If you are affected by DIY noise

Firstly, let your neighbours know that the work they are doing is disturbing you. Be polite and see what they will do to minimise the impact of their work. Try to gain agreement as to times they can work. You will need to show that you can tolerate a certain amount of reasonable disturbance.

If there is no improvement contact the council. We will ask you to keep a record of when and how you are disturbed. We will use this information to decide whether we can help you.

DIY in the garden

There are times when building projects are undertaken in the garden, e.g. laying patios, building walls, erecting pergolas, etc.

As this is undertaken outside noise can travel much further and affect more people. Most people are tolerant of short duration disturbance, as long as you have been considerate as to when you start and how long it goes on for.

We recommend speaking to neighbours if you are going to carry out noisy works over a long period (as might be the case if laying slabs - you may have to cut the slabs regularly through the day).

In particular try to make sure your work doesn’t coincide with a party, or when lots of people are out in their gardens enjoying good weather.

Who to contact at the council

If you need any help or more advice then please get in touch with us...

t: 01902 696000

e: envprotection@sstaffs.gov.uk

Or write to us at:
Environmental Protection Services
South Staffordshire Council
Council Offices
Wolverhampton Road
Codsall
South Staffordshire
WV8 1PX

There is also an on-line form for complaints on our website.

Why not visit our website at www.sstaffs.gov.uk
Do it Yourself building works

Noise from neighbours can annoy, cause stress and generally affect your quality of life. The best way forward is to avoid causing a problem in the first place. This guidance note is to assist you in dealing effectively with DIY noise.

Most people have DIY jobs that need doing around the home, especially if they have just moved in, or are redecorating. We have to accept that many people have jobs during the day and need to do this DIY in the evenings and at weekends.

However, this does not give them permission to annoy neighbours at all hours of the day and night. We all have to be reasonable in what and when we do things that are noisy, cause dust, etc, if we are to live together.

Disturbance from DIY building and decorating can be minimised by keeping noisy activities to reasonable hours and by thinking about what type of activity you are doing. We would define “noisy activities” as the use of:

Hand Tools - Use of hammers, saws, etc should be restricted to reasonable times.

Power Tools - Normal hand-held power tools (drills, saws, sanders, etc) can cause a lot of noise.

Plant - People can now hire “professional” tools and plant such as pneumatic hammers, cement mixers, large power saws and planers, compressors, generators, etc. Use of this powerful type of equipment needs greater consideration, as it is identical to that used by professional builders and can be extremely noisy.

The Radio - It seems most people want the radio on when they are doing DIY. If you do please keep the volume down, especially in the evenings.

Before you start

If the work is likely to be noisy, or if the project is large and will take a long time to complete you should make neighbours aware of your intentions and give them an opportunity to agree when it is reasonable for the work to take place.

What are reasonable hours

It is difficult to provide clear rules when DIY can or cannot take place. All DIY jobs are different. As a general rule you should consider the following: -

- The later into the evening you are making noise, the quieter you need to be. We recommend that you stop noisy activities by 9pm, unless you have spoken to and got agreement with your neighbours.
- At weekends the earlier you start work the more likely you are to annoy your neighbours (particularly on Sunday). As far as possible try to limit any noisy work on Sunday.
- If a DIY project is going to take more than a few days, consider reducing the amount of time you carry out noisy work each evening. Try to gain agreement with neighbours as to when work should start and finish.

Special consideration needs to be made if the work involves the following: -

Prolonged/Extensive Works

If the works you are planning to carry out are going to take several days, weeks or even months, you should discuss the details with your neighbours in advance. When carrying out such works you should try to be neighbourly and take into consideration their circumstances, particularly if the works are noisy or dusty.

Party Walls and Floors

Work on the party wall or floor between properties can give rise to surprising levels of noise. Work such as wallpaper stripping or wall preparation can sound loud next door. Work on the floor, such as plumbing, rewiring and especially sanding, can be very loud downstairs.

Young Children

If neighbours have young children who go to bed early you should bear in mind that your noisy activity may be keeping them awake. This will be particularly annoying to their parents and is likely to cause conflict.