



ASB advice :10 Tips on speaking to your neighbours

1. Try speaking to your neighbours informally if you have experienced a problem. Contacting the Council or police before speaking first to resolve the problems can cause bad feelings between neighbours.
2. Choose a good time to talk and only when you are feeling calm. Don't go round when something has just happened and you are feeling angry or upset.
3. Think about what might be a good time for your neighbour, too – for example, don't go round if you know they have just got home from work or are likely to be having a meal.
4. Do not assign blame; talk about the effects the behaviour or situation has had on you. This makes it easier for your neighbour to hear what you are saying without becoming defensive.
5. Don't make threats or deliver an ultimatum. Your neighbour will be more likely to respond well if you state the problem and leave them the opportunity to respond.
6. Try to keep the discussion lighthearted and friendly. It may be that there is a situation you are unaware of, and this could clear the air between you. Alternatively, your neighbour may be completely unaware of the disturbance they are causing you. Assume goodwill on the part of your neighbour – if you give them the benefit of the doubt they may respond more positively.
7. You may be feeling nervous before approaching them, so take a few deep breaths first, and don't rush it – take your time, and stop to allow the other person to respond.
8. When outlining the problem, keep it clear and stick to the facts. Don't bring in other issues or past history to 'prove' your point – keep to the most recent incident that has caused your concern.
9. Listen carefully to what they have to say, and don't interrupt them. Try to see it from their point of view and be prepared to be reasonable. Reassure them you want to resolve the problem in a friendly way and let bygones be bygones.
10. If you can't or don't want to approach your neighbour in person, try writing to them and outlining your concerns instead.