



HOUSING POLICY

Noise policy, 2025



LONDON BOROUGH OF
HARROW

Noise Policy (Housing)

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1. Purpose

This policy has been created in line with the Housing Ombudsman's spotlight report on noise. The report requires landlords to have separate policies for noise which occurs because of anti-social behaviour and noise which occurs outside of anti-social behaviour. An example of the latter is domestic living noise which can be heard within neighbouring properties.

This policy aims to create an understanding that a certain amount of general living noise is acceptable in everyday life, and it is reasonable to hear noise from neighbours from time to time. This policy will help Harrow Housing staff to work with residents and leaseholders to differentiate between noise being caused by anti-social behaviour and noise that happens because of issues unrelated to anti-social behaviour.

It will also provide tools for dealing with noise issues by adopting measures that focus more on support; early resolution; practical solutions; and good case management.

2. Objectives

- To prevent and reduce noise nuisance within housing developments
- To ensure timely and fair resolution of noise issues
- To promote respectful neighbour relations
- To deal with domestic noise differently from anti-social behaviour
- To support enforcement action where necessary, including warnings, mediation, or legal proceedings

3. Definitions

ASB stands for Anti-Social Behaviour.

EPA stands for the Environmental Protection Act 1990

“**Us**” stands for London Borough of Harrow Housing staff.

“**You**” stands for Harrow tenants and leaseholders.

Statutory Nuisance refers to noise that is unreasonable and harmful to a person’s health or quality of life.

4. Scope

This policy establishes the framework for managing and mitigating noise-related issues within London Borough of Harrow for residential housing. It aims to promote a safe, healthy, and harmonious living environment for tenants and leaseholders by setting clear expectations and procedures for addressing noise disturbances.

This policy applies to all residential properties owned or managed by London Borough of Harrow and addresses the following types of noise:

Domestic noise: (Not limited to) loud TV, music playing, doors banging, parties, shouting, DIY activities, barking dogs, children playing, walking across a room, furniture being moved about etc.

External noise:(Not limited to) Outdoor gatherings, revving motor engines (where they involve our tenants or leaseholders).

Structural noise: (Not limited to) Poor insulation, impact sounds from flooring or plumbing.

This policy applies to all council-owned and council-managed housing properties, including communal areas and shared spaces.

5. Policy statement

London Borough of Harrow is committed to ensuring that all tenants and leaseholders enjoy a safe, secure, and peaceful living environment. We recognise that excessive or persistent noise can have a serious impact on health and wellbeing. This policy sets out our approach to preventing and managing noise disturbances within council-managed housing.

We believe that everyone has the right to the quiet enjoyment of their home, and we expect all tenants, leaseholders, and visitors to behave in a manner that respects the comfort and dignity of others. We will take appropriate action to investigate issues around noise; support affected residents and enforce tenancy conditions if the noise is found to constitute anti-social behaviour.

The council must also ensure that the Public Sector Equality Duty is fully considered when investigating noise complaints. When carrying out investigations, officers should remain mindful that some individuals may experience or generate noise differently, due to characteristics protected under the Equality Act 2010. For example, noise arising from essential medical equipment should be assessed proportionately and with appropriate sensitivity. However, such considerations must be balanced against the rights and reasonable expectations of neighbouring residents. More broadly, the council will have due regard to any other relevant factors when determining whether enforcement action is fair and proportionate in the circumstances.

Through this policy, we aim to:

- Promote respectful neighbour relationships
- Provide clear guidance on acceptable noise levels and behaviours
- Respond promptly and fairly to noise complaints
- Work in partnership with residents, enforcement teams, and external agencies
- Uphold legal standards and tenancy obligations

6. How to resolve neighbour issues

We would strongly advise tenants and leaseholders to try and sort out neighbour issues amongst themselves wherever possible before asking us to intervene. This could be the quickest way to resolve noise and other issues and will promote a good relationship amongst neighbours in the future.

If you have tried to resolve the problem with your neighbour but it has not helped, you can ask the council to get involved.

Sometimes a neighbour might do things that cause upset or annoyance. Below is an example of some of the possible issues (not an exhaustive list):

- Making too much noise (loud voices, banging, DIY, barking dogs, loud music, TVs, or other audio)
- Installing lights on their property that shine into your home.
- Blocking access to your property
- Parking badly (blocking walkways, blocking cars in, parking on grass verges or parking on other people's property without permission).

Falling out with a neighbour can make you feel uncomfortable living in your home or cause ongoing tensions when you bump into each other outside.

