

# Anti-social behaviour guidance notes



## Neighbour disputes

This leaflet gives you (our residents and service users) advice about what to do if you experience a problem with your neighbours or those living nearby. It may also provide useful information to those living near L&Q residents.

### What is a neighbour dispute?

Neighbour disputes are disagreements between two or more neighbours, where the problem at hand affects only those individuals and not the wider community. Examples of issues that may spark such disputes include children's play or behaviour, parking, noise nuisance, overhanging trees, boundary disputes and uncontrolled pets. Neighbour disputes are often typified by contradictory accounts of the alleged problem, and without any independent evidence from people who are not involved in the dispute. This makes resolving the problem difficult. However, where the issues concerned are addressed quickly enough, a practical solution or agreement to resolve the problems at hand can often be found. Where parties cannot sort out a dispute themselves, we can offer help, advice, or mediation to help the parties concerned sort out their differences.

### If you have experienced an ongoing problem

There are a range of things that you and we, as your landlord, can do. How appropriate the suggestions listed below are will depend on the type of the incidents that have taken place, the amount of evidence available and the type of tenancy agreement that the parties involved have signed.

### What you can do:

- Talk to your neighbour in a calm and polite way. If their actions disrupt your normal everyday activities, tell them how the issue concerned is affecting you
- Look for a practical solution to the problem, for example agreeing how cars will be parked, controlling pets or play times for children
- If speaking to the person causing the problem does not work, note down the details of the incidents, when they occur and how long they last - an incident record form, available from your local housing office, will help you do this
- Consider taking part in mediation with the other party. Your tenancy services officer should be able to put you in touch with a suitable mediation service, who will use trained mediators to negotiate an agreed settlement with all parties in a dispute

## What will we do?

- Meet you to make an initial assessment of your reports within three days, or 24 hours where violence or threats of violence are involved
- Take steps to minimise any immediate threat to your safety or the safety of your household
- Treat all complaints you make in confidence and not take action that will reveal your identity to others without getting your permission first. If you wish to remain anonymous we will discuss how this may affect the actions we can take
- Determine whether any of the parties concerned have engaged in unreasonable behaviour
- Ask you what action you would like us to take
- Ask you to make a record of incidents that occur - an incident record form, available from your local housing office, will help you do this
- Keep the parties involved informed of progress and confirm in writing when the case is closed or we think there is no case to review

## Following the initial assessment of your case we could also:

- Encourage those involved in the dispute to reach agreement either by themselves, or by organising mediation sessions for them to attend
- Check whether there have been any similar incidents involving the parties concerned
- Talk (with your permission only) to those parties found to be causing reported incidents and talk to others who live near you, to see if they have experienced similar problems
- Where there is evidence that tenancy conditions have been broken by one or more of the parties involved we will consider taking action to enforce these

Where action is to go ahead this may include the following:

- *Issuing a written warning to the person causing the problem*
- *Asking all parties concerned to attend a mediation session*
- *Asking for support from the local authority environmental health department*

Where the problem is serious or persistent we will consider:

- *Taking legal action, which could include: asking the court to demote a secure or assured tenancy agreement to a shorthold tenancy; seeking injunctions; seeking anti-social behaviour orders; or possession action*

- Offer support and advice to any complainants, victims or witnesses attending court