

Having problems with your neighbours?



June 2011

Occasionally problems may arise as a result of a neighbour, or someone living with or visiting them, acting in an unreasonable manner. Difficulties can range from minor disputes to serious harassment or even violence. We have produced this leaflet as a guide for people who are experiencing problems with their neighbours and need advice on what to do.

What should I do if my neighbour is causing a nuisance?

First try talking to your neighbour. Tell them politely what the problem is and ask if they can change what they are doing. Above all, stay calm and be prepared to listen to what they have to say. If you cannot speak to your neighbour, or you have already tried this and it has not worked, you can contact other agencies who can help solve specific problems. Please refer to the table on pages 3 and 4.

How can Spire Homes help?

As your landlord, we are here to help. Your Housing Officer can advise you on any problems you may be having. Spire Homes has a set procedure in place for dealing with nuisance complaints, which ensures that all complaints are dealt with properly and fairly and resolved in a satisfactory manner.

Where do I complain if the person causing the nuisance is NOT a tenant of Spire Homes?

Owner-Occupiers

If the person causing the nuisance owns their property, you can complain to the relevant Local Authority.

Tenants of other landlords

If the person causing the nuisance is a tenant of another housing association, a council tenant, or is privately renting, you can complain to their landlord.

What should I do if the nuisance involves criminal activity?

If you suspect or have been a victim of criminal activity, you should contact the Police immediately. You should then inform your Housing Officer, so that they can liaise with the Police. In cases of vandalism or graffiti you should report this to your Housing Officer and they will arrange for repairs to be carried out as quickly as possible. You should then report this to the Police.

Mediation

Mediation is a way of helping people in dispute reconcile their differences between themselves, rather than have a solution imposed by the landlord or by the courts. Spire Homes recognises the importance that mediation can have in addressing neighbour disputes and is registered with Peterborough Mediation Services. This approach will only be recommended where it is deemed appropriate and where there is mutual agreement from all parties concerned.

Who can I contact if I need help?

Here is a list of the types of problems you could experience and who to contact:

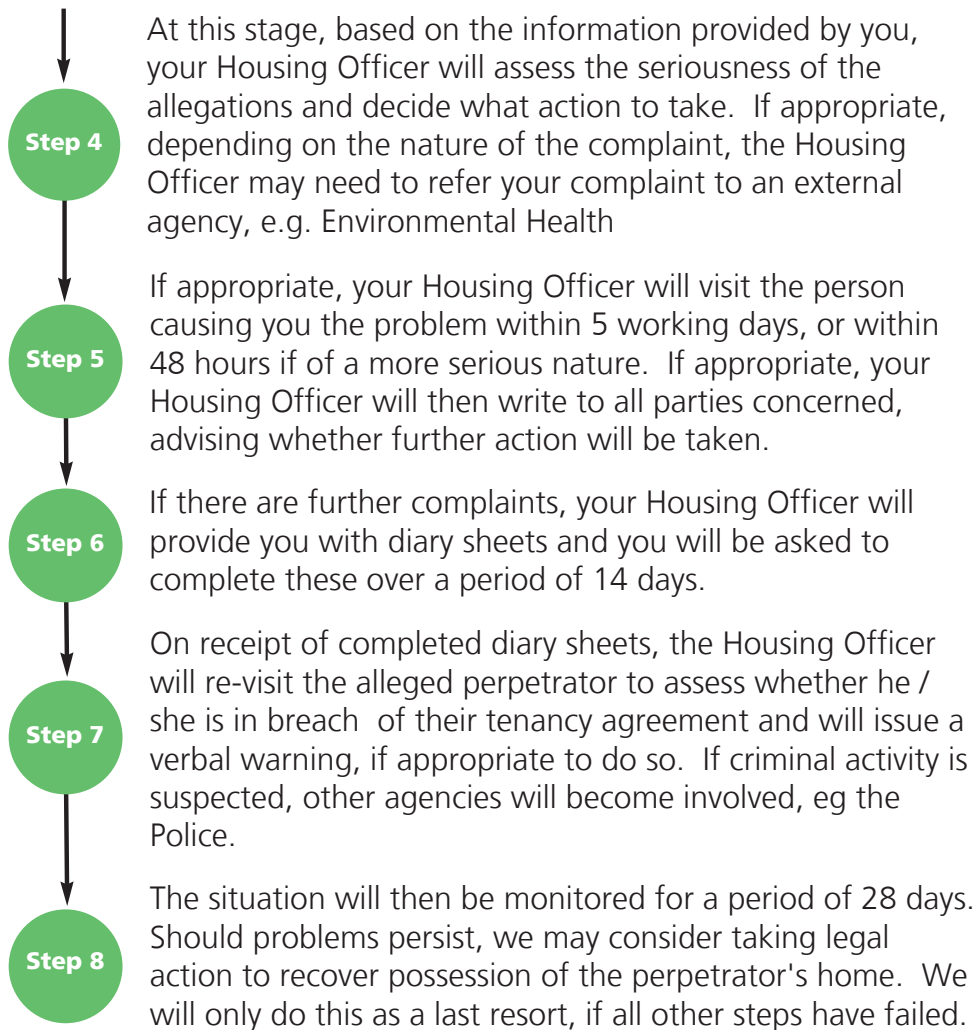
Problem	Who To Contact	How They May Help
Anti-Social Behaviour	Spire Homes Relevant Council Police	In extreme circumstances, an ASBO (Anti-Social Behaviour Order) can be issued by any of these agencies. This will be on the basis of sufficient evidence.
Noise Problems	Environmental Health Police Spire Homes	Both agencies may enforce noise control measures if noise levels are excessive. Enforce tenancy conditions.
Litter/ Illegal Dumping of Waste	Relevant Council Spire Homes (<i>if the litter is on our land</i>)	The Council has a duty to keep public land free from litter. They may issue fixed penalty notices for leaving litter and issue street litter control notices. We can remove litter.
Build-up of Rubbish	Environmental Health	Environmental Health can force people to remove rubbish, but only where excessive.
Infested Properties	Spire Homes (<i>if it is our property</i>)	We can insist that people clean up their homes and get rid of pests, such as rats, mice etc.

