

Good Neighbour Guidance

Most neighbours try their best to get on with each other but sometimes problems arise. If this happens as a **Good Neighbour** there are a few simple things that you can do to help sort out problems of nuisance behaviour.

If this is the first time you have experienced problems with your neighbour, it often helps if you try to sort things out with your neighbour first before involving a third party. They may not realise that they have caused you a problem. Most neighbour problems can be easily resolved at an early stage.

ALWAYS STAY CALM

It could be that the problem has a simple explanation and your neighbour did not realise it had caused you a problem. Below are some simple rules to follow if you intend to approach your neighbour to discuss the problem.

Do's

- ✓ Try to sort things out yourself first
- ✓ Remain calm at all times
- ✓ Work out what you want to say before you approach them
- ✓ Approach your neighbour when you know they will have time to talk to you (not when they are on their way to work)
- ✓ Speak to them face to face when they are on their own
- ✓ Speak to them politely and quietly
- ✓ Listen to their side of the story
- ✓ Be prepared to compromise
- ✓ Leave straightaway if people are aggressive or threatening when you approach them – if this happens you will probably need to consider help to sort the problem out

Don'ts

- ✗ Don't speak to your neighbour if you are angry or annoyed
- ✗ Don't dismiss their explanation for the problem
- ✗ Don't swear at or shout at your neighbour
- ✗ Don't lose your temper, become aggressive or use confrontational body language or discriminatory language

If you feel that you have tried to speak to your neighbour about their behaviour or actions that are causing a problem (such as noise nuisance) but it hasn't made any difference, then it may be time to ask for help from someone.

HOW TO REPORT A COMPLAINT

If you feel that your neighbour is causing you problems please contact your local Housing Office for advice and if necessary to formally report the problem.

If your neighbour is a tenant of the Council then you should contact your local Housing Office in the first instance to report your complaint. However you can report the problem in the following ways.

- to your local Housing Office in person, in writing or by telephone – see the Getting in Touch section for contact details at the back of this handbook
- register your complaint via the www.caerphilly.gov.uk website
- by visiting one of the Council's Customer First Centres

All complaints of nuisance or anti-social behaviour are referred to the Tenancy Enforcement Section. They will assess and grade the complaint and decide who will investigate your complaint. Less serious complaints will be investigated by your Estate Management Officer but more serious issues such as assault, threatening behaviour or racist abuse will be investigated by the Tenancy Enforcement Section.

It is always helpful if you keep a record of any incidents (e.g. date/time) and you may be asked to complete diary record sheets to help with any enquiries.

The Council will not take sides during an investigation but it will try to find out the facts of the complaint and how best to resolve the problem if there is a proven breach of tenancy/ leasehold agreement.

We may also be able to help if the neighbour causing problems owns their own home. Sometimes in order to find out all the facts the Council will need to speak to other agencies to gather information. These other agencies can include:

- The Police
- Social Services
- Mental Health Service
- Education Department
- Youth Offending Service
- Community Safety Section

For support needs we may contact:

- Social Services
- Drug and Alcohol Support Services
- Shelter Cymru
- Supporting People

ACTION THAT CAN BE TAKEN

You are entitled to live in quiet enjoyment in your own home and you should feel safe and secure. There are various types of action that the Council can take to help resolve neighbour problems during the course of their investigation. They include:

- Writing to or interviewing the person causing problems
- Providing support to help stop the problems
- Making a referral to a mediation service
- Making a referral to a support service
- Taking out an injunction against the person
- Making an application to the court for possession of their home

ACTION THAT CANNOT BE TAKEN

- Tenants who are in breach of their tenancy conditions cannot be evicted without going to Court
- Mediation services will not be considered unless all parties are willing to take part to resolve the problem
- Action cannot be taken if a problem is not serious enough, or if the law has not been broken, or if there is not enough evidence

Office contact details are available in the 'Getting in Touch' section in this handbook.

The flowchart in this handbook is also there to help you decide what to do next if you are experiencing problems.

Remember.....

**Considerate & caring
Caerphilly Tenants
Benefit their
Communities!!**

What should you do?

Start Here

