

ADVICE ON TALKING TO YOUR NEIGHBOURS ABOUT NOISE

What can I do about my noisy neighbours?

Many people who have had noise problems, particularly those involving neighbours, have resolved them informally. If you decide to follow this approach, you will need to speak to your neighbour and explain politely that their noise is troubling you.

In our experience, people are often unaware that they are causing a problem, and will be glad to do what they can to reduce noise.

If the personal approach fails, we may be able to help.

Approaching your neighbour - Be prepared!

Be clear in your own mind about:

- The nature of the problem – for example, establish the cause of the noise, when and why you feel it is unreasonable.
- How it affects you – it may disturb your sleep or prevent you hearing your own TV or radio.
- What would you like to achieve – in ideal circumstances.
- It may be helpful to write this down as a reminder.

Making the first move

Try to arrange a time between you and your neighbours to discuss the matter properly. You are most likely to be able to sort things out if you:

- Speak to your neighbours face to face rather than putting a note through the door.
- Don't try to rush them into a decision immediately. They also need time to think.
- Try to choose neutral ground to speak to them and don't approach them when the noise is occurring and you are angry.

It's good to talk

You might:

- Welcome the opportunity to sort things out.
- Tell your side of things. Explain what the problem is and describe how it is affecting you. Try not to accuse your neighbours of deliberately upsetting you.
- Listen to your neighbours. Don't try to enforce your views on them. They may have been unaware of how the noise affected you. Only by understanding each other's point of view will you be able to reach a lasting solution.

Finding the right answer

To find what is best for both of you:

- Make sure you have cleared the air by bringing all the issues out into the open.
- Sort out the things you are able to agree on – even if that means agreeing to differ.
- Treat it as a shared problem that you need to resolve together.
- Be open to ideas and suggestions, including what you each can do.
- Consider all the options before picking the one that suits you both best.

Putting the answer into practice

When you have your answer:

- Make sure you both know who is meant to do what and by when. It may be a good idea to write this down.
- Set a date to check how your agreement is working.
- Agree how you will let each other know about any future problems.

Remember

When you speak to your neighbour:

Stay calm

The best results will be achieved if you remain calm throughout your discussion. **DO NOT** accuse your neighbours of deliberately upsetting you. Instead explain the effect their behaviour has on you.

Listen

Be prepared to listen to their reply and try to understand their point of view.

Respect

Always treat the other person with the same respect that you would like them to show you.

Compromise

Find areas of agreement and use these as a basis to finding a workable solution agreeable to both parties.

What if it doesn't work?

If the contact with your neighbour has not worked, Harrogate Borough Council's Environmental Protection service can undertake an investigation. Please contact us on 01423 556633 or by email at environmentalprotection@harrogate.gov.uk