

What can I do about noisy neighbours?

First of all, try talking to your neighbour about the problem. You may find this difficult, but often people are unaware they are causing a problem. Most neighbours will do what they can to reduce their noise.

Here are some suggestions on how to talk to your neighbour about a problem:

- Plan what you are going to say
- Be polite and try to keep things light-hearted and friendly
- Explain how the noise is affecting you
- Avoid approaching your neighbour when the noise is actually happening. You are more likely to be angry and have an argument.

I can't talk to my neighbour, what else can I do?

You could try writing to your neighbour to explain the problem and how it's affecting you.

If your neighbours are tenants, try speaking to their landlord. Most tenancy agreements have conditions which require tenants not to cause a nuisance to neighbours.

Consider contacting Luton Mediation. Mediation is a way of dealing with neighbour disputes which enables those involved to reach an agreement that satisfies both parties. Luton Mediation is able to deal with any dispute between neighbours, no matter how big or small, and there is no charge.

Luton Mediation, Tel: (01582) 411822, email: lutonmediation@ic24.net

How can the council help?

If you've approached your neighbour about the problem and things haven't improved, contact us for help.

When you make a complaint, we will write to your neighbour to let them know we're investigating a noise problem.

We will not tell your neighbour who has made the complaint. However, sometimes a neighbour will guess who has complained or may ask you.

The letter to my neighbour hasn't worked, what should I do next?

We hope the letter will resolve the problem. However, if the noise continues you will need to contact us again. Your case will then be passed to an officer in the Environmental Protection team for investigation.

How will the council investigate the noise problem?

The officer will need to decide if your neighbour is causing a statutory noise nuisance. If the noise happens during office hours an officer will visit you. If the noise happens at other times, we will install recording equipment in your home.

What legal action can be taken?

If your neighbour is found to be causing a statutory nuisance, an abatement notice will be served, which will require the noise to be reduced or stopped.

If the problem continues, we may prosecute the neighbour (maximum fine £5000). We may also seize any noise-making equipment such as stereos, computers, televisions or musical instruments.

When is a noise a statutory nuisance?

For a noise to be a statutory nuisance it must be unreasonable and interfere with the use and enjoyment of your home. Several factors determine whether a noise is statutory nuisance including:

- the time of day the noise occurs
- how loud it is
- how long it lasts
- how often it occurs.

However, the council is unable to help if the noise is caused by ordinary household activities, children playing or is due to poor sound insulation.

What can I do if the council can't help?

In some cases, we will not be able to help you with your noise problem. For example, the noise may not be loud enough, may only happen occasionally or is ordinary household noise.

In these circumstances, you could consider taking your own legal action or try mediation (see above). For further information about taking your own action, please see the council's website. www.luton.gov.uk/noise

How to make a complaint:

(01582) 51 03 30 Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm, except Wednesday, 10am to 6pm

Online www.luton.gov.uk/noise