Below is a list of actions that we would recommend trying, to resolve the issue:

Talk to your neighbour

In some circumstances the neighbour may be unaware that the issue is affecting you or that they are even causing an issue. By letting them know in a polite, approachable manner, they will be more likely to fix the issue without the situation escalating. When letting a neighbour know about an issue you should:

- Stick to the facts, do not exaggerate or add bits that are not true
- Explain the effect that it is having on you and your household
- Listen to what they have to say in response
- See if you can reach a compromise together

If you do not feel comfortable talking to your neighbour in person, you could write them a polite letter. You can download the template below to help you get started and adapt it according to your needs [Letter to neighbour.docx](#). If for any reason you are unable to download the letter, please contact your housing officer on 020 8901 2630 to request a paper copy to be sent to you in the post.

To support residents in resolving issues early and maintaining positive neighbour relationships, London Borough of Harrow has developed a Considerate Neighbour Guide. This Guide provides practical tips, communication guidance, and examples of how to approach common noise and neighbour related concerns in a respectful way. You can access the Guide here [How To Be a Considerate Neighbour.docx](#).

7. What can we do?

If you have tried communicating with your neighbour without success, you can ask the council to get involved by phoning us on 020 8901 2630 or emailing us: Housing.residentservices@harrow.gov.uk. We can help to resolve issues with London Borough of Harrow council tenants and leaseholders. However, if the property is privately owned or a leaseholder has rented the property to a sub tenant, we will not be able to deal with the issue and may direct you to the homeowner or leaseholder.

We will look at your service request to see if it is something we can help with. Below are some of the actions that we can take:

➤ **Contact the neighbour**

The Housing Officer will make initial contact with the person at the address where the noise comes from to identify the cause of the noise and decide whether it is normal domestic noise or anti-social behavior. Advice will be given on what they need to do to sort out the problem. We will not tell them who made the complaint against them unless you are happy for us to do so and will try to sort it out informally if we can. All information related to the visit will be recorded on our IT systems for future reference.

➤ **Noise diary**

We will give the complainant a noise diary to complete and will review this to fully understand the problem. The diary sheets can also be used in court if it is found that the noise is statutory nuisance. The diary sheets will be sent to the complainant in the post or will be given to them in person during any face-to-face visits with the Housing Officer. If you need help or advice on how to complete the Diary Sheets you can contact the council by phoning 020 8901 2630 or emailing us: housing.residentservices@harrow.gov.uk

➤ **Mediation service**

We can offer a professional mediator early on to see if they can help you to come to a resolution. Mediation can be useful as they are independent and will have tools and skills to help resolve situations.

➤ **Support**

The council can assess the situation and offer support to stop the noise from occurring. This could mean that we offer advice on how to stop different sorts of noise, for example, we may advise not to do domestic chores late at night or we may refer you to a support service if you have a child or someone within the home with needs who is causing noise to occur.

➤ **Prevention**

The council may offer preventive measures such as installing soft door closures to specific doors to stop them from slamming or door stops, anti-vibration mats to place underneath the washing machine, rubber feet for table and chairs to stop them causing scraping noises when pulled in and out from the table. We can be creative with preventative measures if the cost is reasonable.

➤ **Visit**

The Housing Officer may need to visit the address to witness the noise in person, this visit is sometimes carried out by 2 members of staff from Harrow's Housing team.

➤ **Independent witness**

Sometimes we may get an independent witness to come out to witness the noise. Independent witnesses can come out later at night and over the weekends and will provide an independent report on their findings.

➤ **Noise monitoring**

Noise monitoring equipment can be installed in the home where the noise can be heard. We can also instal the equipment within the property where the sound is coming from for further clarification.

➤ **Anti-social behaviour**

If the noise problem persists after support and preventative measures have been put in place, we will begin a formal investigation to determine whether the noise is a statutory nuisance. Statutory noise is covered under Environmental Protection Act 1990 and will be dealt with accordingly. This may be dealt with as anti-social behaviour, depending on the outcome of the investigation. We have a separate policy for dealing with anti-social behaviour [ASB Policy](#). If you are unable to access the ASB policy using the link for any reason you can request a paper copy by contacting us by phoning 020 8901 2630 or emailing us at housing.residentservices@harrow.gov.uk.

