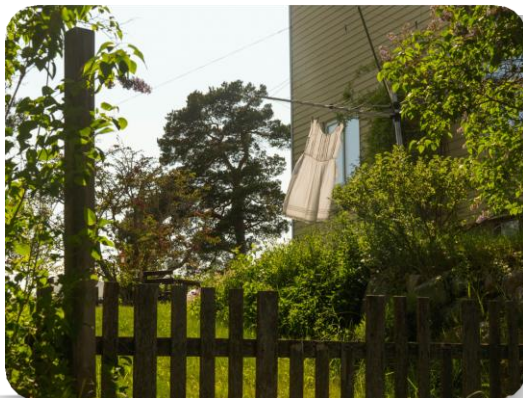


LIVING WELL TOGETHER

A GUIDE FOR TENANTS



POINT OF CONTACT

 0300 123 4000, option 3

 [tenancy.management@
baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:tenancy.management@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk)



Introduction

At Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils we are committed to supporting residents to build good relationships with their neighbours to ensure a safe, welcoming neighbourhood for all.

This guide provides advice on what you can do when a neighbour's behaviour may cause upset and frustration. While this is not the same as a resident demonstrating antisocial behaviour (ASB), some of the issues covered in this guide may, depending on the situation, be escalated to ASB.

In addition to providing tips and recommendations on how to resolve an issue with a neighbour, this toolkit also sets out how Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council may be able to support you.



Getting started

Step 1

If you are having an issue with a neighbour, we recommend actioning Step 1, as outlined below, ahead of seeking assistance from Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council (where appropriate) and actioning Step 2.

Nothing gets resolved without good communication and so Step 1 is to have a respectful discussion with your neighbour, this can go a long way to providing an early resolution.

Ahead of speaking to your neighbour, please refer to the relevant section in this guide to check the tips and guidance on reducing the impact of the issue on your household so you can discuss the options with them.



Step 2

If you have already had a conversation with your neighbour about the issues that are affecting you, but it hasn't been resolved, please contact your Community Housing Officer or our Customer Services team. This can be done via tenancy.management@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk or on 0300 123 4000 Option 3.

Although many cases won't be dealt with under our ASB procedure, we can look at the situation and advise on the most appropriate course of action. This could be:

- Arranging mediation (this can be organised if both households agree).
- Us writing to your neighbour (with your agreement) with guidance.
- Providing you with ways to record issues and gather evidence so we can have a log of what is happening and investigate.
- Referring you to agencies that can support you and your household. These may include Social Services, Mental Health Services, conflict resolution support agencies or the police.

Parking issues

Many of the streets and estates where our tenants live were planned out and designed at a time when households would only require a single parking space.



Now some households have two or three vehicles and sometimes tenants have vehicles from work overnight, we know that limited parking can cause disagreements and frustration for tenants.

For that reason we ask tenants who do have a driveway to ensure they always park on it rather than on the road.

We only have allocated parking in communal parking areas on a few of our estates, other than a number of disabled bays which are for Blue Badge holders only. Most communal parking areas are unallocated.

You cannot park an untaxed car or one without a valid MOT in any of our car parking areas and this includes vehicles declared to be SORN. We will remove these vehicles if they are on council-owned land.



You must only carry out minor repairs to your own vehicles in our car parking areas. You can't use power tools, hoists, welding or spraying equipment.

If you are having issues regarding parking with a neighbour please refer to Step 1 on page 3 initially.

Unless your neighbour is evidenced to be breaching the terms of their tenancy agreement, we are unable to take any further action. We do not monitor our parking areas.

Smells from Smoking and Cooking

In legal terms, internal communal areas such as stairwells and hallways must be smoke-free. However, our tenants are legally allowed to smoke tobacco in their homes and gardens, and this can seep into communal areas.

In the same way, our tenants are free to cook whatever foods they like inside their homes, and there may be times when this will affect communal areas. Neither of these are considered to be antisocial behaviour but there are some steps you can take to reduce the smell from cigarettes or cooking.



- Open windows to allow fresh air to circulate.
- Use extractor fans if you have them.
- Wash up and clean the kitchen as soon as you can after cooking - this will help remove lingering smells.
- Clear away food waste into a container with a closed lid.

Noise in gardens

Our gardens are a place to rest, relax and play. Please be considerate when using your outside space for things which may make noise for your neighbours.



