

Nuisance complaints

Advice for council tenants



St Albans
City & District Council

Housing Management

What should I do if I am suffering nuisance from a neighbour?

We encourage tenants to resolve problems amicably between themselves wherever possible. Often people are not aware that their actions are causing a nuisance to their neighbours. A quiet, friendly word can often resolve the problem quickly, and build bridges between people. Involving others unnecessarily can inflame the situation and make matters worse.

However, we recognise that there may be some exceptions to this depending on the circumstances of the particular case.



How can your Housing Officer help?



If you have made an initial approach to your neighbour and there are still problems, your Housing Officer may be able to help.

Your Housing Officer will act on complaints made in writing, over the telephone or in person at the Council offices. In some instances we may ask you to complete a form so we have full details of the nature of the complaint and what has been done so far to resolve matters.

We may ask you to record details of incidences over a two week period, recording dates, times, and details.

In the majority of cases the emphasis of our actions at this stage will be advisory. Experience demonstrates that problems are more likely to be resolved by discussion between neighbours rather than by being unnecessarily confrontational.

Where necessary, and where there is evidence of nuisance, your Housing Officer may decide to make contact with your neighbour to ask that the issues are resolved.

In most cases low key intervention will lead to an improvement in the situation. However, in a small number of cases there will be no improvement or things may get worse.



If further complaints are received, the situation will be reassessed. You will be kept informed of decisions made.

In very serious cases we may decide to take action very quickly. If necessary the Housing Department will take stronger measures that might involve legal action.



Legal action

If legal action is to be taken, any case needs to be based on firm evidence and you may be asked to provide further information.



This might involve completing diary sheets for a period of several weeks in order to demonstrate the severity and frequency of the problem. We would also require similar information from a number of neighbours affected by the nuisance.

It may also be necessary for complainants to give evidence in Court.

The Council also has access to cameras that can film incidents discreetly which we can lend to residents. This requires legal approval.

Throughout this process you will be kept informed by your Housing Officer.

Impartiality

When dealing with complaints between two parties the Council must remain impartial and unbiased in our actions. Often the main cause of complaints can be a clash of lifestyles and noise attributed to everyday living. It is not for Housing Officers to make judgements about people's lifestyle choices. The reaction and attitudes of all parties involved will be taken into account.



Mediation

Mediation is sometimes the best way of dealing with a dispute. If this is the case we will refer you to the Mediation Service. This is a free service where trained mediators will listen to what you have to say and try to help resolve your problem.



Working with other agencies



In resolving any dispute we may liaise with police, social services, environmental health, and others who may also be able to take action depending on the circumstances. We may undertake joint visits or arrange meetings between parties.

Any questions?

If you have any questions please contact the Housing Management team on **01727 8194943**.

Housing Department

St Albans City & District Council
St Peter's Street
St Albans AL1 3JE

Telephone: **01727 866100**

Email: **housing@stalbans.gov.uk**

If you need this information in an alternative format, such as Braille or in another language, please call **01727 819494**.

The Council's textphone number is **01727 819570**.
This service is for people with a hearing impairment.



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www.stalbans.gov.uk