

Introduction

This leaflet provides information and advice for dog owners experiencing difficulties with a dog which is barking and causing a disturbance to their neighbours.

Environmental Health Departments receive many complaints about such problems each year and it is one of the most common causes of noise disturbance.

The Law

Under the provisions of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, noise emitted from premises - including land - may be a statutory nuisance and a local authority can take action against an owner to stop it.

Private individuals are also able to take their own action by complaint to a magistrates' court.



Dogs At Home

Complaints about barking arise because dogs are often left at home alone whilst their owners are out for most of the day. Commonly, a dog will not bark whilst its owner is present, but as soon as they leave, the barking starts. The owners are therefore unaware that a problem exists until a complaint arises.

Dogs can sometimes resort to destructive behaviour, continuous barking or howling when there is no one around to stop them doing so.

Generally, it is better not to keep a dog at home unless there is someone there to look after it. If this is not possible, then it is questionable whether you should keep one at all. Dogs, by nature, are very sociable animals and regard their owners as their substitute family. Some dogs may become very distressed if left on their own for long periods.

Whilst barking is obviously valuable in drawing attention to intruders, if allowed to go unchecked, the behaviour can be extremely tiresome for owners, neighbours and anyone else who comes within earshot. Very persistent barking dogs can also suffer from tonsillitis.

What Can You Do

It may be more acceptable to keep a dog if it only has to be left alone for short periods on a regular basis.

Dogs do get used to a routine and provided they have been well exercised before you have to go out, will sleep until you come back or until a neighbour or friend pops in to take them for a walk.

Dog psychologists have developed occupational toys for dogs which they claim can keep a bored dog amused whilst its owners are absent.

It is also thought that leaving a radio on during the day will keep a dog occupied, particularly a station with a significant amount of talking rather than music.



Advice

Remember to ensure that the volume of the radio is kept at a reasonable level otherwise you may solve one nuisance by creating another!

More recent developments include an anti-bark collar which is worn around the dog's neck. The collar is activated by the noise of the dog barking and releases a spray of lemon mist in front of the dog's nose. This is harmless to dogs and humans but is sufficient to distract the dog and prevent it from barking. Such devices can be used to train a dog to stop barking in a short period.

Although these collars are fairly costly, they may provide an alternative solution to the last resort of having to dispose of a dog that causes a nuisance.

If you would like any further advice on this subject, please contact the Environmental Protection team.

The address and telephone number are given on the back of this leaflet.

Further Information

If you require any further advice or information - please do not hesitate to contact us.



By Post

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By Telephone

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By Fax

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By E Mail

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Or visit our Website

<http://www.winchester.gov.uk>

If you know someone who would like this information in another format, please telephone: 01962 848367

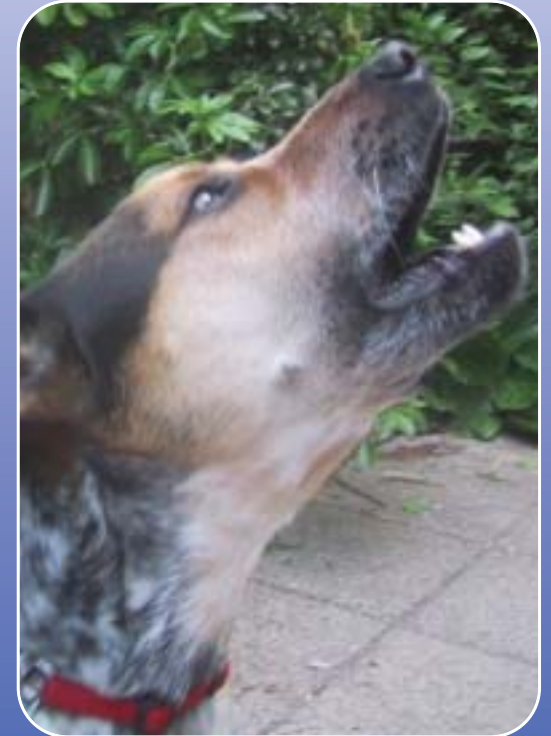


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Barking Dogs

Information and Advice



Environmental Health Services



Winchester
City Council