

NOISE POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

This policy has been introduced to give residents clarity on how we deal with reports of noise which does not meet the threshold of anti-social behaviour or statutory noise nuisance. More serious noise nuisance will be dealt with under our Anti-Social Behaviour policy.

Specifically, this policy covers everyday noise which may be due to issues such as the level of sound insulation of a building, installation of laminate or hard wood flooring in a home and appliances such as vacuum cleaners and washing machines being used outside of the hours of 11pm to 7am. Noise transference happens when noise from one home affects a neighbouring property.

Whilst this noise transference may not be deliberate, it can sometimes have a stressful effect on residents and can cause a disturbance to them.

2. AIMS

Our aim is to provide an effective response to noise complaints by ensuring that we identify the cause and evaluate what can be done in relation to the noise issue being reported. We will encourage good neighbourhood living, including communication between residents to understand how their lifestyle may be impacting their neighbours and taking steps to mitigate any nuisance being caused inadvertently.

We will aim to mitigate the impact of noise in our development and void standards.

3. DETAILS

3.1 Background

To help to reduce noise transference between homes we include measures within our development design standard which includes sound insulation between homes and between noisy plant and equipment in communal areas. The acoustic insulation of each home and between homes meets or exceeds the statutory standards. We also ensure that when developing flats, bedrooms are stacked over bedrooms and living areas over living areas.

We let all our properties with carpets installed as this helps to minimise noise transference between homes.

Investigation

Usually, noise nuisance issues can be resolved between neighbours and in most circumstances we would expect residents to discuss their concerns directly with their neighbours. There will be occasions where a noise nuisance issue cannot be fully resolved, for example, where it relates to an already carpeted property and the neighbour is experiencing sound transference. Whilst our aim will always be to provide support and guidance to our residents, we must also manage expectations so that any outcomes proposed are realistic.

If a report is received from a resident relating to noise nuisance from a neighbouring property initially, we will log this as ASB (record only) and ask the person reporting the noise to speak to their neighbour if they have not already done so. This is because people often do not realise the impact that noise from within their home is having on their neighbour/s. If they have already spoken to their neighbour we will:

- Establish if this is an issue to be dealt with under the Noise Policy. If the noise is classified as everyday noise, it will be considered under this policy.
- If the noise is occurring often and during the working day, the Tenancy Officer will visit the complainant to witness the noise to establish whether the noise would be considered a breach of the conditions of the tenancy and therefore should be treated as ASB. They will also visit the alleged perpetrator to let them know that their actions are causing a nuisance to their neighbour/s.
- The complainant will be encouraged to complete diary sheets to keep a record of the noise nuisance so that the Tenancy Officer can review and investigate the case. Diary sheets help us to establish whether there is a pattern of noise nuisance, whether it is unreasonable, deliberate and/or targeted to cause distress. If residents would prefer to record this in a different way such as by noise recordings, or via email then this is also acceptable.
- Mediation can be an effective way of resolving noise disputes between neighbours and in some instances, mediation will be offered where the Tenancy Officer believes that this could lead to a resolution of the case.
- Where the noise is due to poor sound insulation because the resident above does not have carpet, the Tenancy Officer will ask the resident to carpet the property if it is stated as a requirement in their tenancy agreement. If due to financial constraints the tenant is unable to purchase carpet, we may work with them to apply to charities or ISHA's welfare fund to help the source this.

- A small ASB budget is available each year to help us tackle ASB. This can be used to purchase noise reduction measures, where the noise is not intentional but unavoidable, such as children playing or furniture scraping on floors. The fund can be used to purchase items such as play mats for children which would reduce impact noise of children playing on the floor with toys, felt pads/gliders for the sole of the chair legs and other furniture so that they are quieter when moved. We expect the Tenancy Officer to be creative when considering noise reduction measures and be mindful that what may suit one family may not be the same for another. The purchase of noise reducing products will be approved by the Tenancy Officer and Housing Manager.
- If a perpetrator or complainant is vulnerable we will offer them support from our Outreach Team or refer to other voluntary or statutory support services if appropriate.
- We will manage expectations regarding the outcome of our investigation by making it clear to the complainant what we can and can't do in relation to dealing with noise complaints. The noise complaint will be reviewed monthly by the Tenancy Officer
- Where we suspect that the noise is persistent and unreasonable the Tenancy Officer will consider whether Acoustic Specialists, are required who will have access to specialist recording equipment to monitor noise. This is deployed when we are gathering evidence to take action against someone causing noise nuisance.

3.2 Case Closure

Cases will be closed once the investigation has concluded and any reasonable actions taken. Where no actions can be taken, the complainant will be advised of the reasons why. A review will take place between the Housing Manager and Tenancy Officer prior to closure of the case.

3.3 Complaints & Appeals

If a resident feels ISHA has failed to treat them fairly and in accordance with this policy; they can make a formal complaint using our Complaints Procedure.

4. HEALTH AND SAFETY

Our Lone Working Policy should always be adhered to when using this policy; this is especially important for visits and interviews.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

This policy will be implemented in accordance with our Equality and Diversity Statement, ensuring that we will not discriminate against any tenant on grounds of his/her protected characteristics. We will address any special communication requirements to ensure all our tenants have equal access to the information they need to meet their obligations.

We will ensure that we comply without vulnerability policy when implementing this policy ensuring that residents with a physical, or mental disability are no treated less favourably.

6. TRAINING

All members of the housing team will be trained in the use of this policy, to include, Tenancy Officers, Tenancy Advisors and Outreach & Support Officers.

7. DATA PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS

It is sometimes necessary to share sensitive, private and special category data to facilitate the delivery of this policy. We will ensure that the processing of this data is in accordance with the principles of the Data Protection Act 2018 and our Data Protection Policy.

We will only share a person's data where they have given us permission to do so unless:

- information sharing is necessary for the protection of children or a vulnerable person.
- information sharing is required for the prevention or detection of crime.
- ISHA is required by law to share the information.

We may release information on tenants who are at risk of homelessness to local authority homelessness team as part of our duty to prevent homelessness. The type of information and the purposes for which it can be used will be governed by the individual protocols that we have in place with each local authority.

Where possible we will seek to establish data sharing protocols with relevant external agencies such as The Police and Social Services.

8. STATUTORY AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

- Housing Ombudsman Spotlight on Noise Complaints Report
- Tenancy Consumer Standard
- Neighbourhood and Community Standard
- Anti – _Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Housing Acts 1985, 1988 and 1996
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Equality Act 2010
- Vulnerability Policy

9. MONITORING

The Tenancy Officer will monitor the cases at least fortnightly and will review the cases with the Housing Manager on a monthly basis.

10. REVIEW

The policy will be reviewed every 3 years unless there is a significant change in legislation, regulation or best practice in which case it will be reviewed sooner.

11. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Lone Working Policy

Reference	Version	Created	Author	Review	Board Approved
Noise policy	1	May 2025	Deeion Sharpe	September 2028	September 2028