

# **NOISE**

The Public Protection Division is responsible for the Council's legal powers to deal with noise, including vibration. The following is a summary of the type of noise we are able to deal with and the procedure that we follow in doing so.

## **Road Traffic Noise**

There are few controls available to the Council to control noise from moving traffic on the highway, or the engines of stationary vehicles. It is sometimes possible for other agencies to investigate road traffic noise e.g. if a road is excessively used by heavy goods vehicles, the Highways Agency can be contacted for advice. Sometimes they can arrange for traffic management measures to be provided.

Where noise from a new or substantially altered road causes an increased level of interference to residents, grants may be available to provide sound insulation. These grants are administered by the Highways Agency  
The Highways Agency can be contacted via

08457 50 40 30

[ha\\_info@highways.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ha_info@highways.gsi.gov.uk)

<http://www.highways.gov.uk>

Excessive noise from the engine of individual vehicles is be regulated by the Motor Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations, which are administered by the police.

Where new housing is proposed close to existing busy roads, we may require the housing developer to install sound insulation and ventilation as part of the planning permission for the new housing, depending on the noise levels from the road,.

## **Railway Noise**

Sometimes residents are disturbed by noise from railways near or under their homes; either from the trains themselves or by works carried out on the tracks or at railway premises.

The law regarding railways specifically prevents the Council from taking action on noise from trains. The Council can make comments and recommendations to a public enquiry if a new or significantly altered or improved railway is proposed. In addition, with new or significantly altered or improved railways, noise insulation may have to be supplied and installed by the railway provider, if the noise levels

of The Noise Insulation (Railways and Other Guided Transport Systems) Regulations are likely to be exceeded.

However, we can advise householders on noise insulation schemes they can install, or on the construction of fences or walls, which can reduce noise from the railway. Residents affected by railway noise can also contact the railway operator directly in order to register complaints and request help. Details of railway operators can be found via the following web page

[http://www.britainexpress.com/great\\_british\\_sites/train-ops.htm](http://www.britainexpress.com/great_british_sites/train-ops.htm)

In general Network Rail carry out the majority of works to the railways. They can be contacted on

**Network Rail National 24hr Helpline : 08457 11 41 41**

<http://www.networkrail.co.uk/>

Where new housing is proposed close to existing railways the Council may require the housing developer to install sound insulation and ventilation as part of the planning permission for the new housing, depending on the noise levels from the trains.

Works carried out on the track or railway premises constitute building works and in some cases, the resulting noise can be controlled using the Control of Pollution Act 1974. The Public Protection Division can advise or request the contractor to employ noise reduction measures such as shielding, barriers, noise insulation, substituting quieter machinery and agreeing less disruptive working hours. Where possible, those likely to be affected will be consulted in the negotiations to try to agree acceptable and workable solutions.

Sometimes, it is not possible to reach a solution, which satisfies all parties. There are often over-riding considerations associated with operation of train services, workers and rail safety, and what is known as “possession” of the tracks to allow works. Usually, a compromise has to be brokered which allows work to go ahead at a time inconvenient to nearby residents, but which ensures that reasonably practicable steps are taken to reduce the impact of the resulting noise.

### **Aircraft Noise**

Complaints regarding aircraft noise may arise from commercial air traffic passing over Islington or police helicopters or light aircraft surveying the area.

The Council is unable to take action against noise from aircraft, including helicopters.

The noise output from aircraft is controlled by aircraft construction regulations and restrictions on air movements and altitude administered by the Civil Aviation Authority, on 020 7379 7311.

