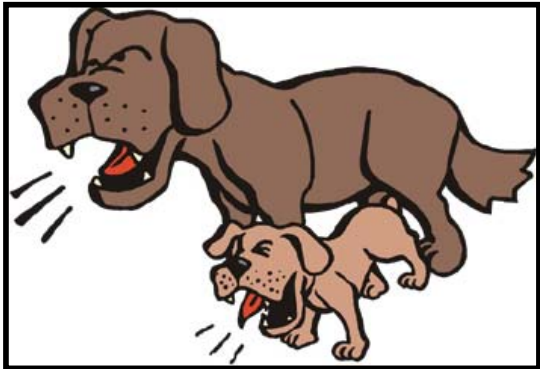


## DOG BARKING – ADVICE FOR OWNERS

[www.charnwood.gov.uk](http://www.charnwood.gov.uk)



Dog barking is the UK's second most complained about noise nuisance after loud music. The constant barking, yapping, howling or whining of a dog can be very disturbing and infuriating for those residents within earshot. Unfortunately for dog owners it is not always a straightforward issue to resolve, requiring understanding, commitment and patience. This fact sheet gives dog owners some general advice on steps to take

to address problems and improve the situation for themselves, their dog and their neighbours.

### EVERYONE KNOWS DOGS BARK

If everyone knows dogs bark why do people complain about it? Part of the problem is firstly that dog barking is so unpredictable, it can happen unexpectedly at any time of the day, and sometimes the night as well. Secondly, and arguably more importantly, people often feel it is uncontrolled. At least with loud music there is usually someone there who can turn down the volume when asked. Once the dog has been left alone that is it until the owner returns, and even then some owners lack the personality or confidence to assert their authority over their dog; allowing it to bark while they sit indoors trying to ignore it and hope it will stop by itself or pretend it's not happening, comforting themselves that everyone knows dogs bark. Unfortunately current noise nuisance law doesn't take that view as you will read further below.

### DEALING WITH THE PROBLEM; DISCOVER WHY YOUR DOG IS BARKING

The first stage to addressing the problem is to understand why it is happening. Like humans, dogs are not by nature solitary animals; their instinctive behaviour is based on being part of a 'pack', like the wolves we see on TV programmes, and they express this within the substitute family provided by their owners. Your dog's behaviour, including their level of barking, is a reaction to their circumstances within your family; how you and other family members treat them in **all** aspects of their life with you. Just as a baby cries for a reason a dog will likewise bark. The way to stopping a baby or young child crying or a dog barking is to understand what is making it behave like this and then



taking the right steps to address the problem. Some of the reasons why your dog may be barking include:

- Excitement
- Frustration
- Guarding
- Boredom
- Attention seeking
- Scared
- Loneliness

To find out which is applicable you need to observe the situation and look at the features of the barking; does your dog bark when someone comes to your house, when he is left alone inside/outside, when someone with a dog walks past your house? Make a note of your observations and refer to the website listed in the '**DEALING WITH THE PROBLEM; GETTING DETAILED HELP**' section below to help identify the reason for the barking and find some tips to try to control it.

Remember it might be you as much as the dog; your lifestyle, behaviour and temperament may unsettle your dog and not give it the control and reassurance it needs. Read the next two sections on basic needs and rank and training to explore this further.

### **DEALING WITH THE PROBLEM; SATISFYING BASIC NEEDS**

A dog owner who is attentive to their animal's basic needs can go a long way towards controlling barking; providing sufficient food, water, **company** and **affection** and an established daily routine will lead to a happy, satisfied, secure dog. It is also vitally important to give your dog the **exercise** it needs which for most adult dogs means two good walks of 30 minutes or more a day (less for a puppy). Walking them in the morning and afternoon, perhaps with a run to fetch a ball, allows them to do what comes naturally; working off energy, socialising with other dogs and feel satisfied by spending time outdoors with their owner. In particular some dogs like collies and spaniels are working dogs with energy to burn and keeping them cooped up all day is only going to increase their frustration which will eventually show itself in barking and other misbehaviour. Exercising your dog before you go out and leave it alone is also a useful way of settling it down. Look on the web for information on the amount of exercise recommended for your breed/size/age of dog.