8. Statutory noise

To decide if the noise is a statutory nuisance we will consider:

- **Impact to health** - This means that the situation is causing, has caused or is likely to have an impact to someone's health.
- **Nuisance** - For noise to be a statutory nuisance it must be unreasonable to the 'average person' and something that is more than an annoyance.
- **Impact** - The problem must have a real effect on how a person can use or enjoy their property. For example, noise from a neighbour may be audible, but it would have to be loud enough to impact on sleep, conversation, watching TV etc. for it to be a nuisance.
- **Frequency** – Something happening just once or twice might not be a nuisance, for example a celebration event with music during the day or early evening. If the same thing occurred more frequently, for example every other week or month, then it could be a nuisance. A one-off event could be a nuisance if it were so loud as to cause an impact on other residents if it goes on late into the evening and their sleep is being affected.

- **Duration** – if something happens for a brief period it may not be a nuisance, for example a neighbour's dog barking when someone comes to the door. But if the same noise went on for the entire day, then this could be a nuisance.
- **Time of day** – This is similar to 'impact' because something that might be a problem through the night, might not necessarily be a nuisance when happening in the day.
- **Everyday activity** – Things which are part of everyday normal life, for example flushing toilets, footsteps, talking, closing doors, babies crying, will not amount to a nuisance because there is little the person can do to prevent it. This is sometimes an issue with poor sound insulation between properties. Statutory nuisance rules can only be used to change unacceptable behaviour and not to require people to do over and above what they should be expected to.

How do we decide if something is a statutory nuisance?

We have trained officers who are authorised to investigate complaints of statutory nuisance. They will investigate cases which cannot be resolved informally to decide if the issue amounts to a statutory nuisance.

Our officers need to gather evidence and will use the following tools:

- Officers witnessing the problem themselves.
- Witness statements from those who are affected, or from professional witnesses such as police officers, housing officers or professional independent witnesses.
- Written nuisance records from people affected.
- Installing specialist noise recording equipment in the property of people affected.
- Inspecting property and talking to those that are the subject of complaint.

We cannot take a person's sensitivity or tolerance to noise into account when dealing with statutory noise. For example, if a person is suffering from tinnitus, migraines, mental health, or they work nights so do not wish to hear any noise during the day. We would provide advice and refer to support agencies where necessary.

Examples of noise that have been found to be a statutory nuisance:

- Loud music being played frequently during the early evening and into the night which was so loud that neighbours could not hear their TV without turning the volume up.
- Dogs that bark for regular, prolonged periods of time consistently.
<https://www.rspca.org.uk/adviceandwelfare/pets/dogs/behaviour/barking>
- Noise from machinery such as heavy-duty floor fans.
- Deliberate or excessive banging, stomping or furniture dragging
- Frequent shouting, swearing, abusive language, arguing and fighting.

- Revving engines or playing music from parked cars outside the home for long periods.

Examples of things that have been found not to be statutory nuisance:

- A person carrying out DIY during the day and at weekends.
- Footsteps or movement that can be heard within neighbouring property.
- Doors closing or people walking on hardwood floors.
- Toilet flushing or water pipes.
- Children playing or crying.
- Normal conversation or laughing.

We can help to deal with complaints about domestic noise if it is persistently loud, frequent, and effecting the peace and quiet within the home. Below is a list of noise that we will help to deal with. This noise will not be dealt with as anti-social behaviour unless it becomes apparent that the noise is being caused because of anti-social behaviour, which we have a separate policy for.

- TVs, stereos, and gaming (not an exhaustive list)
- Loud voices
- DIY
- Noise from vehicles (persistent revving engines, loud car stereo, car repairs if being carried out by a Harrow Council tenant or leaseholder).
- Noise from domestic animals (barking dogs, cockerels, and other domestic animals)
- Loud music including frequent loud parties.
- Children playing at unreasonable hours.
- Washing machines and vacuum cleaners being used at unreasonable hours.
- Domestic living sounds due to hard floor, poor insulation, or no carpet (movement).

We often receive complaints about noise from people shouting abuse, swearing, arguing, and fighting. These circumstances would be classed as anti-social behaviour which we would deal with outside of this noise policy, as per the anti-social behaviour policy.

Noise we cannot investigate

We cannot investigate noise problems caused by:

- Aircraft - you can report issues to the Civil Aviation Authority
- Burglar alarms and car alarms
- Trains and railways - you can report issues to Network Rail

- Emergency vehicles
- Roadworks and utility companies carrying out work in the street
- People in the street, or from loudspeakers used as part of a demonstration

9. What you need to do

If you would like us to keep you updated throughout our investigations into a case of noise nuisance, you will need to give us your name, address and contact details. We cannot feed back to you without this information, and our investigations may be limited if reported anonymously. This is because we will need to visit you to see how the noise is affecting you in your home and gather evidence.

