

# Noise Nuisance Policy

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<b>1.0</b>	<b>SCOPE</b>
	<b>Purpose</b>
1.1	This document sets out whg's policy towards managing incidents of noise nuisance.
1.2	whg understands that customers will have different lifestyles. whg encourages customers to respect these differences and to be mindful of how their lifestyle may impact others. Sometimes lifestyles clash and we aim to support customers to resolve these differences at the earliest opportunity.
1.3	This Noise Nuisance Policy enables whg to provide an effective and proportionate response to noise which is not anti-social. Noise which is considered anti-social will be managed under the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.
1.4	This Policy sets out clear guidelines on the types of noise nuisances that will be investigated by whg and encourages customers to be considerate of their neighbours.
1.5	<p>This Policy applies to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All whg customers (social and affordable rented, leaseholders, shared owners, market rented and residents living within properties that are owned and/or managed by whg).</li> <li>• Visitors and guests at any whg property (owned and/or managed).</li> </ul>
	<b>Legal and regulatory framework</b>
1.6	The Housing Ombudsman Spotlight report on Noise Nuisance recommends a Good Neighbourhood Management Policy, this Policy acts as that and contains the recommendations made by the Ombudsman.
1.7	<p>Environmental noise legislation is primarily governed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental Protection Act 1990: This act defines "statutory nuisances," which include excessive noise and empowers local authorities to take action.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Noise Act 1996: This act provides specific procedures for dealing with noise nuisances, particularly during "night hours" (11pm to 7am), allowing councils to issue warning notices and take other measures.</li> </ul> <p>The combined legislation allows councils to investigate and take action against noise nuisances, including issuing warning notices or abatement notices and potentially seizing equipment.</p>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>POLICY STATEMENT</b>
	<b>Key Principles</b>
2.1	<p>whg will investigate and act on the following types of noise nuisances when they are excessive, persistent and affect the quality of life for other customers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Excessive or Unreasonable Noise During Quiet Hours. Noise disturbances during designated quiet hours, typically from 11:00pm and 7:00am Monday to Saturday and before 9:00am and after 10:00pm on Sunday. This includes loud music, parties and gatherings that disrupt neighbours' peace.</li> <li>Persistent loud noise from adjoining properties that occurs during normal living hours but at an excessive volume, including, but not exclusively, shouting, slamming doors, or the continuous playing of loud music or television at high volumes.</li> <li>Excessive noise from domestic appliances and equipment. Persistent and unreasonable use of domestic appliances, such as vacuum cleaners, washing machines, or other equipment, particularly if operated during quiet hours.</li> <li>Noise from Pets. Continuous or frequent loud noise from pets, which is persistent and disrupts the quiet enjoyment of other tenants.</li> <li>Construction or repair work. Unreasonable noise from renovation, or maintenance work being carried out by residents, especially during quiet hours, without prior notification to neighbours. Except where emergency repairs are being carried out.</li> </ol> <p>This is not an exhaustive list.</p>
2.2	<p>whg recognises that not all noise constitutes a nuisance, particularly where noise is a normal part of daily life. It will NOT address complaints about:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Occasional/non persistent animal noises.</li> </ol>

	<p>2. Isolated incidents of loud music or single event disturbances. One off or infrequent occurrences such as a party or celebration, unless it is excessively loud and continues for an unreasonable duration during quiet hours.</p> <p>3. General household or living noise including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Babies crying</li> <li>• Children playing</li> <li>• People talking and walking in their homes</li> <li>• Closing doors and windows</li> <li>• Reasonable use of household appliances including hoovering or white goods at reasonable hours</li> <li>• Moving furniture</li> </ul> <p>4. Isolated incidents of loud shouting and arguing.</p> <p>5. Occasional/non persistent bangs or noise from items being dropped.</p> <p>6. Noise from normal outdoor activity. This can include but is not prohibited to children playing/ball games, lawnmower during reasonable hours or people walking through shared communal spaces.</p> <p>7. Temporary Building or Maintenance Work. Noise generated from necessary building, maintenance, or repair work that is carried out by whg or its contractors, DIY carried out by customers and/or customers' contractors provided reasonable working hours are observed and prior notice has been given where possible.</p> <p>8. Cars leaving or arriving during designated quiet hours.</p>
2.3	Often noise which causes a nuisance is a one off or can be easily resolved by neighbours agreeing an approach with each other. For whg to intervene it will look at the intention and frequency behind the noise.
2.4	Intention - where whg determines that there is no deliberate intent to cause a noise nuisance, reports will be investigated in-line with this Noise Nuisance Policy. Where whg determines deliberate intent to disrupt a neighbour or a lack of concern for neighbours, the report will be investigated in line with the ASB Policy.
2.5	Frequency - where whg identifies that noise nuisance is unreasonably frequent and our previous interventions have not reduced the nuisance, the matter may be investigated in-line with the ASB policy.

