



General Neighbour disputes/domestic noise

If you are disturbed by noise from another home we can help you. This could be from barking dogs, music or TVs or loud parties.

If you are disturbed by noise, a step by step approach is taken. First try and talk to the person causing the noise. They may not know that they have disturbed you. Explain how it affects you.

Step One

If this does not work or you do not feel comfortable to do this ring the Environmental Health and Licensing team on 01707 357242.

We will discuss your complaint. Be prepared to explain where the noise is coming from. We need an address. Tell us how and when it affects you. If appropriate we will liaise with other agencies such as the anti social behaviour team, housing trust or the University of Hertfordshire. If the noise is due to normal living behaviour and is caused by poor insulation between properties then Environmental Health cannot take nuisance action.

We will write to you and ask you to keep diary sheets usually for two weeks. We will write to the person, tell them that they have caused a noise disturbance and ask them to resolve the problem. We do not say who made the complaint. We will tell them diary sheets are being kept and further monitoring may be carried out.

Step two

If the problem continues we will install sound monitoring equipment in your home and ask you to continue with the diary sheets. This will provide evidence of the noise disturbance that may end up in court. If the noise occurs in the day we will try and visit when the noise occurs. If it occurs at night you can use the Operation Reprise call out service.

You may be asked to write a statement for us describing how and when you have been affected by this disturbance.

Operation Reprise - Out of hours service

We are part of the Operation Reprise service. This is a joint agency approach to deal with noise at night.

Every Friday and Saturday nights an Environmental Health Officer from Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council will team up with a police crew to cover the district of Welwyn and Hatfield. The team will be available between **10pm and 3am**.

Please ring **101** and this will connect you to the non emergency police call centre and they will arrange for an Environmental Health Officer accompanied by the police to visit as soon as they can. You can also ring **0800 111 4484** this will connect you to the councils out of hours general complaints contact centre and they will also pass the details on to an Environmental Health Officer. We do need to witness the noise as it affects you and your family so an officer will contact you and a visit made to your property.



Step Three

If we witness noise that is in our opinion a statutory nuisance (noise due to its nature, frequency and level is unacceptable) we will serve a noise abatement notice. If the noise continues again the person can be taken to court and we can take their equipment away.

Although your complaint is dealt with in confidence if the case goes to court then it is possible you will be asked to appear in court.

If you are disturbed by noise from rowdy behaviour in the street in the street please contact the police on **101**.

Car Alarms

Misfiring car alarms are extremely annoying. If you are disturbed by an ongoing misfiring car alarm please ring us. We will need to have all the car details. These are the vehicle registration, the make, model and colour. We need to know exactly where it is and if you have any ideas regarding ownership.

We have to make all practical steps to find the car owner. If they cannot be found we can either disable the alarm or as a last resort remove the car. This process can take several hours but it will eventually stop the sounding alarm and if someone is away on holiday and you could be disturbed for weeks!

House Alarms

If a house intruder alarm misfires we have to check to see that the alarm is not sounding due to a burglary first. If the intruder alarm is misfiring we have powers to enter the outside of the property and disable an external alarm. If the alarm is inside the property we have to apply for a warrant which can take some time. The cost of disabling the alarm is charged to the person responsible for the alarm.

Please give us all details of the house and how long it has been sounding. Please check to see if there are any alarm company details on the alarm itself. These companies can be very useful to us when disabling the alarm or they may be able to turn it off themselves.

It is strongly advised for any one who has an alarm on their property, whether commercial or residential, to register it with Environmental Health. The registration will have contact details of two key holders who can turn off the alarm if it starts ringing due to a fault. The registration means that Environmental Health department can contact a key holder and ask them to turn off the alarm rather than taking enforcement action and charging.