

Plus Dane Housing

Good Neighbour Guide

Tolerance – Consideration – Understanding

Part One – Being Considerate

Being a good neighbour means being tolerant and understanding other people's views and lifestyles, it also means considering how our behaviour affects others.

Residents/customers are responsible for making sure that their children and visitors are also considerate of neighbours.

What is Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

Hate Crime or Domestic Abuse

Verbal or physical abuse

Drug dealing

Unreasonable noise

Graffiti

Harassment / Intimidation / Threatening Behaviour

Customers can report ASB to us in a number of ways:

- Online report via our website
- Telephoning our customer team
- Using our customer portal
- Emailing communitysafetytm@plusdane.co.uk

What is not classed as Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

Children playing

Carrying out DIY

Noise generated from everyday living

Civil disputes and boundary issues

Parking disagreements

Comments on social media

Part Two – Tolerance

Different lifestyles and one-off incidents

There are different behaviours that can cause problems for neighbours and some are more serious than others. As a tenant of Plus Dane you should respect that other people may not live their lives in the same way you do.

A one off incident can be annoying at the time, such as a loud party or Barbeque but they are part of every-day living, and if not frequent, then you should try to tolerate it. If they occur on a regular basis, and the disturbance causes you a problem, it is often a matter of making your neighbour aware in a friendly manner and seeking to work out a solution together.

Try and resolve issues with your neighbours directly first. They may not be aware of the problem.

Neighbour Disputes

Neighbour Disputes can occur when neighbours have some form of disagreement and there may be some fault on both sides. We will not categorise neighbour disputes as anti-social behaviour (ASB) and we may suggest practical advice such as mediation as a resolution.

We are aware that disputes can cause nuisance and annoyance to other residents in the locality. If this occurs, we will class this as ASB with action being considered against both parties involved.

Part Three – Understanding

Noise

Noise is part of everyday living, and no home is totally soundproof, we have to expect some noise from the people living around us. Everyday living noise includes TVs, music, DIY, dogs occasionally barking, slamming doors or simply walking around the property.

What is a Good Neighbour?

You can help to reduce complaints from neighbours about noise disturbance by:

- Recognise that neighbours do not want to hear noise, particularly late at night, or for long periods.
- Keep noise such as TV, stereo, radio at a reasonable level at all times of day
- It is courtesy to warn your neighbours if you are going to do anything noisy like having a party or doing DIY
- Co-operate with your neighbours if they ask you to reduce noise. Re-position your TV or stereo away from the walls you share with your neighbours
- If you are using devices late at night such as a washing machine consider installing an anti-vibration mat to prevent noise from transferring to your neighbour's property.
- If you live in a flat be mindful of your neighbours when leaving or entering your building. Don't slam doors, keep noise to a minimum in the communal areas, don't play loud music in a vehicle parked outside one of our homes.

- If your flat is above ground floor consider installing carpets or flooring that has an underlay to reduce noise transference. Rugs also prevents noise from affecting your neighbour below.
- If you want to listen to music or play games consoles late at night consider using headphones.

What you can do if you are affected by noise from your neighbour

If it is safe to do so speak to your neighbour, let them know how the issue affects you and suggest practical solutions that you can try and agree to keep communicating.

If you are unable to come to an agreement and the issue persists, contact us for advice.

How will we deal with noise

If you have tried to deal with the matter yourself or if you feel that it is not safe for you to do so you can ask us to intervene. We will take the following steps to deal with complaints about noise:

- Low harm complaints of noise are dealt with by our Tenancy Management Team who will contact a customer by telephone, letter or home visit to explain the impact the noise is having and give clear tenancy instructions about modifying behaviour and look for practical solutions to resolve the issue.
- We will inform new and current tenants about our Good Neighbourhood Management Guide and the practical ways they can deal with noise.
- We may ask you to complete an incident diary, detailing when the noise is taking place, how long for, and how this affects you.
- We may ask you to download the Noise App to a smart phone to record the noise. We will only respond to Noise Apps from customers who have reported incidents of noise to us.
- We may offer mediation to you and your neighbour
- We may make a referral to support services or third party agencies who can assist with improving behaviour that may be causing noise.
- If noise complaints persist and if the noise is classed as anti-social behaviour our Community Safety Team may get involved, this will depend if we have sufficient evidence to pursue an ASB case

What we can do if the noise you experience is not anti-social behaviour (ASB)

- Your Tenancy Management Officer may carry out a home visit to listen to the noise where this is possible
- Arrange for a property inspection with maintenance teams to assess the sound proofing quality of your property
- Carry out a repair to your home if this is the cause of the noise
- We may offer to refer your neighbour to a mediation service

