



## OTHA Tenant Information Leaflet

### Being a good neighbour

This leaflet tells you our advice on how to be a good neighbour

### Being A Good Neighbour

Everyone should be allowed to enjoy freedom from nuisance and annoyance caused by their neighbours, their family or visitors to their home. Good neighbours can usually work out differences without falling out. Where differences can't be resolved, our policy is to work with residents to try to find a solution or to change the behaviour, which is causing concern.

Most problems are resolved with some co-operation from the parties involved – we can offer access to an impartial mediation service if this would be helpful. Where this is not possible, we have a range of measures, which we can take to resolve a problem.

The most common causes of neighbour disputes are: noise; cleaning or use of communal areas; car parking; pets & children.

#### Noise

Sometimes a tactful approach to your neighbour can resolve noise problems. Most people will try to reduce a noise problem when they are aware of it.

With adjoining properties, particularly flats, noise can travel through floors and walls. Sometimes, even ordinary levels of noise can transfer if the sound insulation is poor.

A tenant will only be in breach of their tenancy agreement if the noise level is unreasonably high or the noise happens at anti-social hours. In this type of case, OTHA will contact the neighbour on your behalf to discuss the situation.

In a serious & persistent case, we can apply to the Sheriff Court for an eviction decree if a tenant continues to create excessive noise. An alternative is to apply for an Anti-social behaviour order which if breached leads to criminal penalties.

There are a number of other agencies that you can contact who have powers to deal with a noise problem:

Complain to the Environmental Health Services at Inverclyde Council. They can lend noise-monitoring equipment and can issue a notice requiring your neighbour to stop any noise nuisance. If the noise still continues, they can then take your neighbour to court and have them fined.

Complain directly to the police at the time the noise occurs. They will attend and have powers to deal with any breach of the peace and to remove hi-fi equipment if necessary. It also gives an independent report of the problem, which can be sued as evidence.

## Use of Communal Areas

Communal areas, especially closes and stairways, are the main escape routes in the case of fire. They must always be kept clear. If you have large items of rubbish, contact the Cleansing Department at Inverclyde Council (Tel. 714 750) to arrange uplift. If you have a cellar, please use this to store things that you intend to keep. If you don't need or want the item anymore, please dispose of it.

Some tenants keep some play equipment in the backcourt area. Whilst we do not encourage this, as long as the equipment is not causing an obstruction or any nuisance, we would allow it to remain.

If a resident is failing to take their turn to keep common areas clean, we can issue rotas and monitor their turn. We can also involve the Environmental Health Services of Inverclyde Council as they may be in breach of the local byelaws and be liable for a large fine. Certainly, if someone is causing a health hazard or encouraging vermin, the Council will be able to use their statutory powers.

## Car Parking

Some of our properties have parking bays for residents' use. Please park considerately, and never block access for

emergency services. Spaces should only be used for cars that are in use.

Please do not park the following vehicles: untaxed or unlicensed vehicles; caravans, boats or large trailers; horseboxes, mobile shop units. Legal action could be taken to remove these vehicles. The car parking areas should not be used for extensive or commercial car repairs.

## Pets

You may keep a domestic pet, providing your home is suitable, and it does not cause a nuisance to your neighbours or damage to your home or its environs.

If you have a dog or decide to get one during your tenancy you must advise the Association and complete a dog registration form. This form lists the details of the dog currently in your household and this information will be held on your file.

Most owners take very good control of their pet. Dogs in particular can cause a problem so we would ask you to remember the following guidelines:

- Do not allow your dog out on its own without a lead.
- Do not allow it to foul the common areas or gardens
- Do not allow it to stray into designated play areas

- Do not allow it to create unreasonable noise, or to frighten neighbours.

If you don't follow these guidelines, OTHA may withdraw permission for you to keep a dog and you will have to find a new home for your pet. You will also be held responsible for any costs we incur in putting right any damage caused by your pet.

## Children

Parents are responsible for the behaviour of their children. If they are carrying out acts of vandalism, creating excessive noise, harassing neighbours etc the parent will be held responsible.

Most children behave reasonably and can expect a reasonable level of tolerance from neighbours in return. Whilst there is no right to play in common areas, we do not ban it as long as children are behaving reasonably. This means they should take account of other residents' feelings and be polite if asked to stop doing something.

If a problem does develop in a particular area, for example because a lot of children or youths are congregating or because of unreasonable behaviour, we may choose to ban playing in the area altogether.

If there is a clear breach of your tenancy agreement due to the behaviour of your children, your tenancy may be at risk.

