

We have just moved into a new area, but our neighbours are really noisy, regularly having parties and playing loud music at all times of the day and night. It's affecting our quality of life and we are losing sleep. Is there anything we can do?

Start by trying to talk to your neighbours, or if you are worried about keeping things civil or are worried about how they might react you could consider writing to them instead. Your complaint to them might be more effective if there are more of you, chances are you aren't the only neighbours affected.

If this fails you might be able to contact a local mediator. See www.adrnow.org.uk for details. If your neighbours are in private rented property or social housing you could try contacting their landlord. Social landlords such as local authorities and housing associations have a range of powers to help tackle anti-social behaviour.

In cases where neighbours may be breaching public health or pollution laws, you could speak to your local authority environmental health department. An environmental health officer will usually contact the neighbour and attempt to resolve the matter informally. If this fails, a notice may be served on the neighbour, requiring the abatement of the nuisance. This means they are required to stop, or deal with, the nuisance.

If a criminal offence is being committed, such as a breach of the peace, assault or harassment because of your race or religion, you could call the police. Some behaviour by neighbours could amount to discrimination and may also be against the law. If your neighbours are discriminating against you in any way, you should get help from an experienced adviser, for example, at a Citizens Advice Bureau. They will be able to advise you about the best course of action to take in your circumstances.