



London Borough  
of Hounslow

# Animal Noise



## Animal Noise

The Pollution Team deals with all animal noise complaints, this can include barking, howling or whining dogs, noisy cockerels, or any other domestic animal noise.

Officers have to prioritise incoming complaints based upon the information, which has been provided by the complainant. The highest priority is given to residents who are considered the most vulnerable and are not able to deal with the noise problem that they are experiencing.

Priority is also given to those circumstances where large numbers of residents are affected and especially where the noise is ongoing. Higher priority is given to complainants who are subjected to persistent noise pollution rather than complainants reporting a one-off occurrence.

### What we will do initially

If the investigating officer considers it appropriate and we are sure that the address of the alleged perpetrator is correct, a letter will be sent to the person responsible for the animal causing the noise to let them know that this behaviour has caused a complaint to be made. Sometimes this is enough to stop the problem and the Council need not take any further action. We do not divulge who has made the complaint but the perpetrator might make an educated guess.

What can be done if the initial letter does not have the desired effect?

If the initial letter does not resolve the problem then you will have to help us in trying to solve the problems you are experiencing. This involves:

- The keeping of log sheets.
- Discussing with the case officer the best approach.
- Notifying us when the noise is taking place so as a visit can be made.
- If visits are unsuccessful allowing the installation of monitoring equipment.

- By contacting the Late Night Noise Team.

It is appreciated that completing logs can be tedious but accurate records of disturbance are vitally important, particularly if legal action is necessary to resolve the noise problem you are experiencing.

The log sheets will be used by yourself if legal action is required when writing your statement for prosecution, as it will help remind you when incidents happened. Logs represent a far more reliable source of evidence than using purely your memory alone. When logs are completed the information in them must be accurate and unexaggerated, as these will form part of your written evidence and you will need to sign them to verify their accuracy.

Where logs sheets are not returned within 4 weeks then it will be understood that the original request for service was prompted by a temporary situation, and the case will be closed (although reopening a case is easily done if the problem recurs).

## **What further action will we take if nuisance persists?**

Case officers are able to investigate your complaint in a number of different ways.

- If and when you have returned the log sheets we look at the information you have provided to see if the pattern of the noise establishes a nuisance scenario warranting further investigation. The logs sheets can be returned at any time you consider there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate the noise nuisance you feel you are experiencing.
- If your complaint requires more urgent investigation then your case officer may decide they will not wait for completed log sheets and may well organise a visit to your premises to monitor the noise.

- If after attempting to visit your premises to witness the noise and after a number of unsuccessful attempts it may be worthwhile installing noise monitoring equipment. The advantage of noise monitoring equipment is that you are able to switch the machine on and off when the noise is taking place to try and capture a sample of the noise.

The disadvantage of this equipment is that although it does record the noise it does not provide evidence as to where the noise is actually coming from. The Courts must be 100% sure before convicting that the right person is before them and will not necessarily accept a noise recording as good evidence. Usually the equipment will be installed for a period of a week.

- If the noise occurs during normal office hours you should telephone your case officer to see if the officer is available to make a visit to assess the problem. Due to the large number of complaints being dealt with it is not always possible to make visits when you require but best efforts will be made to visit your premises when you call.
- The Council operates a Late Night Noise Team. The Team operates on Friday and Saturday nights from **22.00 to 04.00**. If the noise takes place at this time please contact the emergency telephone operator on **020 8583 2222** and log your call.

Your details will then get passed onto the officers on duty and they will try to call you back within an hour depending on the number of calls received. If the noise is ongoing then a visit will be made to try and get the problem resolved on the night. Where there is a persistent problem a visit will have to be made to your premises first to witness the noise with the possibility of formal action being taken.

## **What happens if a statutory noise nuisance is established and co-operation cannot be achieved?**

- An abatement notice will be served on the person or business making the noise requiring them to stop.
- If a breach of the abatement notice is witnessed then it will, in most cases, lead to prosecution in the Magistrates' Court. This will include statements from the officers who have witnessed the nuisance and a statement from yourself.
- A Court date can then be set and depending on the plea of the defendant you may well have to be present at court to give evidence on the nuisance that you have been experiencing.
- The possible fine if prosecuted is up to £5,000 in respect of domestic activities and £20,000 in respect of commercial activities.

## **What happens if we cannot witness the noise being complained about?**

In some cases the investigating officer will be unable to witness the noise about which you are complaining especially noise of short duration. In these circumstances when 3 visits have failed to identify the noise problem you will be advised to take your own action using the powers available to you under Section 82 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. Your case officer can provide you with an information leaflet on how to take your own action. If it is felt that the Council has met its statutory obligation to take all reasonably practicable steps to investigate your complaint your case officer will notify you before closing the case.

## **What to do if you are dissatisfied with the service provided**

The person you ask to investigate your complaint about the service will do their best to sort out the problem as quickly as possible. You should consider talking to your case officer straightaway as they may well be able to resolve the problem immediately.

If you are not satisfied with the response from your case officer or feel that it is inappropriate to contact your case officer you should contact the Head of Service either in writing, by telephone or by making a mutually convenient appointment.

The Head of Service can be contacted on telephone number **020 8583 5183** or in writing as follows:-

Head of Pollution Control,  
Environment Department,  
London Borough of Hounslow,  
Civic Centre,  
Lampton Road,  
Hounslow, TW3 4DN.

You can expect a full written response to your complaint within 10 working days from the Head of Service. Alternatively you can contact the Customer Services Team by letter at the above address, or by email at **[environmentcomplaints@hounslow.gov.uk](mailto:environmentcomplaints@hounslow.gov.uk)**

## What if the Head of Service cannot resolve the issue?

If you feel that we have not dealt properly with your complaint please do not hesitate to contact the Customer Services by letter at the above address, or by email at: **environmentcomplaints@hounslow.gov.uk**

You can expect a reply within 10 working days.

## What if the Departmental resolution is unsuccessful?

If you are still not satisfied that your complaint has been considered properly or you feel that the decision is unfair then you can request that your complaint is looked at again by an independent panel of three Councillors. You have the right to attend and address the Panel. The Department will be required to explain its actions and its reasons for the decisions it has made on your complaint. The Panel's decision is final and they can overrule the Department's decision as long as it is legal to do so.

To request a Review please contact the Customer Services Team by e-mail at: **environmentcomplaints@hounslow.gov.uk** or in writing within 7 days of receiving the reply to your Stage 2 complaint. You will be sent further details about the Stage 3 Review process and how to make your appeal. Further information about Stage 3 of the complaints process is available on our website under the link "Council and Democracy".

## What if you are still unhappy with the Council's response?

If you are still dissatisfied after the Council's Independent Panel has responded to your complaint you may wish to contact the Local Government Ombudsman who can investigate cases of injustice and maladministration within a Council.

The address of the Local Government Ombudsman is:-

**10th Floor, Millbank Tower, Millbank, London SW1P 4GP**

**Pollution Control Team**

Environment Department  
London Borough of Hounslow  
Civic Centre, Lampton Road  
Hounslow TW3 4DN.  
Email: [pollution@hounslow.gov.uk](mailto:pollution@hounslow.gov.uk)

[www.hounslow.gov.uk](http://www.hounslow.gov.uk)

**Translations and accessible formats:**

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**020 8583 2299**