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Noisy neighbours cause the most disputes

New research by Halifax Estate Agents shows that noise is still the main reason for neighbourly disputes. The survey revealed that over a quarter of us (26%) admit to having had neighbourly disputes. Of these, almost a third (31%) said it was in the last twelve months.

When asked why we have had disputes with neighbours, noise firmly topped the poll with over a quarter (26%) stating this as the reason.

Other common reasons for neighbours to fall out are boundary disputes (14%), pets (11%) and parking (10%).

Women more likely to have a dispute...

More women (34%) than men (29%) admitted to having a dispute with their neighbours in the last 12 months.

Women were more likely to complain about antisocial behaviour (11%) and the behaviour of children (10%) than men (6% and 3% respectively). Where as almost three in ten of men (29%) who have had disputes with neighbours admitted it was because of noise. This compares to just 22% of women.

Age is also a factor...

Those aged 16-24 years old are most likely to have had a disagreement in the last 12 months with nearly half (49%) saying they had. The age groups least likely to have had a dispute in the past twelve months are those aged 45-54 and 55-64 (28% and 24% respectively).

Those in the south most likely to have had dispute in last 12 months...

Of people who admitted to having had a neighbourly dispute, those in the South (38%) were most likely to have had one in the last twelve months. This compares to just 27% in the North and the Midlands.

Resolving disputes

Often neighbourly disputes can be resolved amicably and without the need for further action. It is always worth trying to talk to neighbours about a problem. If your neighbours are tenants speaking to their landlord may also be an option.

More/...

In the case of noise disputes that can't be settled amicably by talking with your neighbours you may need to consider other options. These include:

- Mediation – there are often free local mediation services available which can provide a neutral venue and persons to help resolve the dispute. To search for a service in your area visit: <http://www.admow.org.uk/>
- EHO – Ask your Local Authority Environmental Health Officer (EHO) to investigate. They will be able to measure the level of noise and tell you if it qualifies as a noise nuisance. Local Authorities have the power to remove noise making equipment.

The Citizens Advice Bureau advises* that: 'If the EHO considers there is a noise nuisance and has been unable to resolve the matter by discussion, the authority can then serve a notice on the person causing the noise, or on the owner or occupier of the property. If the person causing the noise does not comply with the notice, the local authority can prosecute them. The local authority can also apply for an injunction.'

Colin Kemp, Managing Director, Halifax Estate Agents, comments:

"Noise remains the number one reason for neighbourly disputes. It's always advisable to settle things amicably and avoid any unnecessary aggravation.

"It's also important to remember that any formal disputes will have to be declared on a 'Sellers Property Information Form' when you come to sell your home. Ensuring good neighbourly relations is always a prudent measure – that way unpleasant situations can be prevented."

Editors' notes:

* For more information on the Citizen's Advice Bureau on common neighbourly disputes visit: http://www.adviceguide.org.uk/index/family_parent/housing/ neighbour_disputes.htm

If you have had a disagreement with a neighbour what was the dispute about?

Noise	26%
Boundaries	14%
Pets	11%
Parking	10%
Antisocial Behaviour (other than noise)	8%
Bordering or overhanging trees or plants	7%
Children/behaviour of children	7%
Communal/shared areas or grounds	4%
Home improvements, developments or extensions	4%
Personal falling out/disagreements	3%
General appearance or upkeep of property	3%
Rubbish	2%
Football in my garden/their garden	1%

Research conducted on behalf of Halifax Estate Agents by GfK NOP 15th – 17th June 2007. 1,000 adults UK wide.