

For Attached Houses

Noise transmission can occur horizontally if wood or laminate floor finishes are able to touch the shared party wall between the houses. To reduce the possibility of complaints, the 7 Step Guide should also be followed.

For Detached Houses

To reduce noise transmission within your own home using such floor finishes the 7 Step Guide should also be followed.

Renting a house or apartment

If you rent your dwelling from a local authority, housing association, registered social landlord or private owner, you should check your lease or rental agreement and contact the appropriate person to check if laminate or wood floor finishes are permitted to be installed.

If you install such flooring without the appropriate permission, you may be asked to remove it and re-install carpets at your expense.

What to do in the event of problems

By far the best way to resolve problems with noise from neighbours is through talking with your neighbours and explaining your concerns. It is more than likely that they are unaware of the problem and will be happy to discuss a solution.

Suggest that if an underlay has not been installed that the floor be lifted and one installed. An agreement to share the cost of this may help to persuade them.

Alternatively laying rugs on the areas of the floor where problems are most experienced may be less costly and would be far more effective at reducing the noise level.

If you are having difficulty talking to your neighbour directly, Islington will be able to put you in touch with a free mediation service who are expert in dealing with disputes.

Further information

Islington Noise Service

Public Protection Division
Islington Council
159 Upper Street
London N1 1RE

Daytime Noise Service

Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm
Telephone: 020 7527 3258

Night time Noise Patrol

Sunday to Thursday, 8pm to 2am
Friday and Saturday, 10pm to 4am
Telephone: 020 7527 3229

E-mail: noise.issues@islington.gov.uk

Website:

www.islington.gov.uk/Environment/Noise



For further advice, contact the Islington Noise Service on 020 7527 3258.

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Noise associated with laminate and wood flooring

Thinking of replacing a carpet with a hard floor finish?

Do you live in a flat or apartment with neighbours below?

Please read this first!

Hard flooring surfaces such as timber laminates, sanded floorboards and ceramic tiles have become increasingly popular in recent years. This trend has, however, led to an increasing number of concerns with regard to noise and disturbance to neighbours, specifically for apartments and flats.

This guide has been prepared by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) to provide advice and to highlight the potential noise issues of replacing a soft floor covering with a hard floor finish.

The following guide covers issues relating to apartments and flats, types of floor structure and good practice for terraced and semi-detached houses.

Apartments and flats

Noise and hard floor surfaces

Research has shown that when a carpet is removed and replaced with wood or laminate flooring the noise your neighbour in the property below experiences will increase significantly.

If you live in an apartment or a flat and do not have any properties below, this will generally not cause noise issues (see Best Practice for Installation for Houses).

The removal of carpet in your home could change the noise environment in your downstairs neighbour's home from relatively quiet to unbearable. This is likely to have an adverse effect on their enjoyment of their property.

In some cases if the situation continues, their health and well being may suffer. This can lead to significant distress for occupants and tension and disputes between neighbours. **It may also result in legal action being taken against you.**

Minimising noise transmission

To avoid disturbing your neighbour, you should install a resilient underlay under your laminate floor. Extensive use of rugs in areas of high foot traffic will help. Also wearing soft-soled shoes, such as slippers, will reduce the amount of noise you generate.

If you are considering installing a laminate or wood finish floor, you should minimise the amount of noise, which could be heard by your neighbours. The best way of doing this is by laying a resilient underlay.

Advantages of underlays:

- they reduce noise transmission to your neighbours
- they prolong the life of your laminate or wood floor
- they reduce noise and vibration in your own home
- they allow the floor to be more resilient and reduce injuries to children and the elderly when they fall
- they may avoid the potential for confrontation with your neighbour

7 Step Guide to Best Practice:

Installing laminates and wood floors

Step 1: lay your underlay so that it lies flat and not uneven

Step 2: ensure the underlay edges are abutted and do not overlap, as this will create an uneven surface for your laminate/wood floor

Step 3: lay the underlay so that it has at least 10cm extra, turned up at each perimeter wall

If existing skirting not being removed:

Step 4: lay the laminate/wood floor so that it stops at least 2cm from the wall or existing skirting

Step 5: pull the underlay around the edge of the laminate

Step 6: fix a small wood channel to the base of the skirting or wall, so that the underlay passes between the floor and channel

Step 7: trim off the protruding underlay

If using new skirting or removing and re-using old skirting:

Step 4: lay the laminate/wood floor so that it stops at least 2cm from the wall

Step 5: pull the underlay around the edge of the laminate (see over)

Step 6: fix the skirting to the wall so that the underlay passes between the floor and skirting base

Step 7: trim off the protruding underlay

