💸 Comprehensive Neighbours Rights Cheat Sheet - For Printing!

A clear, step-by-step guide to dealing with noisy, difficult, or nuisance neighbours — and knowing your rights.

1) What You Need to Know

Under UK law, your neighbour **can't interfere unreasonably with your enjoyment of your property**. That includes excessive noise, harassment, encroachment, smells, rubbish, and aggressive pets.

Your local council and police have powers to step in — but **you must keep evidence and follow the right process**. This guide shows you how.

2) Your Rights (Plain English)

- **Quiet enjoyment:** You have the right to live peacefully without harassment, intimidation, or persistent noise.
- **Protection from nuisance:** Councils can act under the **Environmental Protection Act 1990** to stop or fine neighbours causing "statutory nuisances" (noise, smells, waste, smoke, etc.).
- **Harassment protection:** If a neighbour's behaviour becomes threatening or repeated, it can count as **criminal harassment** under the **Protection from Harassment Act 1997**.
- **Anti-social behaviour:** Local authorities and police can issue **Community Protection Notices** for anti-social behaviour (e.g., loud music, intimidation, or persistent mess).
- **Boundary protection:** The law protects you against trespass, land encroachment, and property damage.

- **Land registry evidence:** You can confirm exact property boundaries via the **Land Registry**.
- **Mediation:** You can use community mediation services before going to court — often the fastest, cheapest solution.

3) Common Neighbour Problems & What You Can Do!

1) Noisy Neighbours

Regular loud music, shouting, or parties can become a **statutory nuisance** if they affect your daily life.

What to do:

☐ Keep a **noise diary** — date, time, duration, how it affects you.

☐ Record evidence (videos, decibel readings, witness notes).

☐ Speak to your neighbour calmly if safe to do so.

☐ If it continues, contact your **Council's Environmental Health** department.

☐ They may serve a **Noise Abatement Notice** — breaches can lead to **fines or seizure of equipment**.

☐Night noise (11pm–7am): call the council and specifically request a **Warning Notice under the Noise Act 1996** — councils have additional powers at night separate from the standard route.

☐When contacting Environmental Health, ask specifically for **"a formal statutory nuisance complaint under the Environmental Protection Act 1990"** — this changes how your complaint is recorded and acted upon.

☐ If the council will not act: under **Section 82 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990**, you can take a noise nuisance case directly to the magistrates' court yourself — with just **3 days' written notice** to the offender. No solicitor required.

2) Harassment, Intimidation or Anti-Social Behaviour

If your neighbour threatens, insults, damages property, or follows you, this may be **criminal harassment**.

What to do:

☐ Keep all messages, notes, or recordings of incidents.

☐ Report serious or repeated behaviour to **the police** (call 101, or 999 if immediate

danger).

☐ The council can also issue **Community Protection Notices** or **ASBOs**.

☐ For ongoing harassment, you can apply for a **Civil Injunction** or **Restraining Order** through court.

☐ Note: harassment under the **Protection from Harassment Act 1997** requires a **course of conduct** — at least two related incidents. A single incident may not qualify, but document it immediately as the first entry in your log.

☐ Save all digital evidence — screenshots of messages, social media posts, emails. Courts regularly accept this as evidence.

3) Boundary Disputes and Encroachment

Common problems include fences moved, walls built over boundaries, or trees/hedges overhanging.

What to do:

☐ Check your **Land Registry title plan** and **deeds** — though not precise, they show approximate boundaries.

☐ Speak politely to your neighbour first and share your documents.

☐ If you can't agree, you can hire a **chartered surveyor** to mark the true boundary.

☐ Don't remove fences or trees yourself unless they're clearly on your side — that can count as **criminal damage**.

☐ You can **cut branches or roots** that cross your boundary, but **return them** to your neighbour.

☐ Persistent disputes can be decided by court or **Land Registry's Boundary Determination Service**.

☐ If your neighbour is building close to or on the boundary, they may need to serve you a **Party Wall Notice** under the Party Wall etc. Act 1996 — at least **2 months before work begins**. If they don't, you can seek an injunction to stop the work.

☐ Adverse possession risk: if a neighbour has used or occupied part of your land unchallenged for **10+ years**, they may be able to apply to the Land Registry to claim it. Act immediately if you suspect this is happening — do not ignore encroachment.

4) Bad Smells, Rubbish or Smoke

Persistent odours, burning rubbish, or waste piles can be classed as **statutory nuisance**.

What to do:

☐ Keep photos and note when and how often it happens.

☐ Contact your **Council Environmental Health** team.

☐ They can inspect and issue a **Statutory Nuisance Notice**.

☐ Breaching that notice can result in **prosecution and fines**.

☐ Bonfires and smoke: while not automatically illegal, persistent smoke causing nuisance can be reported to Environmental Health. Burning household or commercial waste is a criminal offence under the **Environmental Protection Act 1990.**

☐ When logging incidents, note wind direction, time of day, and exactly how the smell or smoke affected you — this specificity significantly strengthens an Environmental Health report.

5) Pets and Animals

Barking dogs, aggressive pets, or constant fouling can also be considered nuisance.

What to do:

☐ Speak to your neighbour first — they may not realise the impact.

☐ Keep a diary of dates, times, and effect.

☐ Report barking or animal mess to **Environmental Health**.

☐ If the pet is aggressive or dangerous, contact **the police** — it could breach the **Dangerous Dogs Act 1991**.

☐ Dog fouling in public areas: your local council can issue Fixed Penalty Notices of up to **£100** under a **Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO)**. Report to your council's enforcement team, not just Environmental Health.

☐ Persistent dog barking that affects your daily life can qualify as a **statutory nuisance** — follow the same Environmental Health complaint process as noise, including keeping a diary of incidents.

6) Shared Driveways and Communal Areas

For flats or shared spaces, other tenants or leaseholders must respect your right to **quiet enjoyment**.

What to do:

☐ Check your **lease or title deeds** for who maintains the space.

☐ Report nuisance to your **landlord or management company**.

☐ They must take reasonable action against offending tenants.

☐ If your property is leasehold, your **freeholder or management company** has a legal obligation to enforce the lease against other leaseholders causing nuisance — put your complaint to them in writing and ask what action they are taking.
☐ If the management company fails to act, you may be able to apply to the **First-tier Tribunal (Property Chamber)** to enforce your rights — the Leasehold Advisory Service (LEASE) offers free guidance at lease-advice.org.

4) Step-by-Step: How To Resolve a Neighbour Dispute

Step 1) Stay Calm & Communicate – A polite conversation (in person or in writing) can often solve issues before they escalate.

Step 2) Keep Evidence – Maintain a log, take photos or videos of everything, and save all messages or notes between your neighbour and yourself.

Step 3) Involve Your Landlord or Agent – If you're renting, report the issue to your landlord or managing agent early.

Step 4) Report to the Council – Contact **Environmental Health** for noise, rubbish, smells, or pets; or the **ASB Team** for harassment.

Step 5) Try Mediation – Local councils and charities offer neighbour mediation (Civil Mediation Council directory).

Night noise (11pm–7am)? Call the council and ask specifically for a Warning Notice under the Noise Act 1996. This triggers additional enforcement powers.

Council still not acting? Under Section 82 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, you can bring a case **directly to the magistrates' court yourself** — give the offender 3 days' written notice first. No solicitor required.

Seek Legal Action – If nothing changes, seek a **solicitor** to apply for an **injunction**, **restraining order**, or **Noise Abatement Order**.

Contact the Police – For threats, damage, or harassment, call **101** (non-emergency) or **999** (immediate danger).

5) What to Check / Keep (Your Evidence Pack!)

☐ Noise diary (date, time, duration, impact)

☐ Photos/videos of damage, rubbish, or nuisance

☐ Copies of complaint letters or emails

☐ Land Registry title plan and boundary documents

☐ Reports or letters from the council or police

☐ Statements or witness details if others are affected

☐ Audio recordings made from your own property or public areas (not private spaces)
☐ Council or police reference numbers for all reported incidents
☐ Written follow-up emails summarising any verbal complaints made to the council

6) Key Terms Explained

Term	Meaning (Plain English)
Statutory Nuisance	Activity that seriously affects health or comfort, like noise, smells, or smoke.
Abatement Notice	A legal order requiring your neighbour to stop causing a nuisance.
Harassment	Behaviour intended to alarm, distress, or cause fear, repeated over time.
Community Protection Notice (CPN)	Council or police order to stop anti-social behaviour.
Boundary Dispute	When neighbours disagree about where one property ends and another begins.
Quiet Enjoyment	Your legal right to live in peace without unreasonable disturbance.
Section 82 EPA 1990	Your right to bring a statutory nuisance case directly to the magistrates' court — without involving the council. Give the offender at least 3 days' written notice first.
Warning Notice	A night-specific enforcement power (11pm–7am) under the Noise Act 1996. Councils can require noise to stop immediately without needing to prove a full statutory nuisance.

7) Useful Links & Contacts

- **Report Noise or Nuisance:** GOV.UK – Statutory Nuisance

- **Check Your Property Boundaries:** HM Land Registry
- **Mediation Services:** Civil Mediation Council
- **Citizens Advice – Neighbour Disputes:** citizensadvice.org.uk
- **Report Anti-Social Behaviour:** GOV.UK – ASB Guidance

- **Need a specialist solicitor?** BCK free referral service: bettercallkal.co.uk/recommended-lawyer/
- **Party Wall guidance:** gov.uk/guidance/party-wall-etc-act-1996-guidance

📅 Important Deadlines

- **Council investigation:** Environmental Health must investigate noise or nuisance complaints within a reasonable period (usually within 10 working days).
- **ASB or harassment cases:** Report incidents as soon as they happen — ongoing evidence builds your case.
- **Boundary disputes:** There's no strict time limit, but **long delays** can weaken your claim.

- **Section 82 self-help court route:** You must give the person responsible at least **3 days' written notice** of your intention to bring proceedings before filing at the magistrates' court.

⚠️ Common Mistakes to Avoid

🚫 Arguing or retaliating — this can escalate things quickly.

🚫 Damaging or removing a fence or hedge that may not be yours.

🚫 Ignoring legal notices — always respond or seek advice.

🚫 Recording people secretly in private areas (only record from your property or public view).

🚫 Not following up verbal complaints to the council in writing — always send an email after calling so there is a record of what was reported and promised.

🚫 Waiting too long to escalate. If Environmental Health has not acted after 4–6 weeks of complaints, move to the next step — do not keep calling with no written record.

⚖️ Disclaimer

This guide is for **general education only**. It is **not legal advice**. Always seek independent legal guidance if the problem escalates or involves threats or damage.

© Better Call Kal 2026. All rights reserved.