

# NOISE PROBLEMS & WHAT YOU CAN DO

Some ways you can help prevent and resolve noise disturbance.



Noise from neighbours is common and can cause stress and annoyance, stop you sleeping, and can affect your quality of life.

We understand how distressing noise nuisance can be and it is important to try and resolve noise problems as soon as possible.

## Noisy neighbours

We all make some level of noise around our homes, whether we are talking or laughing, watching TV, playing music or just doing housework.

No house or flat is totally soundproof, so we will often hear each other going about our daily lives. We cannot stop people making general living noises.

Sometimes people disturb others without realising their behaviour might not be reasonable. At other times, people disturb others because they live a different lifestyle, such as working night shifts.

We all have to accept that some noise will always happen.

# Practical tips to keep noise down

Here are some simple, practical ways to reduce the amount of noise disturbance we cause our neighbours:

- Keep the volume down on TVs and music systems.
- Avoid slamming doors.
- Fit soft-close systems to doors.
- Make children aware that their noise can disturb others.
- Do the vacuuming at a reasonable time.
- Fit thick underlay and carpets.
- Arrange speakers away from partition walls and floors, and keep the bass turned down.
- Tell your neighbours beforehand if you are going to have a one-off party, and give them an idea of when the party will finish.
- Tell your neighbours before you start a DIY job and try to work at a time that will be least disturbing to them.
- Use noisy household appliances and DIY tools at reasonable times.
- Keep noisy appliances away from partition walls wherever possible.
- Make sure your washing machine and tumble drier are fitted correctly and where possible fit them with a pad or stand that absorbs noise and vibration.

# What to do if you have a problem with noise

## The first step

If the noise disturbance is not serious, speak to your neighbour if you feel you can. Explain the problem calmly and politely. You may find that your neighbour is not even aware that the noise they make is bothering you.

## Reporting the noise disturbance to Staffs Housing

### What we will do

Your Housing Officer will decide if an investigation into the noise nuisance is needed and agree with you how they will deal with it. We'll need to gather evidence in a range of ways, which may include speaking to other neighbours. If we need to, we will then take action.

### What we expect you to do

It is important that we have accurate, detailed information about noise incidents so that we can investigate this. We need to find out how often incidents occur, whether there are any patterns of behaviour and how severe the incidents are.

We also expect you to work with us during the investigation to provide evidence. We will ask you to record any incidents of noise, usually by filling in daily record sheets or an 'incident diary'.

If you don't want to give evidence to support your complaint, we will not be able to investigate or take action.

### Anonymity

If you make a complaint about someone, we do not tell them it was you unless you agree to this beforehand. However, sometimes it will be obvious who has complained. If this is the case, your Housing Officer will discuss it with you before they take any action.

## When Staffs Housing can and cannot take action

What we are able to do about your noise complaint depends on whether or not it is classed as 'actionable'.

If the noise you are disturbed by is classed as 'Statutory Noise Nuisance', we will be able to take action about it.

Usually, Statutory Noise Nuisance is something that interferes with your enjoyment of your home or is a regular disturbance that is unreasonable.

There are occasions when we cannot take action. If this is the case, your Housing Officer will explain why and advise you on what else you can do.

### What is classed as Statutory Noise Nuisance

The Environmental Protection UK states that all of the following have to be considered to decide if the noise is Statutory Noise Nuisance:

- Disturbance
- Loudness
- Length of time
- Frequency
- Time of day
- Locality

### What is not classed as Statutory Noise Nuisance

While the following behaviours can cause disturbance, they are not considered to be Statutory Noise Nuisance under the law:

- A one-off party
- Neighbours arguing
- Slamming doors
- Washing machine vibrating
- Neighbours talking
- Snoring
- Children crying
- Dog barking occasionally
- Lawnmower during the day
- Children playing

## What we can do if your complaint is 'actionable'

### Enforcement tools and powers

Most tenancy agreements state that tenants must not cause a disturbance to their neighbours. If someone breaches their tenancy repeatedly, we can act.

In serious cases this may mean taking legal action where the tenant is forbidden to keep causing the nuisance, or we could take them to court where they may lose their home.

If we take someone to court who you have complained about, you may need to attend court and give evidence. If this happens we will support you throughout the process.

## What we can do if your complaint is not 'actionable'

### Mediation

Noise disputes can often be resolved through mediation. This is a voluntary process where you and your neighbour both agree to meet with someone from Staffs Housing and discuss the issues.

The aim is to find a solution which both you and your neighbour are happy with. We do this by listening, supporting and guiding both you and your neighbour.

Mediation is not about deciding who is right and who is wrong, or about what should or should not have happened in the past. It is about finding a way of making things work for both of you in the future.

## Complaining to your local council

The Environmental Health Department at your local council has a legal duty to advise and assist you with noise issues.

If you complain to them and they decide the noise is a Statutory Noise Nuisance, they can serve an 'Abatement Notice' on the person making the noise.

An Abatement Notice is a legal document requiring the person to stop or restrict the noise. Breaching this notice without reasonable cause is a criminal offence and could lead to a fine of £5,000, plus an extra £500 for each day the offence continues after conviction.

Local authorities also have the power enter a home and seize any equipment or articles used to cause a noise nuisance.

## Summary

- We take all noise complaints seriously.
- We will respond to noise nuisance complaints promptly and effectively.
- Where possible we will try to ensure that all residents can enjoy their homes without experiencing problems from their neighbours.
- We will work with other agencies to help reduce nuisance whenever appropriate.
- We will investigate complaints and take action wherever we can if a complaint is 'actionable'.
- When dealing with noise nuisance, we cannot make exceptions based on an individual's increased sensitivity to noise, or based on a clash of lifestyles.

**Email: [hello@staffshousing.org.uk](mailto:hello@staffshousing.org.uk)**

**Call: 01782 744533**

**[www.staffshousing.org.uk](http://www.staffshousing.org.uk)**

Staffs Housing, 308 London Road, Stoke on Trent, ST4 5AB

We're open from 8.30 - 5.30 Monday to Friday.

Facebook | Twitter | YouTube



Staffs Housing is part of the Honeycomb Group



VAT Reg. No 687901881. A society registered under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 - Reg. No 17093R.  
Member of the National Housing Federation. HCA Reg. No. LH2162.  
Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FRN 1000707)