

Appendix F – Environmental Health Intervention

Environmental Health

This intervention took place in August 2014 and after initial scoping it was decided to focus on neighbour noise complaints. This is a significant area of work for the Pollution team with approximately 1000 complaints a year across Fareham and Gosport.

The old approach Purpose: To enforce Statutory Nuisance legislation



The old approach to dealing with noise complaints focused on enforcing legislation. It was a 'one size fits all' approach with the customer having to complete log forms for one month before any further action commenced. Upon receipt of the forms, a letter would be sent to the property making the noise, threatening the occupier with prosecution. The image to the left shows the process map, with the various standard letters used shown at the bottom.

The out of hours service was used to gain evidence to support formal action; however this was only followed through in less than 1% of cases. The majority of the time, the other 99% of customers became frustrated by the process and stopped making contact, resulting in the complaint being closed.

The process was very lengthy and usually took in excess of 60 days to go through. It mainly made relationships between neighbours worse and the problem was rarely solved.

The new approach Purpose: To help neighbours live peacefully together

"Really supportive and helpful. Problem was resolved - very good service"

Customer feedback

The focus now is on speaking to customers in person to understand the issues they have with their neighbours. The officers then talk to the neighbour in person (where appropriate) and mediate between the two, if the customer doesn't want to themselves. Neighbours are often unaware they are affecting each other and most of the time they are keen to resolve any issues. The officers remain in contact throughout and the complaint stays open until the customer is happy that the problem has been resolved.

This new approach led to a team restructure and recruitment to two new posts of Neighbour Liaison Officers. The focus is now centred on helping neighbours to live peacefully together.

The process now generally takes 2-3 weeks, with the issues being resolved to everyone's satisfaction. Officers experience less confrontation and enjoy greater job satisfaction. The out of hours service tends to only be used when the informal approach fails.

