

## **What is a Neighbour Dispute?**

A neighbour dispute can arise when two or more people disagree about a matter relating to the property or area that they live in.

### ***Types of Dispute***

Problems of this nature can include issues relating to stair cleaning, pets, children, noise, car parking, disposal of rubbish as well as disputes about boundaries and usage of washing lines in common back court areas. Where minor neighbour disputes arise the Association will generally take a low key approach and may try to encourage tenants to work out any difficulties by discussing things with their neighbour.

### ***Anti-Social Behaviour/Breaking the Law***

If you suspect or you know that a neighbour is breaking the law or guilty of behaving in an anti-social manner, you must report this matter to the Police as well as the Association urgently. You can use the Crimestoppers Freephone number on 0800 555 111, if this appropriate, and this can be done anonymously.

The Association may need to obtain a Police report to verify if a breach of tenancy conditions has occurred, therefore the Association must be contacted urgently to allow investigation of the complaint to take place as soon as possible.

Anti-social behaviour is not always carried out by neighbours, nor are the victims always local residents. However, anti-social behaviour is conduct (including speech), which has caused or is likely to cause alarm or distress to someone who does not reside in the same household as the offender.

## **What Should I Do if I am Affected?**

Call into the office and discuss the matter with a Housing Services Officer. We will listen to your problem and try to give you the best advice on how the matter can be resolved. It is important to do this at an early stage, before a minor dispute escalates. It may be necessary to complete diary sheets, providing as much information as possible, including times, whether the Police have been involved etc so that the Association can proceed with investigation of your complaint.

### **What Action can the Association Take?**

There are several courses of action we can take depending on the problem. It is important that we are quickly made aware of any problem so we can establish the facts during our investigation and start taking action early, if this is appropriate. In severe cases or where persistent problems occur we can take an offending tenant to court with the possibility of eviction from property. However, for minor disputes between tenants, advice or limited intervention from the Association may be all that is required. Mediation might also be considered by staff if this is felt to be appropriate – this is where problems are discussed and resolved by all parties round the table. Staff might also suggest that the best way to prevent escalation of a problem may be to talk a problem through with your neighbour before involving the Association.

### **What if My Neighbour is not a Tenant?**

The Association will be restricted in the action we can take against owner occupiers and tenants of other landlords. However, we will assist you as much as possible.

It may be appropriate to consider the involvement of the Police, Environmental Health Department and we will give you advice and assistance where we can in these cases. You will note that contact details for these agencies have been provided in this leaflet for your information.

### **Who Decides if Someone Should be Evicted?**

The Association always sees eviction as a last resort, however, in severe cases a sheriff will decide if a Decree for Eviction is awarded when a case is heard at court. Most disputes are minor however, or are resolved at an early stage so eviction is rarely considered. The Association will liaise with any relevant agencies, like Police, West Dunbartonshire Council, Social Work, etc, to try to resolve any anti-social behaviour.

Support or evidence from tenants and other agencies will be required if a case for eviction is to be prepared and considered by the Court.

### **What is an Anti-Social Behaviour Order?**

Anti-Social Behaviour Orders were introduced in April 1999 and these can be used to stop a person behaving in a particular way, similar to an interdict. An ASBO will only be sought when all other avenues to resolve the issues have been exhausted.

### **What about Confidentiality?**

The Association will treat all information given in absolute confidence. Sometimes when we investigate a complaint it becomes obvious to the other party who has complained about them, but this information will never be disclosed by Association staff. If the matter eventually goes into court, you should note that you may be called upon as a witness, which is written, detailed information is important initially and throughout the investigation of the problem.

## Can I make an Anonymous Complaint?

While we understand why a complainant would like to remain anonymous, it must be recognised that we usually have to obtain further details about the situation, and if the complaint is anonymous it makes things difficult for us to do this. As stated above an anonymous complaint also makes it difficult for the Association to challenge a tenant's behaviour or build a case, which will ultimately be heard at court.

## What Should I Do Now?

If you are affected by anti-social behaviour or a neighbour dispute, you should contact the Association and follow the details outlined in this leaflet. Whilst the Association will deal with neighbour disputes, we sometimes recommend that initially, the parties involved try to resolve the matter themselves.

## Support from Other Agencies

Strathclyde Police, Alexandria	01389 823000
Strathclyde Police, Dumbarton	01389 822000
Strathclyde Crimestoppers	0800 555 111
West Dunbartonshire Council, Community Wardens	01389 772050
West Dunbartonshire Council, Mobile Wardens	01389 772048

**This leaflet can be made available in other languages, on tape, large print or Braille on request**



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## Office Opening Hours

Monday	9.00am to 12.30pm	1.30pm to 5.00pm
Tuesday	9.00am to 12.30pm	1.30pm to 5.00pm
Wednesday	Closed	1.30pm to 5.00pm
Thursday	9.00am to 12.30pm	1.30pm to 5.00pm
Friday	9.00am to 12.30pm	1.30pm to 5.00pm

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**NEIGHBOUR  
DISPUTES & ANTI  
SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR**