

Neighbours matter

Working together to make
a difference





Are you having problems with your neighbours?

If so, here are some things you can try to help sort out the problems and ways we may be able to help.

First of all, ask yourself the following questions:

Is my neighbour trying to upset or annoy me on purpose?

For example, playing loud music late at night and ignoring your requests to turn it down.

Is the problem beyond my neighbour's control?

For example, a baby crying continuously can be annoying but, it may be as upsetting for the parents. They may need help and support rather than a complaint.

Is my neighbour causing a nuisance or are they just different?

We don't choose our neighbours so there is always a chance that we just don't like them. It's important that if you don't like your neighbour you don't start to find fault with everything they do.

Have I had a disagreement or an argument with my neighbour?

For example, a disagreement over parking, children playing or a high hedge. No one likes to be told what to do or feel like they are being criticised.

Misunderstandings can lead to tension between neighbours, and turn into a dispute.

What can you do?

If possible, try to resolve the problem by talking to your neighbour in a reasonable and polite way. Make it as easy as you can for your neighbour to understand your point of view.

Although you may find this difficult or expect it to be a complete waste of time, it is better to reach an agreement if you can and it's surprising how many people do. Don't go round with the intention of giving your neighbour a piece of your mind. This could lead to an argument and will not help.

If you are bothered by noise, the first thing to do is to seriously consider if the noise really is unreasonable. It may be helpful to discuss it with family, friends or neighbours other than those responsible, before doing anything else.

If you are reporting noise, or other problems with your neighbour we would expect you to have tried to sort it out before reporting it if possible. Make a note of when you contacted your neighbour and their response as you may need this later to show that you have tried to resolve the problem.



What can we do?

While we encourage you to contact your neighbour yourself we understand that this approach will not be appropriate or successful in every case. If you do not feel comfortable approaching your neighbour, please let us know and we will decide what to do next under the circumstances.

If you believe that the problem should be dealt with confidentially we will discuss this with you. However, this may limit what we are able to do or if we can take any action at all.

The quickest and easiest way to report anti-social behaviour to us is through your customer portal or on our website at:

www.placesforpeople.co.uk

If your complaint involves threats of violence, actual violence and/or a hate crime, once you have contacted the Police, then you could contact us by calling our Customer Service Centre on **01772 667 002** to report the problem.

We help customers to resolve disputes with their neighbours. We only take formal action if we are satisfied that evidence can show that an individual or individuals have acted in an anti-social manner.

If you have a dispute with your neighbour and we are unable to find out the facts, we may suggest that both parties consider a face to face meeting with our trained staff. This meeting will only take place if both parties agree and want to find an answer to the problem.

Who else can help?

Crimes

If you suspect a crime is being or has been committed you should contact the Police by calling 101 or in an emergency 999. You should do this before contacting us. Even if the Police are not able to resolve the issue immediately it is important that they are aware of the problem. It helps them to know what the potential crime issues are in an area and focus resources.

Drugs and gangs in your neighbourhood

Drugs and gang-related activity can have a significant impact on communities, families and people.

If you are concerned about children or vulnerable people being involved in a gang it is really important that you report this to the Police.

Police resources are targeted at neighbourhoods with high reports.

You can contact the Police on **101** or in an emergency **999**.

If you want to report your concerns anonymously, you can call Crimestoppers on **0800 555 111**.

CrimeStoppers are an independent charity and guarantee anonymity when reporting crimes.

Noise

Noise is a normal part of our daily lives, but too much noise is not. It can be annoying for many people and a serious problem for some. Noise is the biggest problem that our customers report to us.

Normal everyday noise heard next door would not be classed as a noise nuisance and we would not usually investigate it. We expect customers to show tolerance and understanding towards their neighbours.

For issues relating to environmental or amplified noise we would advise you to contact your Local Authority Environmental Services Department. They have duty to investigate noise pollution from industrial, commercial, neighbour and neighbourhood sources.

