

Noise

Factsheet



City of Westminster

1 Is all noise dealt with as “Anti-social Behaviour”?

No. We can appreciate that noise can often be very frustrating, but not all cases are the result of someone acting deliberately or carelessly in an anti-social way. Living in a city and living amongst other residents often means that there will be some noise and we would expect residents to have a certain level of tolerance towards some noise, such as everyday living noises. Our approach to managing reports of noise will depend on the type of noise and whether we are able to take firmer action. Often just talking about the issue can resolve the matter quickly. If you are experiencing noise and you are unsure what to do, please contact us on [0800 358 3783](tel:08003583783), or at housing.enquiries@westminster.gov.uk or online at www.westminster.gov.uk/about-council/contact-us/housing-services and a contact centre agent, housing officer or an ASB case officer can discuss it with you.

2 I can hear my neighbour’s washing machine. What can you do to help?

We would not normally get involved in managing this type of report as we would consider this to be a normal day to day matter if the noise is happening during a reasonable hour. We would encourage you to speak to your neighbour about the noise if you feel it impacts you in any way, should you feel comfortable to do so. We have “Dear neighbour” cards so you can make your neighbour aware of the noise anonymously by dropping a card through their door. These cards can be downloaded here www.westminster.gov.uk/media/document/dear-neighbour-card or you can collect them from our local offices at www.westminster.gov.uk/about-council/contact-us/housing-services

If your neighbour is using their washing machine between 10pm and 7am and it is impacting your enjoyment of your home, you should first try speaking to your neighbours. If a resolution is not achieved, then you can report this to the councils environmental health team who have a dedicated noise service on [0207 641 2000](tel:02076412000) or by using this link mywestminster.westminster.gov.uk/report-it/noise

3 My neighbour comes home late at night and slams the front door really hard and wakes us all up. What action can you take?

Sometimes others may not realise how loud their actions can be, and how much it can affect others, particularly late at night. However, we would not normally get involved in managing this type of report and in the first instance would encourage residents to politely mention it to the neighbour themselves, and therefore nip it in the bud. If you do not feel comfortable speaking to your neighbour, your housing officer may be able to contact the resident and make them aware of the noise being caused.

4 My neighbour has loud parties and keeps me awake at night. What can you do to help?

You can report this type of noise to the councils 24 hour noise service. If you are experiencing continued noise such as loud parties and music, you can call this service on [020 7 641 2000](tel:02076412000), or you can report online at [How to report a noise problem](#). The officers have extra powers to tackle this type of noise such as serving a notice (this is called a noise abatement notice) which orders they stop making noise or they could be prosecuted. In some cases the officers could seize equipment but they would need to apply to the courts for a warrant to do this.

We as the landlord can also act against a resident for this type of nuisance if we have sufficient evidence. Please contact us about this noise using the contact details in Question 1, along with any reference numbers from the environmental health team so we can assess if it is appropriate to take action against the resident.

5 I can hear my upstairs neighbour all the time – walking on the floorboards and moving furniture around. What can you do to help?

This can be a common problem especially in older buildings where lots of other people live. We would first encourage you to speak to your neighbour if you feel comfortable to do

so, or you could use our “Dear neighbour” cards (see question 1). In some circumstances we can speak to your neighbour about the noise being caused and ask them to be more mindful, but we would make you aware that this could make your neighbour feel upset that the council has contacted them. If these options do not work, we could explore mediation with you and the other person.

6 What is mediation?

Mediation is a process in which a neutral and independent trained person helps people in dispute work out an agreement. We use an independent mediation service. Mediation can help resolve disputes involving noise, children, rubbish, parking, animals and in some harassment cases. If residents do not speak English, the mediators will try to match them with someone who speaks their own language.

Where there is a case that could possibly be resolved through mediation, the officer speaks to both neighbours to get their agreement. Mediation is totally confidential and once it has started, no specific details of the mediation will be shared with housing staff unless you want it to be. For more information on mediation please see our [ASB factsheet here ASB_Factsheet.pdf \(westminster.gov.uk\)](#)

7 I can hear my neighbours arguing all the time, and I find it very upsetting. What can you do to help?

If you can hear continued arguing and you think that someone could be at risk, we would encourage you to call the police at the time on 999. You can remain anonymous when calling the police. We would also ask that you make us aware of this using our contact details outlined in the answers above so that we can speak to the police and carry out some actions and checks to ensure no one is at risk and that we are addressing any concerns.

8 My neighbour plays musical instruments and the noise is unbearable. What can you do to help?

We encourage residents to be mindful not to cause any nuisance to their neighbours, but if you are disturbed by this type of noise, we would always encourage residents to speak to neighbours in the first instance so that any dispute can be managed in a neighbourly way.

If the noise becomes unbearable, we can certainly investigate and look at potential options to manage it. This might include offering mediation to both or all parties to try and resolve the matter.

