

Is Your Dog Barking Too Much?

Don't let your dog bark
or whine for long periods
or leave it alone.



Stafford
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Talking it over

If the noise your dog makes is upsetting your neighbours, the first step is to talk things over with them.

Stay calm, and try to see it from their point of view: perhaps they're working shifts, or have got a baby or small children.

Bear in mind that they might be worried about whether the dog is okay and remember, you might not know how serious the problem is if your dog is barking more when you're not at home.

Understanding the problem

Ask your neighbours to tell you exactly when your dog is barking, and for how long.

If you're out a lot, ask them to note down the times when the barking happens. If you're in, make a note yourself.

Think about using a web cam or video camera to find out what your dog is doing when you're not there, or try a 'set-up' - pretend you're going out for the day, then wait outside the door to see what your dog does.

If it starts barking and howling, go back in and tell it firmly to be quiet. Punishing your dog will only make things worse.

What to do

Don't punish your dog. It might mistake it for attention, and it could also make it more anxious.

Don't get a second dog unless you're sure it's going to make your dog feel more secure, not less.

Do keep your neighbours informed about what you're doing to stop the barking.

First steps

There are simple steps you can take straight away to cut down the amount of noise your dog makes. This will help calm the situation between you and your neighbours, and give you time to work out why your dog is barking.

- › If your dog barks at things outside your yard or garden, don't let it go outside on its own. Keep it away from windows, so it can't see people or other animals.
- › If your dog barks at the same time every day, like when people in the house are going to work or school, try to keep it busy at that time. For example, you could take it for a walk.
- › Try to keep your dog calm. If it barks when it's excited, don't play with it at anti-social times like very late at night.
- › If your dog's barking and you're in a flat or a semi, try to keep it away from walls shared with neighbours.
- › Don't leave your dog outside if it's barking to be let in.
- › See if you can get a friend or relative to look after your dog when you go out, or take it with you.
- › Make sure your dog gets some exercise before you go out. A tired dog barks less.

Longer-term solutions - general rules

Be consistent. Every time your dog is quiet when it would normally have barked, praise it or give it a treat. When it barks, tell it firmly to be quiet. You also need to remember that your dog is part of the family. If it only barks when you leave, bring it inside. Leave some toys or chews, and put the radio on quietly.

If your dog is distressed, keep it inside with you whenever you're at home - dogs are pack animals, and they need company.

If the problem doesn't get resolved

If you don't take steps to solve the problem, and Stafford Borough Council receives complaints about the noise your dog is making, we will investigate the complaint.

We may try informally to resolve the problem between you and the complainants, but if we cannot do so, or if we are unsuccessful, and are satisfied that the noise amounts to a statutory nuisance, we will serve you with an abatement notice requiring the noise to be reduced to an acceptable level.

If you fail to comply with an abatement notice, you could face prosecution and, if convicted, a fine of up to £5,000 (and possibly further daily fines of up to £500 for each day on which the offence continues after conviction).



Tackling specific problems

Your dog is clingy, and howls or whines when left alone.

A vet or animal behaviourist may be able to tell you how to help your dog get used to being on its own.

Your dog is frightened. It might look scared (ears back, tail low), have trouble settling, or keep trying to hide.

If your dog likes hiding, make a den for it. If it's scared of noise, mask it by putting the radio on quietly. If it's frightened of other people or animals, shut the curtains or doors. Think about talking to a vet or animal behaviourist.

Your dog guards his territory by barking at people, animals or cars.

Keep your dog away from the front of the house or flat. Screen your windows. If it starts barking outside, call it in straightaway. You could ask a vet or animal behaviourist about behaviour therapy.

Your dog is barking to get attention.

Look at your dog, then look away to show you're not going to respond. Don't give it any attention - or anything else - while it's barking. Try deliberately ignoring it for 20 - 30 minutes two or three times a day, and get everyone in the house to do the same. Doing this for 15 minutes before you go out can help stop your dog barking when you leave.

A vet or animal behaviourist may be able to give you advice.

You went out without taking your dog for a walk, and it's barking through frustration.

Wear different clothes for walking your dog. Leave your dog's lead where it can see it. So if you're leaving without taking the lead the dog will know that its not going with you.

CONTACT

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