

# Direct Negotiation with a neighbour

## Introduction

Before making a formal complaint to the Council it is worth considering whether the situation could be resolved by raising your concerns directly with the individual(s) concerned. The other side may simply be unaware that they are causing you a problem and may be willing to compromise and moderate their behaviour or activities. This fact sheet sets out some dos and don'ts before making contact with the person(s) concerned.

## Think about what you want to say

Some people are comfortable voicing their concerns in person; others prefer to voice their concerns in writing or over the telephone. Either way it is important to;

- ❑ Be clear about what the problem is, how it affects you and what you would like to achieve.
- ❑ Talk to someone who is not involved such as the Citizens Advice Bureau or a solicitor.
- ❑ Write down what you want to say making sure you cover all of the points.

## If your dispute is with a neighbour

- ❑ Often it may be better to talk to your neighbour face to face. This is often better than pushing notes through the door.
- ❑ Try to choose a good time to make the first approach when neither of you are busy. Try to arrange a suitable date and time so the situation can be discussed without interruption.
- ❑ Avoid rushing round in the heat of the moment when tempers may be likely to flare.

## Speaking face to face

### Do:

- ❑ Look for common ground, even agreeing to differ is a start.
- ❑ Make sure that you bring all the issues into the open, work on the easier issues first.
- ❑ Separate the problem from the person, approach this as if you and your neighbour are getting together to solve a common problem, two heads are better than one.

- ❑ Be open to each others suggestions.
- ❑ Try to find a co-operative solution in which both you and your neighbour participate.
- ❑ Consider all of the options before deciding on the most appropriate ones.
- ❑ Make sure you listen to each others opinions.

**If you don't feel you are able to do this you may wish to explore the possibility of using a community mediation service. They may be contacted on:**

### **Don't:**

- ❑ Interrupt, shout or verbally abuse the other party.
- ❑ Assume others have the same values and beliefs as you do.
- ❑ Assume people are doing things deliberately just to annoy you.
- ❑ Think that your neighbours are mind readers and know what is bothering you when you have never told them about it.
- ❑ Retaliate e.g. playing your music louder than theirs, encouraging your dog to bark etc it will only make the situation worse.
- ❑ Argue about who did what and when, focus on what you can do to make the situation better.
- ❑ Bring up things which have nothing to do with the matter in hand.
- ❑ Have unrealistic expectations of the other party, be realistic about what can reasonably be achieved.

### **When you reach an agreement:**

- ❑ Make sure you know who has agreed to do what and by when.
- ❑ It may be a good idea to write this down, both sign it and keep copies.
- ❑ Agree a date to check how your agreement is working out.
- ❑ Agree how you will let each other know about any future problems.

**Please note that if there are any concerns or threats relating to threatening behaviour, or danger of physical violence you must refer such concerns to the police.**

**If you should require further information regarding this aspect of our work please contact us:**

**Environmental Services  
South Norfolk Council  
Swan Lane  
Long Stratton  
NR15 2XE**

**Telephone: 01508 533830**

**Email: [envserv@s-norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:envserv@s-norfolk.gov.uk)**



**Please note that all South Norfolk Council fact sheets are available in large print, cassette form or alternative languages upon request**