Further advice on aircraft noise can be obtained from  
Aviation Environment Federation  
Broken Wharf House

2 Broken Wharf  
London EC4V 3DT  
Tel: 020 7248 2223  
Email: [info@aef.org.uk](mailto:info@aef.org.uk)  
<http://www.aef.org.uk/>

or

**HACAN Clear Skies,**  
**PO Box 339,**  
**Twickenham,**  
**TW1 2XF**  
email [info@hacan.org.uk](mailto:info@hacan.org.uk)  
Tel **020 8876 0455**  
<http://www.hacan.org.uk/>

Advice on helicopter noise can be obtained from the  
British Helicopter Advisory Board  
Graham Suite, West Entrance  
Fairoaks Airport  
Chobham  
Surrey GU24 8HX  
Tel: 01276 856100  
Fax: 01276 856126  
Email: [info@bhab.org](mailto:info@bhab.org)  
<http://www.bhab.org/>

### **Pubs and Clubs**

Noise originating from pubs and clubs can be very annoying and disturbing to others if it is uncontrolled and exceeds reasonable levels. Residents must be prepared to experience some inconvenience if they live near to a pub or club, but this can become intolerable, for example if late night music noise prevents residents from going to sleep.

Whenever a new pub or club is opening, or an existing premises is undergoing refurbishment, we try to anticipate likely noise problems. Controls can then be incorporated into the design and building works via the planning permission or entertainment licence so that noise generated does not cause nuisance to residents.

Where complaints are received about noise from an existing pub or club, Public Protection staff will visit the premises to assess the seriousness of the complaint and try to establish the cause and possible solutions to the problem. The owner or manager of the pub or club will then be informed and advised on possible solutions and asked to sort the problem out within a reasonable time. Wherever possible, improvements will be achieved by agreement. If this is not successful, the action necessary to resolve the noise problem will be incorporated as requirements in a statutory notice or as conditions in their entertainment licence. We can then prosecute the person responsible for the nuisance and object to the

renewal of their licence if the problem is still not resolved. More information regarding the licensing of premises can be obtained via the Public Protection Division's

Licensing Team  
159 Upper Street  
London N1 1RE  
Tel: 020 7527 3233 / 3052.

Sources of noise from pubs and clubs include music, ventilation systems and extractor fans, patrons coming and going and vehicles delivering goods or collecting waste.

Controls can be imposed to:

- limit the volume of music
- to require the provision of sound insulation
- to restrict the operating hours of the venue
- control the mode of operation of noisy machinery
- manage the opening of doors and windows.

The investigating officer will recommend controls according to the nature and seriousness of the problem and advise complainants of action taken and what to do if the problem continues.

### **Noisy Parties**

Most people like to party from time to time, and those parties usually involve loud music and late nights. Where this is an occasional event and the music is controlled, most people will be tolerant of a degree of modest intrusion. However, it is quite a different matter if the parties become too regular, the music played too loud, and the party goes on for too long, too late.

If you intend to hold a party, consider the following advice:

- tell your neighbours what is happening.
- arrange the music so that it only entertains your guests – not the whole neighbourhood
- come indoors and close doors and windows after midnight
- Turn the volume down after midnight -going outside to make sure that it is no longer audible is a good guide to getting the music volume right.
- Ask your guests to leave quietly (put a notice on the door).

If you have been disturbed by one or more parties, and think that there may be more at the same address, you can contact the Noise Team during the day, Monday to Friday on Tel No 0207 527 3258 for advice.

If the party is ongoing, ring Noise Patrol who will try to witness the noise. The Noise Patrol work

Sunday to Thursday, 8pm until 2am,  
Friday and Saturday, 10pm until 4am and can be contacted on 0207 527 3229 at these times.

We will ask you to give your details and information relating to the party. This might include when and where it was, how it disturbed you and how long it lasted. We will give you advice and if the problem is happening during the hours of the Noise Patrol, they will probably ask to visit you. If the noise is causing a legal nuisance we will probably visit the party keeper, inform them of the problems they are causing, how to resolve the matter and what may happen if they persist.

If the party keeper does not respond positively to the Noise Patrol's advice or further parties at the same address happen regularly, we may serve a statutory notice, which imposes legal controls on the noise. This does not necessarily prevent the party from going ahead; it just requires that the noise be kept to a reasonable level. If the notice is not complied with, legal proceedings can be taken against the offender.