You may need to keep a noise diary for two weeks to record the type of noise, when it happens, and how long it lasts.

If our investigation shows that the noise is being caused as part of anti-social behaviour, we may need to take the case to court and we may ask you to complete a witness statement, the noise diary records will be used as evidence.

To report statutory noise nuisance:

- Council website: [asb council web form](#)
- Phone: 0208 901 2630
- Email: asb@harrow.gov.uk
- In person: Tenants and leaseholders can attend drop-in sessions. The dates of which are published in Homing In <http://www.harrow.gov.uk/homingin>
- Write to:
London Borough of Harrow
Housing Services
Forward Drive
PO Box 1367
Harrow
HA3 3QT

If you feel the noise you are hearing concerns the safety of a **vulnerable adult**, please call Customer Services using the contact details below:

Phone: 020 8901 2630

Email: ahadults@harrow.gov.uk

For concerns about **children** please call Customer Services using the contact details below:

Phone: 020 8901 2630

Email: lscb@harrow.gov.uk

You can also contact the police on 101, available 24 hours a day, or in an emergency call 999.

10. Compliance

Managers are responsible for ensuring that all relevant staff members are trained on this Noise Policy. Refresher training should be carried out each year and managers should record any areas of non-compliance and take appropriate corrective actions.

11. Review

This policy shall be reviewed and updated after any relevant legislative or regulatory changes, new case law, guidance and best practice or operational issues.

12. Other related strategies and legislation

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

[ASB Policy](#)

[ASB Standards](#)

Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014

Environmental Protection Act 1990 (Part III)

Public Sector Equality Duty

13. Equality impact assessment

Continued best practice Equality considerations Under the Equality Act 2010. The London Borough of Harrow may consider whether our policies adversely affect our customers and/or staff. We do not consider this policy to disproportionately impact any individuals in regard to these characteristics and therefore a detailed Equality Impact Assessment is not required.

Considerate neighbour guide (housing)



We all live in a busy, sometimes noisy world, but what sounds fine to you might be a little too much for your neighbours. Being mindful about the noise you make and when you make it can help keep harmony between you and your neighbours and avoid complaints.



Find out below what counts as a noise problem and how you can help keep things peaceful in your neighbourhood.



Keep the volume as low as possible, especially late at night

If you can, use headphones

When not using headphones, lower the bass, as those deep beats can travel further and be irritating

Planning a party or barbecue? Give your neighbours a heads-up or better yet, invite them! People are usually more understanding when they know what to expect and when it will end.



Try not to let your dog bark or whine for long periods

If your dog barks when left alone, keep them indoors or ask a friend to check in

Leave a toy or maybe play gentle music to keep them calm

Move the position of the kennels or add a fence if your dog gets distracted by passers-by

Need help? [Get advice on how to stop your dog barking too much](#)



Do your noisier work during the day

Save quieter jobs like painting and decorating for the evening or weekend

Try to finish projects promptly, do not let them drag on for months
Let neighbours know if you will be using power tools or working on shared walls

Vehicles and car repairs

Avoid revving the engine too much

Close car doors gently

Use your horn only in emergencies

Keep music low and windows up when parked or driving

Do repairs in a garage if possible, and stick to daytime hours, avoiding Sundays and bank holidays

In the home

Keep the fridges, washing machine, and speakers away from shared walls

Use carpets or mats to reduce vibration noise

If you live above others, carpets and underlay help soften sound

In the garden

Avoid letting kids repeatedly kick balls against neighbours' walls or fences

Do not mow lawns or trim hedges too early or too late

Keep outdoor music to a personal level

Remember that sound travels outdoors, so be mindful of party or barbecue noise

Communication tips

Noise issues are often solved just by talking!

If a neighbour's noise is bothering you, try a polite conversation before making a formal complaint

Stay calm and friendly, most people do not realise how far sound travels

If someone approaches *you* about noise, listen and work together on a solution

Quiet hours reminder


Try to keep noise down between **11pm and 7am**

Some buildings or neighbourhoods may have their own rules, so check your tenancy agreement or local policy

Who to contact for help

If you have tried talking but the noise continues, you can:

Web form: [ASB council web form](#)

 **Phone:** 020 8901 2630

We are here to help keep your neighbourhood peaceful

 Tips for positive living

Being a considerate neighbour is not just about avoiding noise. It is about building a community where everyone feels comfortable and respected

Small gestures like a smile or quick chat go a long way toward keeping harmony on your street

A little kindness goes a long way

By being considerate and keeping communication open, we can all enjoy a peaceful, friendly neighbourhood

Frequently Asked Questions about how we deal with noise

London Borough of Harrow receives hundreds of noise complaints each year. Below are the answers to some of the most common questions:

What type of noise can one investigate?