If the noise is being experienced at a late and unreasonable time of the day we would encourage you to call the 24 hour environmental health team as detailed in question 4. In such cases we can also look at potential enforcement action.

9 My neighbour does DIY late at night. I can hear hammering and drilling noises and I can't hear my own television. What can you do to help?

The rules on DIY noise are set out on the Council's website here:

Noise problems we can investigate

The Housing service do not have an out of hours service to manage noise nuisance and would therefore encourage you to raise this with your neighbour if you feel comfortable to do so. If the matter continues and becomes unacceptable, we can investigate and look at potential options to resolve the matter.

You can also contact the 24-hour environmental health team for help at the time. The contact details are above in the answer to Question 4.



10 My neighbour has their television on really loud. I've asked them to turn it down, but they won't. What can you do to help?

If you have already tried speaking to your neighbour and this has not helped, your housing officer may be able to look at ways they can help by speaking to your neighbour and seeing if there is any support that they can give to them. Please use the contact details in question 1 or alternatively please visit your local housing estate office.

11 The children upstairs are crashing around playing very loud games and shouting all evening and at weekends. What can you do to help?

We would encourage you to speak to your neighbours about the disturbance you are hearing, or you could use the "dear neighbour" cards.

If you're concerned a child is at risk, we would encourage you to contact Children's Services on [020 7641 4000](tel:02076414000) between 9am to 5pm on weekdays. Outside of these times, contact [020 7641 6000](tel:02076416000).

You can also report it to us at using the details in question 1.

If the activity continues into an unreasonable time (after 10pm) then you can contact the councils noise team as highlighted in Q2.

12 I live on the ground floor and can hear the kids playing outside my window all the time, making a lot of noise playing football. What can you do to help?

As a council and landlord, we encourage families and children to make use of the estate grounds and to enjoy the outside spaces. If the children are deliberately causing a nuisance and harm to you, we can address this behaviour with their parents if we know who the children are and where they live. If you know who the children are and where they live, we encourage you to report it to our service as detailed in the answer in question 1.

13 My upstairs neighbour has large groups of visitors over from time to time, and they make a lot of noise. I live in a converted street property. What can you do to help?

All residents are responsible for their household and any visitors to their home. We appreciate you may not feel comfortable to speak directly to your neighbour about this. We would encourage you to provide as much detail as possible to us using the contact details outlined above stating; what noise you are experiencing and from where, at what times, for how long and how it is impacting you. If this is happening during the day, we may not be able to intervene as it may be that your neighbour is simply having friends over. If, however, the levels of noise are such that your neighbour is causing a nuisance then we would discuss with you our next steps in contacting your neighbour about this noise.

14 I have made a report of noise, why am I being asked to make a note of the time and date the noise is happening?

If the noise you are reporting is identified as anti-social behaviour, your ASB case officer may ask you to keep a log of the time and dates you're experiencing the nuisance. This is so that the officer can see a full picture of the nuisance and potentially any patterns to the noise. We can use these to work with our partners within the councils 24 hour noise service to try and witness the noise out of hours. If we have tried all non-legal tools to stopping the noise, we may use these diaries and notes as evidence to look at any legal tools available to us. We will need exact times and dates the noise has happened to be able to present the information to your neighbour to respond to.



15

Do you have noise monitoring equipment I can use?

Our housing service does not have monitoring equipment, but our ASB team can offer residents the use of the "Noise app" in certain cases.

The noise app is an application that you can download on to any smart device where you can easily record short bursts of noise and send this directly to your ASB case officer. The noise app will be offered to you if your case officer feels this would be helpful and could pick up the noise you are experiencing.

Your case officer will agree to listen to and review any recordings that you send through the app, usually they would monitor this for around 2-4 weeks and provide you with a response on whether they could take any further action.

Westminster City councils' environmental health team does have a small number of noise monitoring devices, but these are only used in addition to collating other evidence on ongoing reports of noise nuisance where an environmental health officer has been unable to witness the noise being reported to them.

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What happens if I contact the 24 hour noise service?

The environmental health officers use different methods to investigate a noise complaint and may ask for your cooperation with this. This may include a prearranged visit to your home.

You may be asked to keep a noise diary or have sound monitoring equipment placed within your home. Some complaints are complex and will require the officers to work with the police and us in the housing ASB team. Following an investigation, the officers will act on noise problems that they assess to be a 'statutory nuisance'. For a problem to be assessed as a statutory nuisance it must do either or both of the following:

- unreasonably and substantially interfere with the use or enjoyment of a home or
- other premises injure health or be likely to injure health.

If an officer investigates the problem and determines that a statutory nuisance is happening, has happened or will happen in the future, they may serve an abatement notice on the person responsible for the issue. They may also serve a notice on the person responsible for the location where the problem is coming from. The notice will require the noise to be stopped within a specific period of time. Not following a notice is a criminal offence, and could result in formal action, such as the seizure of noise making equipment, or being taken to court.



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