

LIVING IN A FLAT

YOUR A-Z GUIDE TO MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR HOME



Part of the Good Neighbour Campaign
www.dover.gov.uk/housing_for_tenants



If you would like a copy of this document
in an alternative format please
email: doverhousing@dover.gov.uk
or call 01304 821199

AT DOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL WE WANT YOU AND YOUR FAMILY TO BE SAFE, SECURE AND ENJOY LIVING IN YOUR FLAT.

PLEASE READ THROUGH OUR GUIDE TO HELP YOU MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR HOME AND BE A GOOD NEIGHBOUR.

ACTIONS AND NOISE THAT CAN CAUSE UPSET

A flat won't ever be as private as a house – as you may not have your own outside space or garden and you may need to share entrance and communal areas with your neighbours.

Due to the design of some properties, you may have thinner party walls which mean you will hear your neighbour's everyday living noises and they will hear yours.



Children will make noises when they play



DIY should happen between 8am-8pm

The types of everyday actions and living noises that can occur:

- Children or babies crying
- Children playing indoors and outdoors
- DIY between 8am and 8pm
- Dropping items or footsteps on the floor
- Flushing the toilet
- General talking or moving furniture
- Kitchen smells
- Noise from a lift or from medical equipment
- Occasional parties (unless the noise is excessive)
- People looking out of windows
- People staring at you
- Playing music or musical instrument at a reasonable level
- Sexual noises or snoring
- Shift workers leaving home
- Shouting/arguing (unless this is excessive)
- Slamming doors (unless deliberate and excessive)
- Washing machines or appliances (at reasonable hour)



Washing machines can be noisy if used late at night

We don't consider these types of noises that occur during the day to be a nuisance and encourage neighbours to show consideration and respect for one another to avoid a bigger problem occurring.

Neighbourhood Noise issues are often a cause of complaint for people living in flats and a certain amount of noise is to be expected. However, you should not have to put up with excessive noise.

Are you experiencing excessive and unsociable noise?

Please contact your Housing Officer.

BALCONIES



If your flat has a balcony here are a few tips that may help you avoid problems with your neighbours.

Balcony tips:

- If you smoke on your balcony please dispose of the cigarette ends in a suitable container. If you throw them over the balcony onto the ground below this makes the area look unsightly and may give your neighbours cause to complain.
- Remember the person below you and make sure any excessive water goes into the drain and not over the edge onto the balcony below.
- Please do not have barbeques on your balcony as this is considered a fire risk.
- If you own a dog or cat please do not allow it to foul on your balcony.
- To avoid complaints from your neighbours please do not throw scraps of food or rubbish from your balcony.
- Birds are lovely but they may cause a nuisance, to your neighbours, if you feed them on your balcony.



COMMUNAL AREAS AND STAIRWELLS

Communal areas including stairwells, landings, entrance areas, alleys and lounges, should be kept clear at all times.

Please do not store large items such as bikes, prams or white goods in communal areas as they can block possible escape routes in the event of a fire in the building.



DAMP AND MOULD CAUSED BY CONDENSATION

Sometimes you may see patches of damp or mould in your flat, which may be caused by Condensation. You can reduce the effects of condensation by:

- Pulling furniture away from walls and allowing air to circulate around your home
- Closing doors and windows when cooking so the warm air does not circulate into other rooms.
- Keeping bathroom doors closed when bathing and opening the windows slightly afterwards.
- Not drying clothes on a radiator unless you open a window to increase ventilation.
- Putting the vent from a tumble drier through a window to the outside.

Pick up our condensation leaflet from a local office or search 'condensation' on our website for more advice.

Opening up a window after a bath or shower will help

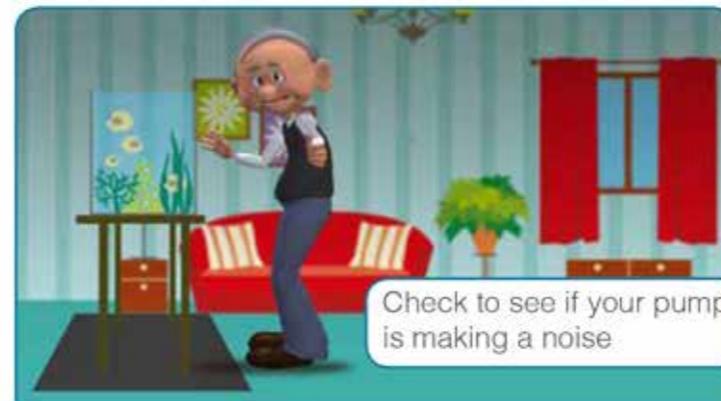


FISH TANKS

If you have a fish tank with pumps and filters this may cause a nuisance to your neighbour if the vibration of the pump can be heard in neighbouring flats. Noise from a fish tank will usually be in the form of a buzzing, rattling or humming sound which can be irritating.

