

## Guide to *Noisy Neighbours*

**Noise from neighbours can be irritating, annoying or at worse, very disturbing.**

### What kind of noise is unreasonable?

Noise is unwanted sound. It is a fact of life that the sounds we all make every day although acceptable to us, are likely to be unwanted by someone else. One person's music is another person's noise.

Excessive noise can reduce quality of life and, in some extreme cases, even destroy it entirely.

Thanet District Council receives over 1000 complaints relating to noise each year.

The legal controls on noisy neighbours are based on the law of nuisance. To be a nuisance, noise has to be **unreasonable** to the average person.

Factors such as the loudness and type of noise, how often it occurs and the time of day it takes place are taken into account in considering whether noise is unreasonable. The noise must be persistent. Something that occurs very

rarely and/or is of short duration is unlikely to be a nuisance in law.

It is unrealistic to expect absolute quiet where we live, but nobody has the right to make as much noise as they like, at whatever time.

To ensure you do not cause a noise nuisance please follow the Do's and Don'ts Guide to Noise (see over).

### Being a Reasonable Neighbour

Everyone has the right to **reasonable** enjoyment of their own space. Thanet District Council are likely to assess you as being **unreasonable** if:

- You play music too loudly for too long;
- You play music with your windows and doors open;
- You carry out DIY like hammering, drilling or car repairs over a long period or early and late in the day;
- You allow your dog to bark or howl excessively;
- Your children play noisily or are antisocial;
- Your house or car alarm is left sounding;
- You have loud parties after 11pm, or frequently;
- You use raised voices (in the street or with windows and doors open or in the garden) which disturb others.

## Regulatory Action

Thanet District Council Environmental Health have a duty to investigate noise nuisance complaints. Where we assess that a noise coming from a person or property is **unreasonable** and is causing a **noise nuisance** we have a duty to serve an abatement notice requiring the person to eliminate the 'unwanted noise'. Failure to comply with the notice is likely to lead to a fine of up to **£5000** and/or **seizure of all noise making equipment** and accessories (e.g. hi-fi's and CD's).

For further information, advice or if you believe that someone is being unreasonable and causing a noise nuisance then please contact the Environmental Health Section by telephone (01843 577580), email ([environmental.health@thanet.gov.uk](mailto:environmental.health@thanet.gov.uk)), or by writing to or visiting a member of the team at the Council Offices, Cecil Street, Margate, CT9 1XZ.

## The Do's and Don'ts Guide to Noise

- **Do** be co-operative if asked by a neighbour to reduce noise;
- **Do** keep the hi-fi level down (particularly the bass), especially after 11pm. If you must turn it up, use headphones;
- **Do** avoid putting speakers on party walls (or on the floor in flats) – Place them on mats or cupboards;
- **Do** keep all windows and doors closed when playing music;
- **Do** realise that your pleasure should not lead to your neighbour's distress;
- **Do** remember that noise and vibration transmits easily through walls and floors
- **Do** wear slippers or go barefoot if you live in a flat or maisonette, remember your floor may be someone else's ceiling. Carpets and heavy curtains help to absorb sound;
- **Do** ensure that another keyholder can be called to deal with house or car alarms
- **Do** carry out noisy DIY work during the day. Complete the work as quickly as possible and let your neighbours know when you will finish;
- **Do** tell your neighbours if you are having a party and tell them when it will finish. (11pm at the latest! and not often)
- **Don't** carry out noisy DIY work after 8pm or before 8am on weekends, and if possible never on Sundays. Remember that drilling and hammering are particularly disturbing;
- **Don't** play music at a level that annoys your neighbours in their own space. Keep the bass level down;
- **Don't** take a radio or hi-fi speakers outside – Use headphones;
- **Don't** have loud, late parties. (Finish by 11pm);
- **Don't** use domestic appliances late at night (e.g. vacuum cleaners or washing machines);
- **Don't** leave dogs alone for long periods and try to minimise their barking;
- **Don't** allow children to play noisily. If you live in a flat don't allow children to jump about on the floor in a way that disturbs neighbours below;
- **Don't** sound horns, slam doors or rev engines late at night;
- **Don't** slam doors at any time, including kitchen cupboards;
- **Don't** forget your neighbours have a right to peace and quiet as much as you do!

## Environmental Health Information

### Noisy Neighbours



**Creating unwanted noise reduces residents quality of life and harms neighbour relations**

**Why not be reasonable and keep the noise down?**

