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**If you are a customer of Bromford Support,  
please speak to the Bromford colleague who is  
working with you for more information.**

# Being neighbourly

**Helping you solve problems with your neighbours**



[www.bromfordgroup.co.uk](http://www.bromfordgroup.co.uk)

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If you have difficulty understanding this information or would prefer to receive an alternative format (i.e. translated, audio, Braille or large print) please contact us.

**This leaflet explains how we can work with you to sort out disputes between neighbours who are our tenants, licensees, leaseholders or shared owners, and other people causing problems in your neighbourhood.**

Our specialist Community Safety Team works with other agencies to tackle antisocial behaviour. Our housing managers, support workers and customer relationship managers are also trained to help deal with this.

Many things can cause problems between neighbours, from minor disagreements to more serious and complicated problems, including harassment and intimidation. It is important that we work together to sort out the difficulties – we need your cooperation every step of the way.

**We ask you, your family and your visitors to:**

- stick to the terms of your tenancy, licence or lease
- avoid dropping litter or leaving rubbish
- report anyone you see vandalising or damaging the neighbourhood
- report things in the neighbourhood that need repairing as soon as you find them
- respect your neighbours
- look after any garden you have
- help us investigate people causing a nuisance or harassing others.

**What will you do if I am having problems with my neighbours?**

It depends on the type of problem, but we will help you sort it out as soon as possible. Please tell us immediately if you think someone is being harassed or intimidated.

First, we may ask you to try to sort out the matter with your neighbour yourself. This can be better than involving us at a very early stage, which may make your neighbour feel threatened and so make things worse. By speaking to your neighbour, you may be able to settle the matter straight away without involving us.

### How should I tell my neighbour they are causing a nuisance?

Explain to your neighbour, calmly and reasonably, exactly what is causing you a problem and why – be very specific. Your neighbour may not even be aware that they are causing a nuisance. Don't get involved in an argument.

If your neighbour behaves unreasonably, walk away. Don't have a row or retaliate (take revenge) in any way.

### What if I retaliate against my neighbour?

We know things are difficult and you may feel angry and frustrated. But please don't retaliate against your neighbour. Doing so would weaken your case if you want to take further action. It would also limit or stop any action we could take. Also, your neighbour may make a claim against you.

### What if I have tried to sort out the matter myself and it hasn't worked?

Please contact us. We will talk to you about the problem and tell you if we can help. We may put you in touch with other agencies, such as the police or an environmental health team. If we do this, **we will work with these agencies to help sort out the problem.**

If we can help, we will try to sort out minor problems as soon as possible by taking action and negotiating with all concerned. If things are or become more serious, we will decide with you on:

- an action plan, setting out what we will do and what we need you to do
- how and when we will keep in touch with you while we are sorting out the problem.

We always aim to:

- sort out problems as calmly as possible
- support you through your difficult time
- ensure that neighbours who cause problems behave better in future.

### What will the action plan involve?

The action we take and arrange with you will depend on the problem. We may:

- ask you to keep a diary of events
- work with other agencies – such as environmental health, the police, social services and schools
- contact other witnesses for information
- set up mediation between you and your neighbour (please ask for our separate leaflet 'Neighbour mediation – getting help to sort out a dispute')
- negotiate acceptable behaviour contracts (ABCs) with the people involved
- interview you and your neighbour
- set up surveillance (such as CCTV)
- take practical action like explaining where boundaries are or who can park where
- remove offensive graffiti (**within 24 hours of being reported to us**).

**We will take legal action in serious and persistent cases if a customer breaks a condition of their tenancy, lease or licence agreement.** The action we can take depends on the case and the strength of our supporting evidence.

We aim to ensure everyone in the community can live in a neighbourhood free from abuse, nuisance and harassment. Our policies on antisocial behaviour, domestic violence, racial harassment and hate crime try to stamp out such behaviour and support the victims.

## What legal action can you take?

The following legal action will help us tackle antisocial behaviour:

- Antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs) are orders that a court can grant on anyone aged 10 or over. An ASBO bans someone from behaving in a specific way. It may also keep them out of specific areas, or set a curfew (a time when they must be at home). An ASBO does not give someone a criminal record. But breaking it turns the incident into a criminal offence and the person may get a custodial (prison) sentence. An ASBO runs for at least two years.
- Injunctions are orders that a court grants to stop someone aged 18 or over acting in a specific way, approaching specific people or being in specific areas. It can also force them to do something. There are two types of injunction – with notice and without notice. ‘With notice’ means the person is told about the injunction before it is given, so they can attend the court hearing if they want to.

If necessary, the court can add a power of arrest to the injunction. This enables the police to arrest the person if they break the injunction.

The court decides how long the injunction will last. If the person breaks the conditions of the injunction, they must go back to the court, which will decide what action to take. The action could be a fine, a suspended sentence – where the person is found guilty but only has to go to prison if they break the terms of a probation order – or a custodial (prison) sentence.

- Possession actions are when we ask a court to order the tenant to give us back the home they are renting from us because they have behaved in an antisocial way. To do this, we must find people willing to give evidence in court to prove the tenant has broken the tenancy agreement and caused a nuisance to people in the area. We give all the information to the court, which sets a hearing date. We then present the evidence and the judge decides whether to grant a possession order. If an order is granted, the judge decides whether it will be an outright or suspended order. An outright order means the court lets us repossess the property immediately. A suspended order means the court lets us repossess the property only if the tenant breaks their tenancy conditions again during a set period. If the tenant sticks to the conditions, they can stay living in the property.

- Demotion orders are when we apply to a court to reduce a tenant’s security of tenure. Demotion orders remove some tenancy rights, including the Right to Buy and the Right to Exchange. When the court grants the order, the tenant gets a less secure form of tenancy. Demoted tenancies last one year unless we take legal action during that year. If that happens, the demoted tenancy continues until we withdraw the demotion. Demotion orders give a serious warning to the customer, since if they continue to behave antisocially, we can quickly repossess their home. Legal action can take a long time. The court sets the dates for hearings, and their outcome depends on the judge. We need a lot of evidence to take legal action and you may be asked to be a witness in court.

## What support can I get?

If neighbours are causing a problem, it will be a difficult time for you. Every case is different, but we understand that you may feel frightened and intimidated. There are several ways we can help. For example, we may:

- arrange extra security at your home if we are responsible for repairing your property
- arrange to phone you outside normal office hours
- work with the police to help improve your security, and so help you feel safer
- support you as much as possible before, during and after any court case, including arranging transport and going with you to court.

## Please ask us if you would like:

- more information on tackling antisocial behaviour, harassment or intimidation
- a summary of our antisocial behaviour policy and procedure.

We have separate leaflets you can ask for, which explain in more detail how we deal with domestic violence, racial harassment and hate crime.