a party
- If you're having an outdoor party, remember that noise will travel and affect people further away
- Remember that noise is more likely to become a nuisance when people would generally be sleeping

Household noise:

We often receive reports of household noise causing a nuisance, this is usually caused by appliances such as washing machines, or from people installing wood/laminate flooring in flats.

- If you're considering installing wood / laminate flooring, check your tenancy agreement with us BEFORE starting the work. Unfortunately, installing wood / laminate flooring can make noise issues worse between flats and may be in breach of your tenancy agreement
- Try to choose a quieter model when looking for new appliances
- Position your washing machine on even, concrete floors
- Do not overload the machine. Run machines at a time when they will least disturb your neighbours. Remember, the final spin is the noisiest bit
- Try to be considerate when vacuuming - don't do it late at night or early in the morning



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