



Anti-Social behaviour - frequently asked questions

NOISE

"What do I do if I can hear a party happening nearby in the middle of the night which is disturbing me?"

The council has powers to deal with noise that is considered a statutory nuisance. A statutory nuisance is determined by a number of factors including, but not limited to; type of noise, volume, frequency, duration and its impact on others. The council generally adopts an escalating approach to noise enforcement and can deal with unreasonable noise from loud music, parties dog barking, car and house alarms. The law enables the council to take action against those who cause a noise nuisance, which can result in a fine and confiscation of any equipment causing the noise. The Environmental Health Officers (EHO) attend to assess the situation and if needed can request support from police. The EHO are contactable on 0208 726 6200 or using the My Croydon app (which can be downloaded from the iTunes and Android stores).

While the council's legal powers enable them to deal with unreasonable noisy activities, defined as a Statutory Nuisance, they cannot deal with noise which is considered to be "normal domestic noise" which arises from people going about their normal, day-to-day activities in a reasonable manner such as:

- * Noise that can be heard due to poor sound insulation, for example neighbours talking or walking on wooden or laminate floors
- * Children playing in gardens or in the street
- * Doors being closed
- * Road traffic (other than vehicle alarms).

"My neighbour deliberately makes noise throughout the day and night and it is affecting my quality of life, who do I speak to in regards to this?"

Tackling and dealing with ongoing incidents of anti-social behaviour often requires a multi-agency approach and the council work closely with the police and other partners to bring ASB to an end as swiftly as possible. Call 101 to report the incident to the police and this will be passed to your local borough for an officer to make contact with you to ascertain the exact details of what has occurred. The officer will then advise you whether police will deal with this or another agency. If further assistance is needed from another agency then you will be given their contact details. Alternatively, you may wish to report any nuisance or ASB you have experienced, directly to the council and this can be done by calling on: 0208 726 6000 or emailing the ASB team directly at ASBTeam@croydon.gov.uk. If you are a council tenant, you are advised to contact your housing officer on the same telephone number.

FLY TIPPING

"I saw a white van dumping a load of material and waste by the garages at the rear of my property, what do I do now?"

This is a criminal offence for which the council will prosecute. If you see someone fly tipping, please call the Police if it is still happening on 101. To report an instance of fly tipping call the council pollution team on 0208 760 5483, with as much information as possible (for example a license plate or description of the vehicle). The council and police then work together to find the suspects and issue them with either a fine or prosecute which could lead to a custodial sentence; the council can also seize the vehicles involved.

The Council is not responsible for clearing up waste on private land but will use the relevant legislation to ensure that those dumping waste on private land are prosecuted and any clear up costs recovered from the offender. In some instances this may also apply to the owner of the land who may be liable for prosecution if they have allowed their land to be used for dumping.

LITTER

"Every time I go shopping in Croydon town centre I see people throwing crisps packets and other rubbish on the floor which I find disgusting. Who deals with this and what is done about it?"

It is illegal to drop litter. The Environmental Protection Act 1990 - Section 87 (as amended) states that an offence is committed if anything is dropped, thrown, left or deposited that causes defacement, in any place open to the air that the public have access to with or without payment. Croydon Council provides signed litter bins in high street areas and other busy places across the borough and also provides a uniformed patrol in the Borough. We will continue to work with schools, residents groups and other forums to reduce the level of littering by undertaking general litter education and raising awareness to highlight the consequences of littering. Where appropriate, authorised officers will use FPN powers to highlight that littering is not tolerated in Croydon. Litter is a matter for the council and not police, please call the Croydon Council pollution team on 0208 760 5483.

ABANDONED VEHICLES

"There is a car outside my property parked on the road for the last few weeks and I believed it has been abandoned, how do I get it removed."

Any information in regards to abandoned vehicles is useful in order to make sure that the vehicle has not been stolen. Once you have called 101 to report the vehicle, a check is done to ascertain if there are any reports on it. If there is not then the antisocial behaviour officer will contact the council's abandoned vehicles team on 0208 255 2718 as it is down to the council to deal; their procedure is as follows:

First visit - Enforcement officer visits the targeted vehicle to confirm that in their opinion the vehicle has been abandoned. Photographs and a site visit report are made during this visit. If the vehicle is suspected as being abandoned, the officer will affix a self adhesive seven day notice on the vehicle. If the vehicle is a wreck or is a clear health and safety risk to everybody then the visiting officer can immediately order the vehicle to be removed for disposal.

Second visit - If the vehicle has not moved within the period of the seven day notice, and no response has been received for the letter of enquiry, and then the targeted vehicle will be immediately marked for collection and subsequent disposal by the council's authorised contractor

DOGS

"I was walking through the park on my way to work when I was attacked by a dog which bit me on the leg."

There are clear guidelines in regards to dogs being dangerously out of control under the Anti Social Behaviour Crime and Police ACT 2014. A dog is said to be dangerously out of control if there is reasonable apprehension that the dog will injure any person or assistance dog whether it actually does so or not. Any dog can be a dangerous dog!