If you have a fish tank, please secure your pump tightly to a flat surface so it does not vibrate.

Alternatively if you are unable to do this you can place a foam mat between the pump and the hard surface to dampen the noise.



GARDENS

To help keep you and your family safe there is certain play equipment you are not allowed in the communal garden:

- Swings
- Trampolines
- Slides
- Paddling pools.

If your children play in the communal garden please make sure that any small toys they are playing with are cleared away when they leave. This will help keep the communal gardens tidy and make it easier for the contractors to maintain the grassed areas.



I INTERNAL LIFTS

If you have a lift in your building you, your family and visitors to your home should use it responsibly. One of the main reasons for a lift breaking down is vandalism and no one likes going into a lift that has been used as a toilet.

L LAMINATE FLOORING

Laminate Flooring- This type of flooring can be really noisy for your neighbours as they will hear every noise you may make. Noise from footsteps, chairs scraping and dropped items will travel through the floor and quickly become an annoyance to your neighbours. To help reduce noise you can place rugs where you walk the most such as by the sofa, by your bed or in the hallway.

Thinking of putting down Laminate flooring?
Please contact your Housing Officer.



M MOBILITY SCOOTERS



Safety of other residents, visitors in the building and fire risk assessments have identified mobility scooters as a possible fire hazard if stored in escape routes in communal areas.

If your building does not have a designated storage area for mobility scooters you must contact your Housing Officer, for permission, before you buy one as you will need adequate storage space in your flat for it.

For fire safety reasons you are not permitted to charge mobility scooters in communal hallways.

Make sure your scooter can be stored correctly when not in use

Before you decide to keep a pet, please contact your Housing Officer for advice and permission, as your property may not be suitable to keep one.

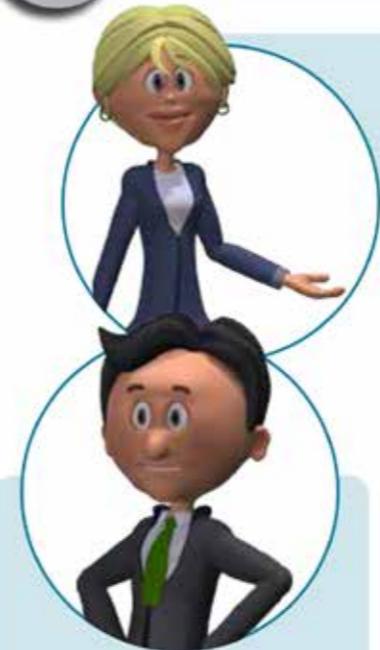
If you do have a pet here are a few tips to avoid it causing a nuisance.

- Try not to let your pet foul in communal areas and public open spaces. If this does happen clean it up straight away and dispose of it responsibly
- Keep your pet under control at all times
- When you go out with your dog make sure it is kept on a lead
- If your dog barks when you are out make sure you do not leave it alone for long periods of time. If this is unavoidable ask one of your neighbours to look in on your dog or leave a radio on to mask other noises that may trigger barking. You could also try an anti-barking collar
- Block your dog's access to windows and doors while you are out so it cannot see outside.



Bag it and bin it – to keep your area free of dog poo

Rubbish in the wrong place can cause many problems – from seagulls picking at the bags to rats attracted to the area. It's really important that everyone plays their role in keeping the area where they live clean and free of rubbish.



Please remember - If you drop some of your rubbish on the way to the bin, please pick it up – it won't take long!

Using your bin chute

Some blocks of flats have bin chutes which lead to a large bin that is emptied by the refuse collectors. Please only put small **bagged** rubbish down the chute rather than using large refuse sacks that can cause a blockage. Please avoid throwing loose food scraps down the bin chute as this can cause a blockage and unwanted smells as the food decays. Don't forget to recycle as much as possible. Also, try to avoid using the bin chute at night as the noise may wake up your neighbours.

