Sanctuary

Good neighbour management: what you can expect from us

This guide explains what we will do when everyday behaviour causes upset or frustration but is not antisocial behaviour or against the terms of your agreement. It is for Sanctuary Housing customers, including shared owners, market rent tenants and leaseholders, and anyone who lives with them.

What this guide covers

Everyday living can sometimes cause problems between neighbours, even when nobody means to cause harm or upset. We will encourage everyone involved to talk, understand each other's point of view and agree practical ways to live well together.

We will not describe anyone as a victim or perpetrator in these cases. We may call the people involved Household 1 and Household 2.

Examples of everyday neighbour issues

We do not usually treat the following as antisocial behaviour if nobody is deliberately trying to cause a problem:

- everyday noise, such as footsteps, doors, talking, toilets, household appliances, dogs barking or babies crying
- cooking smells, smoking, bins, litter, cats in gardens or overgrown gardens
- parking, boundaries, fences, shared driveways or minor car repairs
- children playing, ball games, bikes, trampolines or young people gathering, unless they are abusive, causing damage or committing a crime
- one-off parties, celebrations or DIY work
- working from home, staring or minor personal disagreements
- noise linked to someone's disability or health condition.

What we will do

- listen and gather information about the problem
- consider whether someone is deliberately causing the problem
- explain clearly what we can and cannot do
- encourage everyone involved to talk calmly and find practical solutions
- consider whether anyone needs support and, where appropriate, work with other organisations to help identify it
- keep written records of the action we take
- look at the situation again if we receive more reports that suggest antisocial behaviour or that someone has broken the terms of their agreement.

What you can do

- If you feel safe to do so, speak calmly to your neighbour. Explain what is happening and how it affects you.
- Use the Good Neighbour leaflet or Dear Neighbour card if you have been given one.

- Consider a good neighbour agreement or mediation. Taking part is voluntary, so we cannot force anyone to join.
- Tell us about any support you need so we can consider this when responding.

Privacy and confidentiality

To help resolve the problem, we may need to tell the other people involved who raised it. This means we may not always be able to keep your identity private, even if you ask us to.

If your complaint is about noise

We will encourage you to speak to your neighbour and may give you a Dear Neighbour card. We will also ask you to use the Noise App to record the noise for 14 days.

- We will review the recordings during the 14 days.
- If the noise seems deliberate or may be against the terms of your agreement, including noise before 8am or after 11pm, we will speak to the person making it. We will write to confirm any action agreed.
- If it continues, becomes worse or is intended to cause distress, alarm or harassment, we will manage it as antisocial behaviour.
- If the recordings show normal everyday noise, we will explain why we cannot take further action through this process.
- We may discuss a good neighbour agreement, mediation, other housing options such as a mutual exchange, or practical ways to reduce the effect of the noise.

When we will treat behaviour as antisocial behaviour

We will use our antisocial behaviour process if someone appears to be deliberately causing a problem, has clearly broken the terms of their agreement or may have committed a crime. This can include:

- violence or threats against people or property
- harassment or hate crime
- criminal activity, intimidation or verbal abuse
- vandalism, graffiti, criminal damage or arson
- drug or alcohol-related nuisance
- uncontrolled pets.

How to report a problem

You can report a problem with a neighbour by phone, in person, by email, text, WhatsApp or letter, through social media, or on our website. Another organisation, such as the police, social services or Environmental Health, may also contact us about a problem.

If you think we are using the wrong process for your report, you can ask us to review the case.