Some may have an out of hours service, meaning that they may be able to personally witness the noise late at night or the early hours of the morning.

They can provide help and advice about noise from the following:

- alarms, including vehicle alarms
- barking dogs
- construction and demolition sites
- deliveries, or waste/recycling collections at commercial premises
- noisy neighbours including music
- noisy equipment in the street
- pubs and clubs
- ventilation, air conditioning equipment, or other noisy equipment in commercial and industrial premises

Local authorities have a wide range of legal powers to act against noise and noisy neighbours. Under the law, local authorities have a duty to deal with any noise that they consider to be what's known as a 'statutory nuisance'. Under the Noise Act 1996 and the Environmental Protection Act 1990, a council has powers to seize noisemaking equipment and issue financial penalties to those responsible.

Through the ASB Crime and Policing Act 2014, Local Authorities can issue Community Protection Notices and Community Protection Orders. If breached they can carry fines and are very effective.

Powers granted to your Local Authority can also be used to tackle rough sleeping.

If you wish, you could take your own civil action through the Courts. You will need legal advice and you will probably want to talk to Citizens Advice Bureau or seek other legal advice from a solicitor.

You can report a noise problem on our website www.placesforpeople.co.uk or you can telephone our Customer Contact Centre on **01772 667 002**.



What if a neighbour complains about you?

If you receive a complaint about your behaviour from a neighbour please take it seriously. The fact that someone complains means that it is an issue for them.

If they approach you directly please be prepared to discuss the problem with them reasonably and politely. Try to listen to their concerns and discuss ways to resolve the problem.

If you have points you want to make, remain calm and be polite.

If we contact you about a complaint from your neighbour, it doesn't mean that we agree with your neighbour. We are just letting you know that there has been a complaint and asking you to think about what you can do help stop it being a problem.



Tips to be a good neighbour

Know your neighbours

- Speak to your neighbour regularly and be nice to your new neighbours for example, welcoming them when they move in next door.
- Think about your neighbour's routines and what their schedules might be like. For example, if your neighbours work nights, quiet mornings will be important to them. If they have young children, quiet evenings will be very important to them.
- Remember that you are responsible for all members of your household including visitors both in your home and surrounding areas.

Parties

- Consider inviting your neighbours – or let them know well in advance.
- Keep the volume of the music down, with windows and doors closed.
- If the party spreads outdoors, make sure any music outside is only heard in your own property.

Home Improvements

- Let neighbours know beforehand if you are doing noisy jobs, using power tools or working on shared walls.
- Carry out noisy work during the day and try to agree times with your neighbours.
- Complete work as quickly as possible.



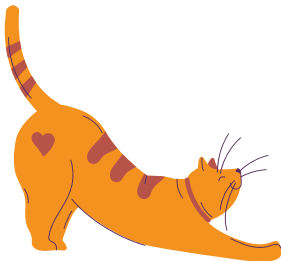
Tips to be a good neighbour (continued)

Communal areas

- If you need to pass through communal areas late at night or early in the morning make sure you do so quietly – remember your neighbours might be sleeping.

Pets

- Make sure your pets are happy and quiet.
- Keep dogs indoors if they bark when alone or disturbed.
- If your dog barks when it's alone, try to find someone to look after it, or visit when you are out.
- Try leaving a radio on at a low level to help keep your dog calm when you are out.



Rubbish

- Dispose of your rubbish properly. Only put your rubbish out on the day it is due for collection. If you accidentally miss the collection bring your bin back in. Rubbish can attract vermin, insects and other pests.





We hope these simple tips will make a difference and help build a happy community.

How to get in touch

You can contact us online:

www.placesforpeople.co.uk

or by telephone on:

01772 667 002

Lines are open Monday to Friday
from 8am to 8pm (excluding bank holidays).

Our phone service is available outside of the
above hours for emergency repairs only.

Please note: calls to local numbers may be
cheaper or included in your call package.

Always check with your provider.