<p>Abandoned Vehicles</p>	<p>Relevant Council</p> <p>Spire Homes</p>	<p>The Council can remove and dispose of vehicles unlawfully abandoned.</p> <p>We can arrange for the removal and disposal of abandoned and untaxed vehicles on our land.</p>
<p>Dog / Pet Nuisance</p> <p>Continuous Barking & Dog Fouling</p>	<p>Relevant Council</p> <p>Parish and Town Councils</p> <p>Police</p> <p>Environmental Health</p> <p>Spire Homes</p>	<p>Councils have by-laws about keeping dogs on leads and not fouling public areas. They may designate area where owners commit an offence if they do not clear up dog mess.</p> <p>The Police can take legal action if a dog is dangerous.</p> <p>Environmental Health's Dog Wardens can seize and dispose of stray dogs found in public places and on private land with the land owner's permission.</p> <p>We can enforce the tenancy conditions.</p>
<p>Untidy Gardens whose condition affects the area</p>	<p>Relevant Council</p> <p>Spire Homes <i>(if it is our property)</i></p>	<p>The Planning Department can enforce planning controls, where conditions are excessive.</p> <p>We can enforce the tenancy conditions.</p>

Harassment	Relevant Council	The Council may issue an ASBO.
Racially aggravated crimes, hate crime, domestic violence	Police Spire Homes <i>(if offender is a tenant)</i>	The Police may take legal action if a criminal offence or may issue an ASBO. We can enforce the tenancy conditions or we may issue an ASBO. Set up an ABC (acceptable behaviour contract), should this fail we may issue an ASBO.
Verbal / Written / Physical Abuse	Police Spire Homes <i>(if offender is a tenant)</i> Relevant Council	The Police may take action, as this is a criminal offence. We can enforce the tenancy conditions. The Council may issue an ASBO.

How to deal with anti-social behaviour

- Step 1** First try talking to your neighbour - this may resolve the matter amicably between all parties concerned. This is only recommended where it is deemed safe and apt to do so.
- Step 2** If that doesn't resolve the matter or does not seem apt, try contacting the relevant agency, as detailed in the table on pages 3 and 4.
- Step 3** You can complain to your Housing Officer, either by letter or by filling out a nuisance questionnaire. If you make a complaint verbally, a nuisance questionnaire will be sent to you, which you must complete and return to us within 10 working days.



Step 4

Step 5

Step 6

Step 7

Step 8

This leaflet is available in various formats, i.e. different languages, braille, audio formats etc. Please contact us for further information.



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Rushden Office

1 Crown Court
Crown Way
Rushden
Northamptonshire
NN10 6BS

t: 0845 603 5399

text: 07797 800062

Rutland Office

Pinewood
1 Cold Overton Road
Oakham
Rutland
LE15 6NT

t: 01572 755465

text: 07797 800062

email: spirehomes@longhurst-group.org.uk

www.spirehomes.org.uk



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