### **Noisy Neighbours**

From time to time, we may all be able to hear noise from our neighbours. Most of the time this does not affect or bother us, but sometimes it can interfere with enjoyment of our homes. The Public Protection Division may be able to help resolve these problems. In addition, if you are a Council tenant or the noise that is bothering you comes from a Council property you should also contact the Housing Officer for the premises. Contact details can be found below.

Firstly, you should identify where the noise is coming from, if you can. Then try having a polite and courteous word with your neighbour, they may not be aware that they can be heard from outside their home.

If this does not work, or you cannot speak to your neighbour, you can contact us for

help. We will need your details, and information on the nature of the problem and the source of the noise. You can telephone the Public Protection Division's Noise Team on 020 7527 3258 during the day Monday to Friday or the Noise Patrol on 020 7527 3229 at the following times

Sunday to Thursday, 8pm until 2am,  
Friday and Saturday, 10pm until 4am

Unfortunately, we cannot respond to anonymous complaints or complaints where we cannot visit your home, as effectively as if you do give your name and address or allow a visit. However all personal information is treated confidentially and will not be revealed to anybody else without your permission.

We will ask you to keep a diary of the noisy occurrences for 3-4 weeks or sometimes longer if the noise does not recur too often.

During the day, provided staff are available, we may come out, listen to the noise, and contact your neighbour to try to resolve the problem.

At night, If the noise is occurring during the Noise Patrol hours, we will respond as quickly as possible and in any case to 75% of complaints within one hour and 90% of complaints within two hours. Where a legal nuisance is established the Noise Patrol will usually contact the noise perpetrator on the night to try to resolve the problem.

For most situations where the noise is unreasonable, and causing a legal nuisance, a polite but firm informal approach by the Public Protection staff to the noise perpetrator resolves the problem. If the noise perpetrator does not respond to the informal approach, formal action may be taken.

This formal action involves the service of a statutory notice requiring specific measures to be taken to reduce the noise. If this does not work the noise perpetrator may be prosecuted and/or the noise making equipment seized. In the case of Council tenants causing a noise nuisance, details of our actions are reported to the Housing Department who may enforce the tenancy agreement, which can result in injunctions or eviction of persistent noise nuisance perpetrators.

Details of Housing Officers covering specific areas may be obtained via <http://www.homesforislington.org.uk/homesforislington/housingArea/index.asp>

or

Contact Islington  
222 Upper Street  
London N1 1XR  
Tel: 020 7527 2000  
Email: [contact@islington.gov.uk](mailto:contact@islington.gov.uk)  
Minicom: 020 7527 1900  
Fax: 020 7527 5001

### **Commercial Noise**

Sometimes people at home or at work are disturbed by noise from commercial or trade premises. Examples are machinery noise, fan noises, vehicle movements, alarms and ventilation systems. Where these noises occur continuously or loudly, or when they are new noises, they can be very annoying.

If you are disturbed by commercial noise and are able to identify the source, try visiting the premises and speaking to the manager. In many cases, they may not be aware that there is a problem and may be able to resolve the problem quickly and easily.

If you are unable to do this, or it is not successful, contact the Public Protection Division Noise Team on 020 7527 3258 between 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday. If the noise is occurring at night ring Noise Patrol on 020 7527 3229. Noise Patrol operating hours are Sunday to Thursday, 8pm until 2am,

Friday and Saturday, 10pm until 4am.

Be prepared to provide your own contact details, and information relating to the noise—what it sounds like, when it occurs, how long it goes on, where it comes from (if you know), and how it affects you. You may be asked to keep a diary of the disturbance.

We will visit both you and the premises, and try to identify the cause of the problem. Sometimes a resolution is simple (e.g. persuading the manager to turn down  or  ban radios, close doors or re-site noisy machinery. Sometimes it is more complicated; for example where the noise is associated with the process itself. In these situations, officers may take noise measurements at your property and visit the noise source to inspect the cause of the problem. We will give an opinion on how unreasonable, or not, the noise is. We take into account not only how loud the noise is but also the timing, duration, frequency of occurrence of the noise. In mixed residential/commercial areas, a certain amount of noise should be expected.

