

Neighbour Noise



11% of people in the UK are extremely disturbed by neighbour noise, with 54% bothered to some extent (1)
There is legislation in place to deal with neighbour noise. The challenge is for the police and local authorities to find the resources and the will-power to use it effectively.

Key legislation:

Environmental Protection Act 1990 - <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/43/contents>

Noise Act 1996 - <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/37/contents>

The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 - <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/12/contents/enacted>

Solutions:

Crack down on noise offenders

This has been made a lot simpler by the 2014 Anti-Social Behavior legislation which allows noise offenders to be prosecuted more easily and quickly (2). It is time to get consistently tough on noise offenders. Sometimes a warning will suffice but the authorities should not hesitate to use their powers to confiscate their equipment or evict them, if required. Do whatever is needed to sort out the noise problem for the victim.

Give residents the right of appeal

When local authorities fail to crack down on noise offenders, there is little redress for noise sufferers. They can go to court (usually too expensive) or the Ombudsman (whose remit is often too narrow to deal with many of these cases). An Independent Appeals Panel needs to be set up.

Improve insulation of properties

Poor sound insulation is one of the hidden scandals of our housing crisis. Exact figures are hard to come by but research done over 10 years ago estimated at least 2.5 million people lived in homes with poor sound insulation (3). This will have increased in recent years with the growth of the private rented sector. A nationwide programme to properly insulate all the UK's homes would run into billions but doing nothing is not an option. The worst affected should be done first as part of a 10 year programme to install effective sound insulation in all homes.

Just 7% of people living in a detached house or bungalow are annoyed by noise from their neighbours. This rises to 23% of those living in a medium/high rise flat.

References:

(1). file:///C:/Users/Dell/Downloads/12378_SummaryReportV1.0.pdf

(2). The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014

(3). *A Sound Solution*, UK Noise Association, 2002