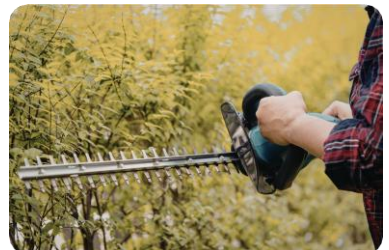
Of course, children will want to play outside when the weather permits and we encourage our tenants to make full use of their outside spaces, however, here are a few tips for ensuring it's not unpleasant for others:

- If a child's toy or game is very noisy, please try to find a quieter alternative for them.
- Try to restrict any really noisy activities - such as mowing or strimming your lawn and using other powered garden tools to the middle of the day, if you are doing it at the weekend.
- If possible, replace any really noisy or defective equipment.
- If you are planning a social event in your garden such as a barbecue or party, please tell your neighbours beforehand.



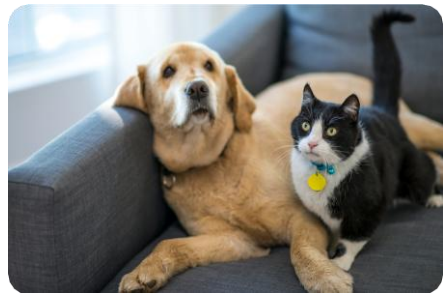
- Avoid amplified music outside and, if anyone does complain, please turn it down and either end your party or bring your guests indoors at a reasonable time.
- Barbecues, trampolines, paddling pools and fireworks are not permitted in communal areas.

- When possible, let your neighbours know beforehand if you are undertaking noisy work such as power washing or hedge cutting.
- Please don't start work before 8am on weekdays or 10am on weekends and finish by 4pm if possible.



Pets

We allow our tenants to keep pets at home as long as they have written permission from us.



There are, however, situations in which behaviour or noise from pets can become a nuisance. Whilst it's natural for a dog to bark occasionally, it can become frustrating if it is continuous. And similarly, whilst cats have the right to roam, they can be a nuisance in terms of being destructive and going to the toilet in other people's gardens.

With some caged animals such as birds or hamsters, activity may increase during the night so carefully considering where they are placed in relation to neighbours is important.

If you feel that:

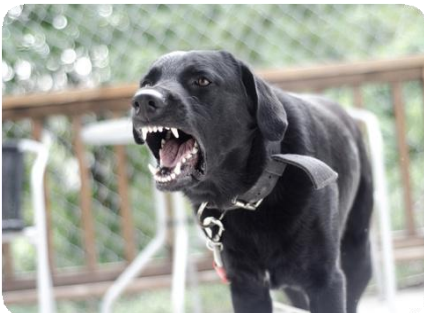
- A pet is constantly disturbing you.
- Your neighbour is not picking up their dog's faeces.
- You are concerned about a neighbour not keeping their dog under control in a communal area.

Please refer to Step 1 and have a calm conversation with your neighbour.

When could a pet issue be ASB?

If you think there might be immediate danger because of a pet please contact the police.

If you are concerned about the welfare of an animal please contact the RSPCA. If noise from pets is daily and for continuous periods and preventing you from sleeping please contact us.



Loud noise

Most activity carried out at home will make some sort of noise - closing doors, vacuuming, listening to the radio. However excessive noise can be a nuisance so here are some tips for reducing noise in the home.

- Keep volumes at a reasonable level, especially the bass.
- If you have a bedroom TV keep it quiet at night - especially if your bedroom adjoins someone else's.
- Only play or practise a musical instrument when it will least impact neighbours.
- Consider using headphones if listening to music during unsociable hours.
- Be mindful of others when windows are open.



Household appliances:

- Try to position appliances on an even floor or use mats under washing machines or tumble dryers.
- Vacuum at a reasonable time, especially if you live in a flat - no late night or early morning sprees!



- Try to run washing cycles at reasonable times and remember that it's the last cycle - the spin - that is likely to make the most noise.
- Don't fix blenders etc. to walls shared with your neighbour (party walls).
- Put soft closers on cupboard doors that are on party walls.

DIY activities:

- Most people do DIY in their homes at some point and any related noise is not considered antisocial behaviour.
- Before carrying out any noisy work we suggest tenants speak to their neighbours and agree what times are best to avoid intrusion.

Again - if you are having trouble with persistent noise try, initially to refer to Step 1 and have a calm conversation with your neighbour - they may well not be aware they are causing disturbance.

We will only consider loud noises to be ASB if it is persistent and we require you to submit recordings.

Persistent means noise that lasts for continuous periods of over 30 minutes a day, for at least 5 days within 1 week. Or noise that occurs during the night between 11pm and 7am.

Fly-tipping and rubbish



Fly-tipping is defined as the illegal dumping of waste, including black bags, furniture, and white goods. It is treated as a serious breach of tenancy agreements and a criminal offence under the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

Consequences for tenants:

- Penalties: Perpetrators can face fines up to £50,000, Community Protection Notices, and up to 5 years in prison.
- Tenancy Breach: Such actions are classified as anti-social behaviour (ASB) and can lead to eviction or legal action.