If we consider the noise unreasonable, we will identify a solution with an appropriate timescale, and try to maintain the co-operation of the management to try to resolve the problem as quickly as is practicable.

Where progress is slow or co-operation is not achieved, we will serve a statutory notice that may incorporate proposed solutions and time scale. The recipient of the notice may appeal against its requirements, which may delay the resolution of the problem.

In cases where the requirements of the notice are not met within a reasonable time, and the problem persists, legal proceedings may follow.

### **Car Alarms**

The Public Protection Division can silence continually or persistently sounding car alarms. A typical situation is where a car has been parked in a residential road or car park whilst the owner is absent, perhaps for several hours or even days.

If you are bothered by a car alarm during the day, you should contact the Noise Team on 020 7527 3258. If it is at night then contact the Noise Patrol on 020 7527 3229. The Noise Patrol is available  
Sunday to Thursday, 8pm until 2am,  
Friday and Saturday, 10pm until 4am

Please give you details and the location of the car alarm. If possible, provide details of the colour, model and registration number of the vehicle as this helps us deal with the problem more quickly.

The law requires the Public Protection Division to undertake reasonable steps to trace the owner or driver of the car in order to advise them of the situation. The

investigating officer will visit the complainant, hear the effect of the noise, and serve statutory notices if necessary.

If the owner does not silence the alarm, attempts will be made by the investigating officer to attend the scene with a contractor and silence the alarm, or remove the vehicle to a secure area. The registered keeper of the car will be charged for the costs incurred.

However, please be prepared for a resolution to take up to several hours, as we must attempt to trace the owner before making arrangements with a contractor and the police to take action ourselves. We will keep you informed of progress.

### **Barking Dogs**

Dogs that bark loudly and persistently cause a great deal of annoyance to people living nearby. The Public Protection Division, together with the Animal Warden, may be able to help.

Dogs bark for many reasons – because they are lonely, bored, frightened, aggressive, excited, hungry or wanting attention. Most dogs are well behaved and well looked after, and can only be heard occasionally. However, some never seem to stop barking. If your dog is causing a problem, try the following action:

- if the dog is left out, keep it indoors
- if the dog is shut in, take it out for exercise more often
- provide some company, such as a radio left on at low volume, when you go out
- take it for regular walks
- do not leave the dog for too long on its own
- do not leave your dog barking in the garden or on a balcony if you are at home.

If these measures do not work, contact the Animal Warden on 020 7527 3222 for further help – you may find that some simple re-training measures or an anti-barking collar will work.

If you are bothered by a barking dog try and identify where it lives, before you contact the Noise Team on 0207 527 3258.

You will be asked to keep a noise diary for around two weeks, where you should note the times that the barking is so bad that it disturbs you – usually this involves persistent loud barking or howling for extended periods of time rather than isolated, infrequent short term barking.

The Animal Warden will visit the owner of the dog, try to identify the cause of the problem and offer advice to try to resolve the problem informally.

In cases where the co-operation of the dog owner is not achieved, formal legal steps can be taken requiring action to reduce the noise from the animal.

The Animal Warden and any other officers involved will keep you informed of progress.

### **Burglar/Fire Alarms**

If you are disturbed by a continuously ringing burglar or fire alarm, the Public Protection Division may be able to silence it. We can deal with an alarm more quickly if you can identify the premises from where the alarm is sounding. If it is on a neighbour's property, ask around to see if anyone knows where he or she might be. Give any information you can to the officer who contacts you.

The officer will make their own enquiries and will visit your premises to listen to the noise. If no key holder for the alarm can be located, the officer may obtain a Magistrates Warrant to enter the premises and silence or re-set the alarm. The owner of the premises will be re-charged any costs incurred.

Many people install burglar alarms within their homes or in commercial premises. These alarms vary greatly in their sophistication – from simple audible alarms that rely on passers-by to react to them, to outwardly silent systems that alert staff at a central security control centre. It is usually the cheaper DIY systems that cause noise problems as they may not be properly installed or maintained and can be over sensitive, no one is specifically responsible for reacting if they are triggered.