Using your bin areas

Please use the bin areas to store your rubbish prior to collection as leaving rubbish in the communal areas and walkways make the area look unsightly.



Keep your area free from rubbish

SECURITY ENTRANCE DOORS

We want you and your family to feel safe and secure and enjoy living in your flat. When you enter the building always close the entrance door behind you and never prop it open or leave it unlocked. If someone asks you to let them into the building and you don't know them it's best not to let them in.

Remember if you let someone you don't know in to the building you have reduced the security for yourself and everyone living in the block.



All our staff and workmen have identification badges they can show you if they are working in the building and you are not sure who they are.

SMOKING

It is illegal to smoke in communal areas in blocks of flats including corridors, stairwells, walkways, entrances and lifts. If you smoke inside your flat please make sure your front door is closed to avoid the smoke seeping into the communal hallway. If you smoke outside the building please make sure the entrance doors are kept shut to avoid any smoke seeping back into the building. Please make sure any cigarette ends are disposed of appropriately.



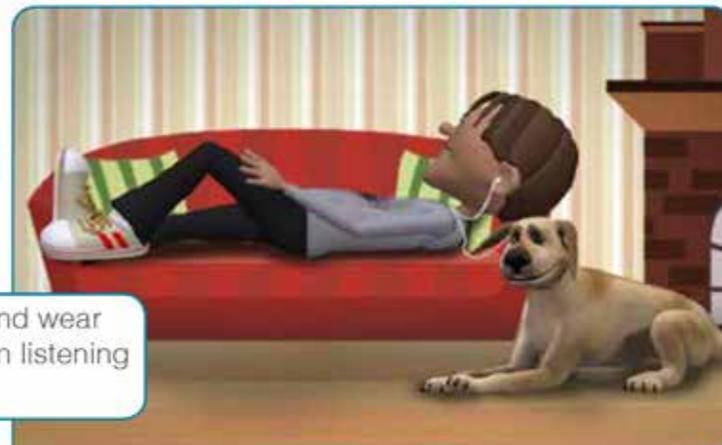
TELEVISIONS AND MUSIC SYSTEMS

Try not to position your television or the speakers to your music system on an adjoining wall or on the floor as this may cause a nuisance. Even if they are on at a low level the sound may vibrate through the walls and floor and cause a problem to your neighbours.

If you have your windows wide open in the summer, remember your neighbours and keep noise levels to a minimum.

Noise carries at night so if you have a television in your bedroom, please consider your neighbours and keep the volume to a minimum.

You could try using headphones if you play your music or watch television late at night.



Be noise aware and wear headphones when listening to music.

U N WANTED HOUSEHOLD ITEMS

Any unwanted household items, appliances or furniture should not be stored in the walkways, bin areas or communal areas. You can contact us for information on a bulky waste collection service or you can take your unwanted items to the tip.

Some charities will also collect suitable items for free and reuse them.



V ISITORS

As a tenant you are responsible for anyone living at or visiting your home. If you have visitors to your home please ask them to keep noise down when they leave.



Z ERO TOLERANCE

Don't be a neighbour with Zero Tolerance. Take a moment to think about the situation. Is it a one off, am I being reasonable, can I approach my neighbour and tell them how their behaviour is affecting me and my family.



If you do speak to your neighbour try and do it calmly and politely. It's easy to start shouting but will make it harder to resolve things as people get defensive and shout back. If you can't resolve it speak to your Housing Officer or visit our website for tips on how to approach your neighbour.

Thanks for reading this booklet.
You may also be interested in:

Our Good Neighbour Cartoon Booklet can be found online at www.dover.gov.uk/housing_for_tenants



Love where you live and want to make it better?

Every year we run an Environmental Improvement Programme (EIP) which gives tenants the chance to suggest improvements for their street, estate or block. Everything you need to know about the programme including how you can apply for an improvement in your area can be found on our website:

www.dover.gov.uk/housing_for_tenants

Dover District Council offices:

**Dover District Council, White Cliffs Business Park, Whitfield
Dover, Kent CT16 3PJ**

Dover Gateway, Castle Street, Dover, Kent CT16 1PD

**Email: doverhousing@dover.gov.uk
Telephone: 01304 821199**

**For more information visit our website:
www.dover.gov.uk/housing_for_tenants**