### **DEALING WITH THE PROBLEM; RANK AND TRAINING**

A dog also needs to know its place within the family hierarchy and the owner, who should be 'top dog', needs to deal with any misbehaving by using firm, but kind, meaningful correction. Your dog may try to impose itself on you by doing what it instinctively wants to do; barking at other dogs while it is out with you on the lead or barking at visitors to your house or even at family members. If you ignore such



behaviour all you are doing is silently approving it and your dog will continue to do it. It is not enough to give your dog a lengthy talk in a semi serious voice about being a 'naughty boy' and not to do that again or 'it's no treat for you'. Dogs don't understand English they have no idea what is being said and what it all means, but taking your dog to a short **training** course will teach you how to properly correct and control your dog and reassure your dog about his position in your family. Your dog will also enjoy the mental challenge of learning new 'tricks' and pleasing its owner by obeying commands. Good training is essential at an early age to prevent your dog developing bad habits and once you have committed to using certain commands you must continue using them. Dog training classes are as much about instructing the owner as about training the dog and you should be able to find details of one in your area by looking on the web or in Yellow pages. Needless to say don't tease your dog to make him bark, although it is possible to train a dog to make it bark on your command, and this is sometimes a useful way of controlling barking.

### **DEALING WITH THE PROBLEM; GETTING DETAILED HELP**

An established daily routine of exercise, training and supplying the other basic needs will help to resolve most barking problems, but sometimes additional measures need to be implemented to deal with a specific behavioural problem. As with training, these measures are going to take some hard work and commitment and in many cases it will not be an overnight fix. As we have seen above, there are a lot of reasons why a dog might bark and consequently there are a lot of guidance available to tackle the problem, too many to list here. We advise dog owners to view the information available on the web, in particular the leaflet produced by the Dog's Trust ([www.dogstrust.org.uk](http://www.dogstrust.org.uk)) found at

[http://www.dogstrust.org.uk/\\_resources/resources/factsheets09/factsheetbarking10.pdf](http://www.dogstrust.org.uk/_resources/resources/factsheets09/factsheetbarking10.pdf)

For dog's that bark specifically when left alone look at the 'Beating Boredom' factsheet at

[http://www.dogstrust.org.uk/\\_resources/resources/factsheets09/factsheetbeatingboredom10.pdf](http://www.dogstrust.org.uk/_resources/resources/factsheets09/factsheetbeatingboredom10.pdf) and the 'Coping Alone' factsheet for destructive behaviour

[http://www.dogstrust.org.uk/\\_resources/resources/factsheets09/factsheetcopingalone09.pdf](http://www.dogstrust.org.uk/_resources/resources/factsheets09/factsheetcopingalone09.pdf)

In addition, you may want to consider contacting a dog behaviourist for some one to one help, particularly if you have an older dog that needs to learn new tricks. Again you should be able to find one on the web or in Yellow Pages. As a last resort, in extreme cases you may wish to consider buying one of the many commercially available anti-barking devices, usually in the form of special collars that are available from pet shops, vets or the web, but make sure you research the effectiveness and suitability beforehand rather than wasting money on something that does not work.



## WHAT DOES THE LAW SAY ABOUT DOG BARKING?

Dog owners often cite any number of reasons why their dog barks but in terms of the law this might not be a sufficient defence to justify other residents being disturbed by barking that none of them wants to listen to. A particular favourite is that the dog has been brought for property security and is meant to bark at people who walk by to warn them off. The problem is that a dog can't distinguish between people who pose a threat and those who are just innocently walking by and barks at both; why not invest in an alarm and CCTV instead. Many owners try and hide behind such reasoning, but dog barking can be a legal nuisance and in extreme cases owners do get taken to court by councils if they do not stop the nuisance and may receive an anti social behaviour order as well as a fine. Information about how Charnwood Borough Council deals with complaints about nuisance is contained in our fact sheet **“Dealing With Neighbour Nuisance Complaints”** available on our website at <http://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/environmentalprotection> - where you can also find a leaflet giving advice if a neighbour makes a complaint about you.

### If you require more information please contact:

Environmental Protection team, Regulatory Services, Charnwood Borough Council, Southfields, Loughborough, Leicestershire LE11 2TX

Office Opening Hours: Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 5.00pm; Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm

Tel: (01509) 634636 Fax: 01509 232313

E-mail: [env.health@charnwood.gov.uk](mailto:env.health@charnwood.gov.uk)

<http://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/environmentalprotection>

To arrange for an explanation of any part of this document in your language or to receive a copy in Braille, on audio tape or large print please call 01509 634567.

This information is available in different formats. To access these please phone (01509) 634560.

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這資料具不同的格式，請致電 (01509) 634560 索取。

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