A dog does not have to bite someone to cause injury, injury can be caused by the dog jumping up and clawing / scratching, or knocking someone over.

Running out in front of a cyclist and causing a collision does not count; this is classified as an accident.

An assistance dog is a dog used to guide a blind person, assist a deaf person or to assist a disabled person. Examples include Guide Dogs, Hearing Dogs and Medical Detection Dogs.

Reasonable apprehension is something that a person of reasonable firmness must feel. Someone who has an inherent fear of dogs who wildly jumps around on the approach of a dog does not constitute a person of reasonable firmness. Guidance therefore would suggest that the dog must in some way act aggressively towards the person to make that sense of fear realistic. At present there is no law in place which covers if a dog attacks another dog.

Incidents can be reported to the police by calling 101, or directly to the council on 0208 7266000. If you are a council tenant, please contact your housing officer to report the incident.

NUISANCE VEHICLES

"Every evening a group of youths ride around on their mopeds and quad bikes across the park without helmets which is dangerous for me and my children as they are out of control and the noise is deafening."

This should be reported to the Police using 101 or 999 where the manner of driving is causing a danger of injury or accident.

Anyone who drives a vehicle on a road carelessly, off-road or in a way that is likely to alarm or annoy other people can have their vehicle seized from them.

If appropriate, they can be given a warning by police not to do it again. The warning under the Police Reform Act 2002 (Section 59) lasts for one year.

The rider is subject to the warning, along with the vehicle. This means that once the vehicle has been warned, it can be seized on any occasion in the next 12 months if it is used anti-socially. This is regardless of whether the driver has had a warning themselves.

The same applies to the driver. If they use another vehicle anti-socially within 12 months, that vehicle can be seized regardless of whether it had been used anti-socially before or not.

This legislation was introduced to discourage anti-social use of vehicles by groups of youths who may share one vehicle.

DRIVEWAYS

"My car is parked on my drive way and I want to go out but there is a car parked over the entrance on a dropped curb which has blocked me in, what can I do."

Under the Road Traffic Offenders ACT 1988 if your vehicle is on your driveway and another car has blocked it in then they might be committing an offence of willful / unnecessary obstruction. If you call 101 in relation to this matter then police will attend in a timely fashion to assist. Officers will also make enquiries to ascertain the registered keeper and get a contact number for them to be advised re their parking.

The council also have a blocked driveway team contactable on 0208 760 1966 or parking@croydon.gov.uk which is available Monday to Friday 9am till 5pm.

SCHOOL CHILDREN

"I live by a local secondary school and everyday when school has finished they hang around outside my property being loud and intimidating. They also run in and out of the road and nearly cause a traffic accident, who can help with this?"

Croydon police has a dedicated schools team comprising of 10 police officers who deal with all issues in relation to secondary schools (primary schools are dealt with by the local SNT). The schools team, local SNT and school work together to try and resolved any ASB issues involving pupils. Please call 101 to advise of any problems, and this will be passed to the schools team.

STREET DRINKING

"Now the weather is getting warmer there are a group of adults who sit on the bench in the little green opposite my property drinking all day being loud and rowdy. They are not committing any crimes but are a general nuisance and make me feel uncomfortable to walk past them. Who will deal this issue?"

Street drinking is dealt with by the police and several other agencies including the council. We advise to call 101 re this matter which will be passed to the Local Police Team to make them aware. The information is then shared with outer agencies and there are monthly meetings whereby all the agencies meet to discuss the issue and plan resolutions (this is known as 'Safer Streets'). The Safer Croydon Partnership also works closely with "Turning Point", who actively seek to engage with vulnerable individuals such as street drinkers to provide support and access into treatment services.

There are 4 no drinking zones in the borough in which alcohol can be confiscated and fines issued. These are implemented in the following wards; Fairfield (town centre), New Addington, South Norwood and Thornton Heath. People are required to hand over alcohol in their possession when requested to do so by a police officer. The police officer will generally dispose of the alcohol by pouring it away. Failure to surrender alcohol on request may result in an arrest. There are changes to be implemented throughout the year in regards to street drinking; for the most up to date information please go to the Croydon Council website. (we should provide the link here for the relevant page)

The police and council also work together to monitor license premises and those linked to regular outbreaks of alcohol related disorder are closed. Those responsible are given 8 weeks to implement an action plan with the partnership to eliminate the problems. If the premises complied with the recommendations in this period the premises can be re-opened.

OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION

In relation to generic neighbourhood ASB, people can send reports to Croydon Council's ASB team inbox ASBTeam@croydon.gov.uk. Your complaint will be responded to by an officer from the ASB team. Alternatively, if you are a council tenant, please contact your housing officer on 0208 726 6100.

There are a range of tools available in order to tackle ASB in the borough ranging from Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABC's), Civil Injunctions Criminal Behaviour Orders and Community Protection Notices (CPN's). For more detail of the council's role in tackling environmental matters and ASB, please go to www.croydon.gov.uk where the February 2015 Environmental Enforcement Policy and ASB policy will be published online shortly.