- Ask if you are adequately housed and the property suits your needs
- Refer you to your local authority who may be able to assess if the noise is a statutory nuisance

Being a responsible pet owner

We know that pets are a great comfort to some people. Owning a pet means that you are responsible for ensuring that it does not cause a nuisance to other people. Examples of Being a Good Neighbour can include:

- Make sure your dog doesn't bark for long periods of time
- Arrange a dog walker if you are out for long periods of time
- If your dog fouls in a public space, or your garden you should clean it up
- Keep your dog under control at all times
- Ensure XL Bully breeds have correct exemption certificates and are muzzled when walked on a lead
- requesting our consent before owing a pet.

Please Note: We can withdraw permission for a customer to have a pet in our property

Rubbish

Food rubbish is the biggest attraction for rats and other vermin. Examples of "Being a Good Neighbour" can include:

- If you have a communal bin area, dispose of your rubbish correctly in the bins, and keep the area around the bins tidy
- Don't contaminate recycling bins
- If you live in a house ensure your bins are ready for collection
- If you have any bulky household items that you no longer want, your local authority can usually take them away for you.
- Don't throw any items out of your window

Parking

Show consideration and regard to other residents when parking your vehicle.

Examples of "Being a Good Neighbour" can include:

- No one has an automatic right to park directly outside their home on the public highway unless they have a designated disabled bay.
- Do not block entrances, or park at dropped kerbs, or outside garages, or in a way that prevents wheelchair users and prams from using the pavement.
- Do not block access for emergency services.

- Cars parked on Plus Dane land including car parks must be roadworthy, have road tax and MOT certificate. We will refer to our abandoned car procedure should we receive reports of vehicles that don't meet these requirements.

Mobility Scooters

We understand that mobility scooters are an essential aid for many customers. Examples of "Being a Good Neighbour" would include:

- Customers living in properties with communal areas should store mobility scooters in their property or outside the building.
- Communal corridors must not be used for charging a mobility scooter.

Children playing

It is important that children play safely outdoors. Neighbours can become concerned about damage to their property when children are playing ball games nearby.

Examples of "Being a Good Neighbour" can include:

- Consider if there is a safer place to play.
- Consider how the noise of children playing outside may affect your neighbours
- Use soft balls on play areas that are near to homes and vehicles.

Smoking

Smoking is not permitted in any indoor communal area of Plus Dane buildings including stairwells, lifts and bin stores. Examples of "Being a Good Neighbour" can include:

- Consider the effects of second-hand smoke. Try and avoid cigarette smoke from blowing into your neighbours open windows or doors.
- If you live in a flat don't leave cigarette butts outside the main entrance, dispose of butts in bins or use an ash tray.

Gardens

If you have your own garden or yard, ensure this is well maintained, including cutting the grass and removing rubbish and pruning trees. Examples of "Being a Good Neighbour" can include:

- If you struggle to keep on top of your garden, consider joining Plus Dane's gardening service which is subject to a weekly charge.
- If you have a shared or communal garden, ask our permission before purchasing garden furniture or making any alterations.

Cannabis Use

We are unable to deal with cannabis smoking as a crime until the police have decided that that a criminal act has taken place.

The action we take against tenants who are convicted of drug related offences will depend on:.

- The prospect of success
- The impact, or potential impact, on the neighbourhood
- The seriousness of the offence
- The reasonableness of the type of action we can take

Using Cannabidiol (CBD) is not illegal and can be purchased legally in shops and be smoked or vaped. CBD gives off a similar smell to cannabis. If you use CBD this way, neighbours might be affected by the odour. Take steps to minimize its effect, this could include

- Buying an Air Purifier for use at home.
- Smoking CBD away from your home.
- Talking to your neighbour and agree a time when they are less likely to be affected by the odour.

Mediation/dispute resolution

If you are unable to reach an agreement with your neighbour and need help in resolving a situation, we can refer you to mediation. Mediation is an informal, confidential and independent service available to help neighbours resolve their differences.

We may use an independent mediation service, when this happens there will be no charge to our customers.

What do mediators do:

- ensure that everyone has an equal chance to make their point,
- ensure that everyone takes part in reaching a fair agreement which will work,
- put a stop to any behaviour that prevents people from negotiating fairly

How does the process work

- Mediators initially telephone each customer to understand the issues,
- They arrange to meet with customers where they feel comfortable,
- Each case is different, it is difficult to predict the timescales for completing the mediation process.

Please Note: Mediation is more successful when introduced as early as possible.

Don't delay in letting us know if you have an issue that you can't resolve.