2.6	Noise nuisance can be reported to whg through whg's usual channels, by phone, email, portal or face to face at our office or in communities.
2.7	whg will give customers the right support and advice in response to noise enquiries and ensure the right levels of support for vulnerable customers. In particular, colleagues will provide this support where the noise falls outside of what whg are willing to investigate but is having an impact on the customer.
	<b>Policy Actions</b>
2.8	When a report of noise is received, whg will make an initial assessment and triage the information available to determine whether the Noise Nuisance Policy or ASB Policy applies; colleagues may switch to investigating the case under either policy if required as the case progresses. Customers will be advised which policy is being applied to their report and why, and what this means for the investigation into the issue.
2.9	whg will acknowledge and start an investigation into all reports of noise nuisance from customers as quickly as possible and aim to respond within five working days. When a case is opened whg will manage expectations with the customer on what may or may not be able to be done to tackle the noise.
2.10	<p>whg will utilise various tools to tackle noise related reports including at investigation stage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Noise App: a tool to establish the volume and frequency of the noise, utilised as part of the investigation.</li> <li>• Noise recording equipment: whg has specialist noise recording equipment which can be installed in a customer's home where the Noise App has not been suitable or successful as part of the investigation.</li> <li>• CCTV: where whg has CCTV installed, colleagues can monitor events in this location from the control room; NOMAD cameras can also be supplied which can be moved and set up in different locations.</li> <li>• Investigation may include speaking to relevant neighbours to establish if the noise nuisance is affecting surrounding households. whg may not be able to guarantee confidentiality during our investigation of noise reports, particularly where the noise caused is only affecting one neighbour. When this is the case the customer reporting the noise will be informed.</li> </ul> <p>whg will keep a record of its deliberation over interventions and communicate with the customer the reasons behind its decisions.</p>
2.11	Where noise nuisance is found to be occurring whg may:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore possible resolutions with all parties involved, this may include encouraging customers to change floor coverings (e.g. from laminate to carpet), invest in anti-vibration mats or headphones. Where customers are willing, but not able for reasons of vulnerability (including financial hardship), whg will work with that customer to find a suitable way forward. This may include signposting the customer to access available hardship funds, whether this is through their local authority, local charities etc.</li> <li>• Offer mediation between neighbours to agree a solution.</li> <li>• Take tenancy enforcement action/injunction action if serious enough, and it is reasonable and proportionate for us to do so.</li> <li>• Work with local partners, particularly the local authority for enforcement action under their powers.</li> </ul>
2.12	whg will encourage our customers to work collaboratively with external partners, including the local authority and police where it is believed that the noise has reached a threshold that would warrant Local Authority involvement. Local Authorities have legal powers to address noise nuisance beyond those that are available to whg. whg can provide support to our customers to do so where support is needed.
2.13	Where noise nuisance meets a threshold for Local Authority intervention, this may trigger tenancy enforcement action where this is reasonable and proportionate.
2.14	<p>whg will also act proactively to reduce the likelihood and impact of noise nuisance by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring, in accordance with building regulations, its new homes will be designed to minimise noise nuisance. Colleagues will make clear at tenancy sign-up and through whg's new tenancy settling in visits (minimum of three in the first 12 months) its customer's responsibilities under the terms of their tenancy agreement, not to cause a nuisance and annoyance to their neighbours.</li> <li>• Making it clear to all its customers what whg's responsibilities are and what their responsibilities are in relation to noise nuisance.</li> <li>• Empowering and supporting its customers to deal with any noise concerns that they may have by having useful information, FAQs and helpful signposting information available on our website.</li> <li>• During the void process, leaving carpets if they are in good condition, and the incoming customer wants them.</li> <li>• Wooden or laminate flooring in flats is prohibited under the tenancy agreement.</li> <li>• Maintaining sustainable communities by deterring acts of noise nuisance through the operation of our Community Housing Model. Customers will be encouraged to form positive relationships with their</li> </ul>