If you have an alarm on your property please refer to the section on registering alarm details on our web page at <http://www.islington.gov.uk/Environment/Noise/1445.asp>

Precautions, which can be taken to prevent false activation or nuisance to your neighbours, include:

- buying the best an alarm you can afford
- ensuring the alarm has a 20 minute cut-off device (this is a legal requirement in London)
- ensuring the alarm complies with the relevant British Standard (BS4737)
- Installing the alarm as per its instructions – or better still get an alarm technician to do it for you
- testing the alarm after installation and from time to time thereafter (during the day and for a short time only please)

### **Is your burglar alarm registered?**

If your house or business is fitted with a burglar alarm, you must notify the Council and the police.

Failure to do this can have serious implications. Your neighbours could be unreasonably disturbed if the alarm goes off and the Council may have to enter

your property in order to silence it. The costs incurred will be charged back to you.

Your responsibilities are set out in Section 23 of the London Local Authorities Act 1991. In particular, you are required to:

- notify the police of names and addresses of nominated key holders
- notify the Council within 48 hours of the installation of an alarm
- ensure that the alarm is fitted with a 20 minute cut out device

We also recommend that you ensure the alarm is regularly maintained, and we suggest that it be serviced yearly.

### **Keyholders**

Nominated keyholders are two people (not the occupier) who hold spare sets of keys to your property, so if necessary they can gain access to your property and reset the alarm. As an alternative, you may use a specialist company as a keyholder. You must ensure that the company can offer a 24 hour, seven day a week service and that they have a complete set of keys.

The Metropolitan Police Key-holder database offers two types of registration **FREE** and **PREMIUM**. Registration means the police know who to contact in the event of an emergency. They can also make this information available to the local authority upon request

Go to [www.metkeyholders.org.uk](http://www.metkeyholders.org.uk) or call: 0800 197 7711 (Lines are open 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday). We advise that you confirm your details annually.

By doing the above, you fulfil your legal requirements.

### **Construction & Demolition Site Noise**

Building sites are often a cause of significant short-term noise nuisance, some of which may be unavoidable. The law recognises that construction and demolition noise is often unavoidable and temporary, and the standards of noise control the Council can enforce for construction and demolition sites are significantly less stringent than for other noisy premises.

If you consider noise from a construction site to be unreasonable or unnecessary, try visiting the site office and speaking to the site manager. The contractor may not be aware they are causing a problem. Be prepared to offer a compromise.

If you are unable to do this, contact the Public Protection division, giving details of the noise problem, how it affects you, the times of the problem, and the source (if you know it). This is important, as the noise may not be occurring when we visit. You must also provide your own details.

Typical noise problems on construction sites include:

**Delivery and operating times** - the usual arrangements for noisy works are

- 8am –6pm Monday to Friday,
- 8am – 1pm Saturdays;
- no noisy work on Sundays or Public Holidays (unless by prior agreement in special circumstances).

However, under specific circumstances noisy work may take place outside these hours, for example the delivery or despatch of very large items of plant, which may involve traffic restrictions. The police often insist that this occurs at weekends or during the evening.

**Generators and fixed noisy plant** – most often controlled by considerate siting, silencing or screening.

**Moving vehicles** - best controlled by choice of site layout and traffic routes (if possible) and the use of well-maintained vehicles.

**Reversing alarms** – can be avoided by substitution with alternative, quiet safety measures, and employing traffic management systems that minimise the need for reversing.

**Radios** – the site manager may agree to ban radios from certain parts of the site and ensure they are not audible outside the site boundary.

Contractors will be encouraged to advise local residents of the timing of and need for any noisy work that cannot be otherwise controlled. Examples would include piling or night-time work on the highway.

Where informal agreements cannot be reached or agreed to, the Public Protection Division may set noise limits or specify other control measures, which will be incorporated into a legal notice. Enforcement action can be taken if this is not complied with.

If you have any queries or problems regarding noise and vibration you can contact the Public Protection Division Noise Team during between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday on 0207 527 3258.