

Noise from “Do it Yourself” (DIY)

DIY work covers the building, modifying, or repairing of something without the aid of experts or professionals.

Projects can vary from small tasks like changing a fuse or repainting a room to major undertakings such as remodelling a property’s interior, replacing structural features, or installing new plumbing and electrics. DIY isn’t limited to indoor work—outdoor projects like extensions, landscaping, or adding conservatories are also common.

Generally, the larger the project, the greater the likelihood of disruption to neighbours. That’s why it’s important to think ahead and consider how to minimise the impact before starting any work.

What problems can arise from DIY work?

DIY projects can cause several types of disputes, including:

- Obstruction of access
- Mud on public paths or roads
- Boundary disagreements
- Improper placement of skips

However, the Council’s Pollution Control team is only legally required to investigate the three most common complaints:

- **Noise** (including vibration)
- **Bonfire smoke** from burning waste
- **Dust emissions** from industrial/trade premises

What does the law say about nuisance caused by DIY work?

UK law does not set specific hours or days when DIY work can or cannot take place. This means individuals are generally free to carry out work at times convenient to them—often evenings, weekends, or bank holidays. However, this freedom does **not** give people the right to carry out disruptive work without consideration for their neighbours.

What happens in situations where nuisance problems arise from DIY work?

Even without strict legal restrictions, the Council often steps in to help negotiate workable solutions when DIY work causes disturbances. We recognise that many people work during the day and must complete home improvements in their free time. Sometimes emergencies, like water leaks, may require urgent and noisy repair work that can't be delayed.

That said, everyone is entitled to reasonable peace and quiet, especially during evenings and weekends. This is particularly important in households with young children. The Council works to balance the needs of both parties: those undertaking DIY and those affected by it.

What are considered to be reasonable times for DIY work?

To minimise disruption, we recommend restricting noisy DIY activities to the following times:

- **Monday to Friday:** 8:00am – 7:30pm
- **Saturday:** 8:00am – 5:00pm
- **Sunday and Bank Holidays:** 10:00am – 2:00pm

These are **not legal limits**, but suggested guidelines to promote neighbourly consideration. A simple conversation with your neighbours in advance can go a long way.

Using Hired equipment

More people are hiring heavy-duty tools like pneumatic hammers, cement mixers, large power saws, and generators. These tools can be much louder than typical household equipment. If you're using them, please be especially mindful of the increased noise and take extra care to reduce disruption.

DIY in Unoccupied Properties

There is nothing to restrict property owners from undertaking DIY at their property whilst it is unoccupied or not in a liveable condition. Whilst we would expect that the majority of works are undertaken within the hours usually specified for construction sites:

Mon-Fri: 08:00 -18:00

Sat: 08:00 – 13:00

Sunday/bank holidays: No noisy works recommended

We accept that property owners may undertake some DIY activities themselves outside of those hours and some flexibility with these hours is recognised.

Major works and specialist Equipment

For large-scale DIY projects—such as roof replacement, demolition or concrete breaking—that you would usually expect to be undertaken by contractors or powered machinery, we recommend observing standard construction site hours (listed above).

Projects that require planning permission are generally considered major works, and we would expect any noisy activities associated with them to be limited to those same hours.

It should be noted that external works of these type can have potential for wider disturbance.

What happens if it is impossible to find a compromise arrangement?

In serious cases, where noise, smoke, or dust substantially interfere with a neighbour's ability to enjoy their property, the Council can investigate and take enforcement action. If necessary, a **legally binding abatement notice** may be issued to control the nuisance by imposing specific working conditions or time limits.

It's important to note that this does not usually mean a complete halt to the work—just tighter controls to reduce its impact. At the same time, while DIYers must be mindful of their neighbours, neighbours should also recognise that not all disturbances can be avoided. Wherever possible, the Council seeks informal resolutions before considering legal steps, as collecting sufficient evidence can be a time-consuming process.

What should you do if you are disturbed by nuisance from DIY work?

We encourage residents to speak directly with their neighbours before involving the Council. Many issues can be resolved quickly and amicably through a friendly conversation. Although you're not legally required to do so, it's often the most effective first step.

If speaking directly doesn't help, or if you're uncomfortable approaching the person responsible, the Council can still investigate your complaint. Please visit [Noise and Air Pollution](#) for more information and details on how to make a complaint.