Reporting fly-tipping

- If you discover waste that has been fly-tipped, please [let us know](#) by reporting it as soon as possible.
- Please make a note of the date and time that you found the tipping, as well as its exact location (and whether it is in, or near water).
- Take photos, if it is safe to do so.

Bulky waste and rubbish in gardens

Under the terms of our tenancy agreement, you must keep your garden and surrounding areas free from rubbish, furniture or domestic or commercial appliances.

We may remove these items by giving you a minimum of seven days' notice and we will charge you for doing this.

Household and garden waste, plus larger and electrical items, can be taken to a [Suffolk Recycling Centre](#) (rubbish tip).



Noise from arguments



Our first concern in relation to shouting and arguing would relate to potential domestic abuse or a safeguarding issue.

If you suspect domestic abuse, or are concerned about the safety of any of your neighbours and there is an immediate risk, please ring the police on 999. You can then let us know by contacting our Domestic Abuse Link Worker – linkadvice@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk or call 0300 123 4000, option 3 and ask for Domestic Abuse Support.

You can get further information from our website [here](#) and the Suffolk County Council safeguarding web pages [here](#).



Alternatively, in a non-emergency situation you can make a safeguarding referral directly to Suffolk County Council. Please try to capture as much detail as possible so you can let the team know when you call such as:

- Does the person appear vulnerable?
- Might there be drugs or alcohol involved?
- Who do you think lives in the property?
- Have you noticed anyone new move into the home or if there are new visitors or an increase in visitors?
- Are you concerned about anyone's welfare?
- Are there any children living in the property?

Anyone can refer a safeguarding concern. If you are worried that someone is at risk of abuse, neglect, or harm, please report it to Suffolk County Council using the links below.

[Report abuse of an adult](#)

[Report a child at risk of harm, abuse, or neglect](#)



Criminal Activity & Conflict

There are some issues between neighbours that are considered to be criminal offences and need to be reported to the police.



You can call 999 for emergencies, 101 for non-emergencies or contact Suffolk Police online at www.suffolk.police.uk.

Alternatively, you can contact your local police team or if you wish to remain anonymous, and it is not an emergency, you can make a report to Crimestoppers online or call 0800 555 111. Situations in which you may prefer this route include hate crime, assault or threats of violence.

Drug dealing is a criminal offence, and so is using drugs (including cannabis) unless they have been prescribed by a doctor for medicinal use and must be reported to the police.

Our officers work alongside the police and other agencies to tackle these issues in our communities. Drug offences are also a breach of tenancy and leasehold conditions. Once you have reported anything to the police please contact your local Community Housing Officer by calling 0300 123 4000, option 3. Or at tenancy.management@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk,

Minor personal conflict

This sort of issue often involves a disagreement between neighbours. It can include unfriendly gossip, staring, children arguing and disputes about communal areas.

It's important to remember that we don't always know what's going on in other people's personal lives and be mindful that might be affecting their behaviour. Please refer to Step 1 and try to resolve things calmly and before they escalate too far.



To find the policies and procedures for the subjects within this booklet please check our websites:

www.babergh.gov.uk/housing
www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/housing



English	If you would like this document translated or require an accessible format such as large print or braille, please call 0300 123 4000, and select option 3.
Kurdish	ئەگەر دەستوورێت نەم بەلگەنەسەر وەر بگێڕێت بۆ ئێوەمان بە شێوازیکی دەستگەشتن هەمە وەک چایی گۆرە بۆ نووسینی نابینایان braille، تکایە پەیوەندی بکە بە 0300 123 4000، و بۆ زاردی 3 هەڵبژێرە.
Polish	Jeśli chcesz, aby ten dokument został przetłumaczony lub potrzebujesz innego dostępnego formatu, takiego jak duży druk lub alfabet Braille'a, zadzwoń pod numer: 0300 123 4000 i wybierz wewnętrzny 3.
Portuguese	Caso pretenda esta informação traduzida, ou em formato acessível como impressão grande ou braille, por favor ligue para o número 0300 123 4000 e selecione a opção 3.
Pashto	که چېرې ددغه سند ژباړه غواړئ یا یې لویې چاپې یا بریل یې ته اړتیا ولری، مهرباني وکړئ 0300 123 4000 ته زنگ ووهئ او 3 اېشن یا غوراوی وټاکئ.
Romanian	Dacă doriți ca acest document să fie tradus sau dacă aveți nevoie de un format accesibil, cum ar fi caractere mari de tipar sau Braille, vă rugăm să apelați 0300 123 4000 și să selectați opțiunea 3.