Housing Rights

https://www.housingrights.org.uk/landlords/tenancy-issues/dealing-antisocial-behaviour

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Dealing with antisocial behaviour

This information is for private landlords of properties in Northern Ireland.

If you are a tenant, you can find advice here.

If you are a landlord or letting agent in Northern Ireland seeking advice, you can:

- send a message to Landlord Advice, or
- call 028 90 245 640 (Option 1)

If you have experienced antisocial behaviour, there are options available.

Neighbours may contact you to complain about tenants' behaviour. The council might also get in touch if they have received complaints about noise or rubbish.

Your tenants are responsible for their own behaviour and that of their guests. But antisocial behaviour could be a breach of their tenancy agreement. So you need to take it seriously.

Antisocial behaviour can include:

- violence or threats of violence
- very loud music, TV or noisy parties
- rubbish left outside the property
- drunken behaviour that disturbs others
- intimidating or harassing people
- using the property for illegal purposes – such as using or selling drugs

How to deal with tenants causing antisocial behaviour

If your tenants have been antisocial, you should:

- send them a written warning
- explain what will happen if antisocial behaviour continues

There may be reasons for the behaviour. Your tenants can get confidential advice from our helpline on their situation.

Our Housing Mediation Service can help to settle disputes between:

- landlord and tenants, and
- neighbours who are both private tenants

You can try to deal with the issue informally, but in some cases, you may need to:

- speak to the tenant's guarantor, or
- consider ending the tenancy, or
- report the matter to the police

Tenancy agreements usually have a term about causing a nuisance to neighbours.

You can end the tenancy if:

- your tenants repeatedly or seriously breach this term, and
- their behaviour does not improve after your warning

Landlords of houses in multiple occupation (HMOs)

The council could refuse to renew your HMO licence if you do not deal with antisocial behaviour.

As a HMO landlord, you must follow the:

- HMO code of practice

- HMO standard licence conditions
- HMO guide for tackling antisocial behaviour

HMO landlords must:

- have an antisocial behaviour plan
- state in the tenancy agreement what happens if there are antisocial behaviour complaints
- keep a record of any complaints of antisocial behaviour

A solicitor can help with drafting plans or tenancy agreements.

The HMO Unit for Northern Ireland may be contacted:

- by emailing nihmo@belfastcity.gov.uk
- by phoning 028 9027 0414

Non-HMO landlords do not have to do this. But they should still deal fairly with complaints to avoid a situation getting out of hand.

Noise complaints

Your tenants and their neighbours should try to deal with noise problems informally. If this is not possible, the council might get involved.

The council can investigate noise complaints, and they have the power to serve a legal notice on:

- the person causing excessive noise, or
- the landlord

Neighbours may contact you or your estate agent to complain about noisy tenants.

If this happens, you should:

- listen to the neighbour’s complaints
- investigate to see if your tenants are causing a nuisance
- give your tenants a written warning if there is evidence of excessive noise
- remind them that causing antisocial behaviour could breach their contract

Complaints about rubbish

HMO landlords must provide bins for rubbish and recycling. Non-HMO landlords are not legally required to do this. But tenants will expect to have the right bins on the property.

Make sure bins are:

- marked with the property address to avoid confusion
- labelled with what should go inside to avoid mixing items

Tenants are responsible for putting bins out on the right collection days.

You should give tenants information about:

- how rubbish and recycling should be sorted, and
- what day each bin is collected

The council can issue a penalty notice if someone is not disposing of rubbish properly.

Bin theft is common in some areas, and collection trucks can sometimes damage bins. You will have to pay for a new bin unless you can prove that the damage or theft was the tenant's fault.