The council can deal with many types of general noise that is preventing people from enjoying peacefulness inside their homes or within the environment where they live, such as:

- TVs, stereos, and gaming (not an exhaustive list)
- Loud voices
- DIY
- Noise from vehicles (persistent revving engines, loud car stereo, car repairs if being carried out by a Harrow Council tenant or leaseholder).
- Noise from domestic animals (barking dogs, cockerels, and other domestic animals)
- Loud music including frequent loud parties.
- Children playing at unreasonable hours.
- Washing machines and vacuum cleaners being used at unreasonable hours.
- Domestic living sounds due to hard floor, poor insulation, or no carpet (movement).

What type of noise can't one investigate?

The council can't investigate anonymous complaints, one-off events and certain types of outdoor or everyday noise such as:

- Aircraft - you can report issues to the [Civil Aviation Authority](#)
- Trains and railways - you can report issues to [Network Rail](#)
- Emergency vehicles and traffic on public roads
- Roadworks and utility companies carrying out work in the street
- People in the street, or from loudspeakers used as part of a political demonstration
- Everyday activities, such as children playing in their garden, noise from a washing machine or vacuum cleaner (unless it is at an unusual time such as the early hours of the morning)

Why can't the council come out immediately to monitor the noise?

We need to assess the nature and level of the noise problem being complained about. This is done by talking to you and collecting information and evidence about the noise that you have supplied. Officers are not always available to respond immediately to complaints about noise and need to schedule in monitoring time. When we receive a complaint about noise, we might also need to contact the people causing the noise to give them the opportunity to resolve the problem informally.

Do you have an out-of-hours service?

We do not operate an out of hours noise service. However, our officers can make pre-arranged visits out of hours to investigate ongoing noise complaints. However, our officers can make pre-arranged visits outside normal working hours to investigate ongoing noise problems. These visits will be made at our discretion, which will also depend on resources at the time.

What happens when I make a noise complaint?

If the noise is something we can investigate, we may ask you to complete a noise diary to record the dates and times of the disturbance. We may also arrange to visit your home to assess how the noise affects you.

We aim to resolve issues informally, but if the problem continues and is identified as anti-social behaviour, we can take formal enforcement action.

Can I make an anonymous complaint?

Investigations into anonymous complaints are limited because we need details from you to understand how often the noise occurs and how it affects you. Your details will not be shared with the person you complain about without your consent.

Will my personal details be kept confidential?

Yes, under the Data Protection Act 1998, your details are kept confidential.

We will not give your name or address to the person you complain about. If the case goes to court, you may be asked to give evidence, and your diary sheets or witness statement could be used.

Why do I need to complete noise diary sheets?

Noise diaries help us to gather evidence of when the noise happens, work out the best time to visit, potentially witness the noise, and provide supporting evidence if formal action is needed. Please record the time, date, and description of each disturbance as accurately as possible.

What formal action can the council take?

We always try to resolve noise problems informally first by identifying the cause of the noise and then providing any support to help resolve the issue. If we identify that the issue is anti-social behaviour, we can take formal actions such as:

- Official warning letters
- Notice of Seeking Possession
- Noise Abatement Notice telling the person causing the noise what they must do to stop or reduce it. If they ignore the notice, the Environmental Health department may seize noise-making equipment or take legal action, which could result in a fine or prosecution.

What should I do if someone complains about me?

You should work with our staff and accept any support offered to you to help resolve the issue. For example, if the noise is being caused by dining chairs being pulled in and out on a hard floor. We may be able to help you purchase chair covers to put on the feet of the chairs. It is best to work with us as soon as possible if you are made aware of a complaint against you.

What times are considered unreasonable for noise?

There are no fixed hours in law, but noise is more likely to be considered unreasonable if it occurs late at night between 11 pm and 7am, frequently or for long periods, or at high volume and affects your ability to sleep or enjoy your home. We assess each case individually based on the frequency, duration, and impact of the noise.

Can you help me talk to my neighbour about noise?

Yes, we always encourage informal communication first, as often neighbours are unaware that they are causing a problem. We can offer advice, mediation, or help you write a letter to help you resolve the issue.