

**Problem:** Your dog is barking to get attention.

**Solution:** Look at your dog, and then look away to show you're not going to respond. Don't give it any attention – or anything else – while it's barking. Try deliberately ignoring it for 20-30 minutes two or three times a day and get everyone in the house to do the same. Doing this for 15 minutes before you go out can help stop your dog barking when you leave. A vet, animal behaviourist or dog warden may be able to give you advice.

**Problem:** You went out without taking your dog for a walk and it's barking through frustration.

**Solution:** Wear different clothes for walking your dog. Leave your dog's lead where it can see it; so if you're leaving without taking the lead the dog will know that it's not going with you.

#### What *not* to do

- Don't punish your dog. It might mistake it for attention and it could also make it more anxious.
- Don't ignore the problem thinking it will just go away.
- Don't get a second dog unless you're sure it's going to make your dog feel more secure, not less.

**Keep your neighbours informed about what you're doing to stop the barking.**

#### If the problem doesn't get resolved

If you don't take steps to solve the problem and Harrogate Borough Council receives complaints about the noise your dog is making, the authority will investigate the complaint. We may seek to resolve the problem informally between you and the complainants, and recommend the services of Arch Mediation to assist you in this matter. But where such mediation is unsuccessful, and the authority is satisfied that the noise amounts to a statutory nuisance, we will serve you with an abatement notice requiring the noise to be reduced to an acceptable level.

If you fail to comply with an abatement notice, you could face prosecution and if convicted a fine of up to £5,000 (and possibly further daily fines of up to £500 for each day on which the offence continues after conviction).

For more information and advice about why your dog barks and what you can do about it:

Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors (APBC)  
P O Box 46  
Worcester  
WR8 9YS  
Tel: 01386 751151  
www.apbc.org.uk  
Send an SAE for a list of APBC members

You can also talk to the Environmental Protection team at Harrogate Borough Council

Environmental Protection  
Harrogate Borough Council  
Springfield House  
Kings Road  
Harrogate  
HG1 5NX  
Tel: 01423 556633  
Fax: 01423 556820  
www.harrogate.gov.uk  
Email: environmentalprotection@harrogate.gov.uk

If you wish to seek mediation contact

Arch Mediation  
Knaresborough House  
High Street  
Knaresborough  
HG5 0HW  
Tel: 01423 868782  
Fax: 01423 869815  
sarchmediation@harrogate.gov.uk

**IS YOUR DOG  
BARKING  
TOO MUCH?**



# Is your dog barking too much?

## Is your dog barking too much?

It's normal and natural for dogs to bark; but when barking happens a lot or goes on for a long time, it can be annoying and upsetting for your neighbours. If you're out a lot, or you're just used to the noise, you might not realise just how bad it is.

This leaflet is designed to help you work with your neighbours to sort out any problems caused by your dog barking. It will also help you understand why your dog barks and tell you about some practical steps you can take to stop or cut down the barking.

Research into noise issues shows that problems are most likely to be solved when people discuss things calmly and work out a solution between them. If you can't do this, the council may have to get involved and you could face some serious penalties, as explained in this leaflet.

## Talking it over

If the noise your dog is making is upsetting your neighbours, the first step is to talk things over with them. Stay calm and try and see it from their point of view; perhaps they're working shifts, or have got a baby or small children. Bear in mind that they might be worried about whether the dog is OK and remember, you might not know how serious the problem is if your dog is barking more when you're not at home.

## Understanding the problem

Ask your neighbours to tell you exactly when your dog is barking and for how long. If you're out a lot ask them to note down the times when the barking happens. If you're in, make a note yourself. Think about using a web cam or video camera to find out what your dog is doing when you're not there, or try a 'set-up' – pretend you're going out for the day, then wait outside the door to see what your dog does. If it starts barking and howling, go back in and tell it firmly to be quiet. Punishing your dog will only make things worse.

## First steps

There are some simple steps you can take straight away to cut down the amount of noise your dog is making. This will help calm the situation between you and your neighbours and give you time to work out why your dog is barking.

- If your dog barks at things outside your yard or garden, don't let it go outside on its own. Keep it away from windows/close your curtains or put up a close-boarded fence, so it can't see people or other animals.
- If your dog barks at the same time every day, like when people in the house are going to work or school, try to keep it busy at that time. For example, you could take it for a walk.
- Try to keep your dog calm. If it barks when it's excited, don't play with it at anti-social times like very late at night.
- If your dog's barking and you're in a flat or a semi, try to keep it away from any walls you share with your neighbours.
- Don't leave your dog outside if it's barking to be let in.
- See if you can get a friend or relative to look after your dog when you go out, or take it with you.
- Make sure your dog gets some exercise before you go out or arrange for someone to take it for a walk whilst you are out. A tired dog barks less.

## Longer-term solutions

### Some general rules

Be consistent. Every time your dog is quiet when it would normally have barked, praise it or give it a treat. When it barks, tell it firmly to be quiet.

You also need to remember that your dog is part of the family. If it only barks when you leave, bring it inside. Leave some toys or chews, and put the radio on quietly. If your dog is distressed, keep it inside with you whenever you're at home – dogs are pack animals and they need company.

### Tackling specific problems

**Problem:** Your dog seems unable to cope with being left alone and howls or whines, usually as soon as you leave the house. The dog may become destructive and/or soil in the house.

**Solution:** Get your dog used to being left alone, initially by leaving it for short periods and gradually building up the length of time. A vet, animal behaviourist or dog warden may be able to tell you how to help your dog get used to being on its own.

**Problem:** Your dog is frightened. It might look scared (ears back, tail low), have trouble settling, or keep trying to hide.

**Solution:** If your dog likes hiding, make a den for it. If it's scared of noise, mask it by putting the radio on quietly. If it's frightened of other people or animals, shut the curtains or doors. Think about talking to a vet, animal behaviourist or dog warden.

**Problem:** Your dog guards his territory by barking at people, animals or cars.

**Solution:** Keep your dog away from the boundaries of your property and screen the dog's view. If it starts barking outside, call it in straight away. You could ask a vet, animal behaviourist or dog warden about behaviour therapy.