



NoiseActionWeek

When is noise a nuisance?

If noise is seriously disturbing your daily life or affecting health, your local council may consider it a statutory nuisance and take action. This guide helps bust common myths and explains the facts about noise nuisance.

Myth 1: Noise has to exceed a certain volume to be a nuisance

There are no fixed decibel limits in UK law for noise nuisance. Environmental Health Officers assess whether the noise would seriously disturb an average person in their home, considering how loud it is, how long and how often it happens and the time of day.

Myth 2: Sound level meter apps are a reliable way to measure noise

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Myth 3: Noise has to affect more than one person to be a problem

Even if only one person is affected, noise can still be classed as a statutory nuisance.

Myth 4: You can be as loud as you want during the day

Daytime noise can still be a problem. While some everyday sounds are normal, loud or ongoing, noise between 7am and 11pm can still be considered unreasonable and classed as a nuisance.

Myth 5: Construction work can only happen during the day

Construction work can take place at any time, unless the local authority has set specific restrictions on working hours.

Myth 6: If you move next to a noisy business, you have to put up with the noise

A business must still take reasonable steps to manage its noise, even if residents move in after it starts operating. If the noise is unreasonable and not properly managed, it can still be classed as a nuisance.

Myth 7: A business with a licence or planning permission cannot be a nuisance

Licences or planning permission do not protect a business from noise nuisance laws. If the noise is unreasonable, it can still be challenged.

Myth 8: If it is a one-off party, or I let my neighbours know, it's okay to be loud

Even a single party can be a problem. Being polite and notifying neighbours helps, but the noise must still stay within reasonable limits. If it causes significant disturbance (e.g., continues well past midnight with very loud music) then it may be classed as an antisocial behaviour offence or a statutory nuisance.

Myth 9: The police are responsible for dealing with noisy neighbours

Your local council should be your first contact for reporting noise nuisance. You should keep a record of incidents to help them with their investigation.

Myth 10: There is no point in reporting noise nuisance - nothing will be done

Authorities cannot take action unless a nuisance is reported. Keeping a log of incidents helps support investigations. If a nuisance is confirmed, the household or business can be required to reduce the noise, and ignoring this can lead to fines or the seizure of noise-making equipment.



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About Noise Action Week

Noise Action Week takes place from the 11th - 15th May. It is a campaign to raise awareness and reduce noise pollution across the UK.

Noise Action Week is run by the Environmental Policy Implementation Community (EPIC) and supported by leading acoustics and environmental health organisations.

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