

NEIGHBOUR DISPUTES



Our approach to tackling neighbour disputes

We want all our residents to be able to enjoy their homes in peace. We take all reports of neighbour disputes seriously. We look into them thoroughly and work with all of those involved to resolve the problems.

What we mean by neighbour disputes

Neighbour disputes are problems with neighbours where the person causing the problem is not doing so intentionally, the problem is not persistent and no serious harm is caused. If the problems are deliberate, persistent and pose a risk to someone, they are anti-social behaviour.

Neighbour disputes often involve clashes of lifestyle or differences of opinion about what is or is not acceptable. Examples of a neighbour dispute include:

- ▶ noise that happens during normal working hours and is unintentional, not persistent and does not breach noise nuisance legislation
- ▶ smells from cooking
- ▶ untidy gardens
- ▶ children playing at reasonable hours.

What you can expect from our service

We cannot take legal action about a neighbour dispute, but we will advise you on what can be done and offer possible solutions. If you report a neighbour dispute to us, we will aim to meet you within 10 working days to discuss the problem and how it can be resolved.



We will stay in regular contact with you to keep you updated on what we are doing to help resolve the problem and to get updates from you.

We will always offer to meet with you before closing a case. We recognise that situations can change and that what starts as a neighbour dispute sometimes develops into anti-social behaviour. If this happens, let us know so that we can help.

What will happen after you report a neighbour dispute to us

We will assess whether the incidents involve anti-social behaviour or are about a neighbour dispute and we will arrange a meeting with you to discuss the problem.

We will talk to the other people involved, to help you all reach agreement about the best way forward. In many cases we will encourage you to talk to the neighbour about the problems they are causing you, so that you can try to resolve the problem yourselves.

Neighbour disputes can only be resolved through discussion, leading to understanding and sometimes compromise. Everyone involved has to be willing to take part in this process. We can refer you to a mediation service if you would like someone to facilitate discussions. Mediators are skilled at helping people in dispute to talk openly and find solutions

Examples of practical ways in which we may be able to help resolve neighbour disputes include:

- ▶ for noise problems – discussing what hours are reasonable for certain activities to take place and whether modifications such as door closers or carpeting might help to reduce noise levels
- ▶ for problems with children playing in shared areas – discussing what hours are reasonable for children to play in shared areas, or what are the most suitable local areas for them to play in
- ▶ for problems with untidy shared areas – you may be able to bid for funding to improve the design of the area
- ▶ for lifestyle differences – talking to everyone involved to develop a ‘good neighbour agreement’.

Making sure that we are succeeding

If you report a neighbour dispute to us, we will ask for your feedback to find out if you are satisfied with our service and to find out what we can do to improve.

Neighbour disputes are a community problem and we will always need the support of residents to tackle them. Together we can stop nuisance problems and make a difference, creating communities that we all want to live and work in.

How to contact us about neighbour disputes

For more information or if you are experiencing a neighbour dispute please visit our website octaviahousing.org.uk or contact your resident service officer on the number below.



Please contact us if you need any part of this information in Braille,
on audio tape or explained in a different language.

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