	neighbours and encourage contact to support case resolution where appropriate. whg may do this through community events.
2.15	Some customers will have additional support needs and the impact of the noise nuisance will vary as a result. In line with whg's Vulnerability Policy, it will tailor its approach, treating the customer fairly and with respect. whg may involve external support agencies or its own in-house support services where it is felt this is necessary.
2.16	Where noise is occurring from private owners or commercial businesses, whg will ask the customer to refer the issue to the Local Authority and work with the Environmental Health Team to gain a resolution. whg will, where necessary, support our customer to do this, for example if they have a vulnerability which makes this more difficult for them to do.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>PERFORMANCE MEASURES</b>
3.1	whg will keep records of all reported cases of noise nuisance and monitor the data to improve performance, report trends and tailor our services to the needs of our communities.
3.2	whg will periodically undertake compliance audits to check that practice reflects this Policy and relevant operational procedures. whg will implement any recommendations to ensure continued compliance.
3.3	whg will undertake regular casework reviews to ensure it is delivering a consistent and effective approach to noise nuisance and customers receive a high-quality service. whg will also gather feedback from customers by undertaking a Transactional Satisfaction Survey for a sample of closed cases.
3.4	TSM satisfaction will be monitored under its handling of ASB and we will review comments across all measures, including fairness and respect to monitor the impact of its service.
3.5	whg will deal with complaints from customers about the quality of its handling of noise nuisance matters through its Customer Experience Policy and Complaints Procedure.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY</b>
4.1	All customers reporting noise nuisance to whg will be treated equally and with respect. Noise nuisance is investigated impartially and is focused on delivering the right solution to the problem. whg will not label anyone involved in a report of noise nuisance as a 'victim' or 'perpetrator' of noise nuisance unless evidence proves this to be the case.

4.2	whg are committed to making reasonable adjustments where possible for vulnerable customers in line with our Vulnerability Policy.
<b>5.0</b>	<b>TRAINING AND DISSEMINATION</b>
5.1	Colleagues within Community Housing, Community Safety, Neighbourhood Services, Customer Services and Complaints will receive training on the Noise Nuisance Policy.
5.2	Colleagues within Community Housing, Community Safety and Neighbourhood Services will receive appropriate noise nuisance training at the commencement of their role, at intervals throughout their role and in response to any relevant changes in legislation.
5.3	All wider business colleagues have access to the Policy through the internal whoogle communications page.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>MONITOR AND REVIEW</b>
6.1	This Policy will be monitored by the Director of Housing and Customer Services, reviewed every three years by the Customer and Operations Panel and approved by the Customer Service Oversight Committee.
<b>7.0</b>	<b>ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES</b>
7.1	<p>Documents, policies and procedures associated with this Policy are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anti-Social Behaviour Policy</li> <li>• Tenancy Management Policy</li> <li>• Domestic Abuse Policy</li> <li>• Hate Crime Policy</li> <li>• CCTV Policy</li> <li>• Neighbourhood Management Policy</li> <li>• Allocations Policy</li> <li>• Personal Safety Policy</li> <li>• Data Protection Policy</li> <li>• Empty Homes Policy</li> <li>• Market Rent Management Policy</li> <li>• Freeholder Management Policy</li> <li>• Vulnerability Policy</li> <li>• Safeguarding Policy</li> <li>• Housing Ombudsman's Spotlight on: Noise Complaints – October 2022</li> <li>• Reform of Anti-Social Behaviour Powers – Statutory guidance for frontline professionals – Home Office, July 2014</li> <li>• Neighbourhood and Community Standard 2024</li> <li>• ASB Privacy Notice 2023</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Equality Act 2010</li></ul>
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