

Blackpool Council

High hedges: Complaint form

The right hedge can be an ideal garden boundary but the wrong hedge may bring problems. This form should be used for the Council to get involved - using their powers in Part 8 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003.

You should not complete this form without reading the guidance notes at the back and the leaflet *"High Hedges: complaining to the Council"*.



High Hedges Complaint Form

Please complete this form in block letters, using black ink or type if you prefer. Before completing the form, you are advised to read the guidance notes at the back and the leaflet "High Hedges: complaining to the Council".

This form helps us deal with your concerns as quickly as possible. Please complete all the sections, so that we have all the information we need to process your complaint.

We will acknowledge your complaint within five working days and notify you if your concerns are to be investigated.

YOU MUST PAY THE NON-REFUNDABLE FEE WHEN YOU RETURN THIS FORM.

Please provide your contact details

Title / Name	<input type="text"/>		
Address	<input type="text"/>		
	<input type="text"/>		
Post Code	<input type="text"/>	Telephone No.	<input type="text"/>
Mobile No.	<input type="text"/>		
E-Mail	<input type="text"/>		
Preferred Method of contact	<input type="checkbox"/> Post	<input type="checkbox"/> E-mail	<input type="checkbox"/> Telephone

Please tick appropriate box (☐) **(PLEASE NOTE FINAL DECISIONS WILL BE SENT BY POST)**

Please provide the address of the property where the hedge is sited

Address	<input type="text"/>
	<small>(Please state property/company name if applicable)</small>
	<input type="text"/>

Please enter the owners details if known

Title / Name	<input type="text"/>		
Address	<input type="text"/>		
	<input type="text"/>		
Post Code	<input type="text"/>	Telephone No.	<input type="text"/>

Attempts made to resolve the complaint

Please describe what you have done to try to settle this matter, providing dates and details of the outcome. If you have not tried a number of steps to resolve your dispute, such as discussing the problem with your neighbour, seeking independent mediation and writing to the owner, the Council may not proceed with your complaint.

To support your complaint, please provide copies of any letters or diary notes that you mention.

(Please use additional sheets in needed)

Criteria for making a complaint: (please tick the appropriate boxes below)

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Is the hedge - or the portion that is causing problems - made up of a line of two or more trees or shrubs? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Is the hedge evergreen or semi-evergreen? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Is it more than 2 metres above ground level? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Does the hedge obstruct light or views even though there maybe gaps in the foliage or between the trees? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Is it growing on land owned by someone else? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Is the property affected by the hedge a residential property? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

If you have answered "No" to any of the questions in this section, the criteria have not been met and the Council cannot consider your complaint.

Previous complaints to the Council (please tick the appropriate box below)

Has a written complaint been made to the Council and not upheld?

 Yes No

If you have ticked "Yes", do you know the date and/or reference number of the Council's decision letter?

Date

Reference No.

What has changed since the Council last looked at this hedge?

If nothing has altered, the Council will not proceed with your complaint.

Grounds of complaint

Please describe the problems actually experienced as a result of the hedge being too tall and say how serious they are. It will save time and help your case if you stick to the facts and provide all relevant information to back up the points you are making.

Continue overleaf >>>

Grounds of complaint - continued

Please sketch your location plan below

To help us understand your situation better, please provide a photograph of the hedge if possible and a plan or sketch of both the site where the hedge is growing and the property it is affecting, with the hedge clearly marked on it.

Supporting documents (please tick the appropriate boxes below)

Have you enclosed the following?

A photograph of the hedge

A location plan of the hedge and surrounding properties

Copies of correspondence with your neighbour about the hedge

Copies of any documents that you mention (please list separately below)

Sending the complaint

I confirm that I have completed as much of this form as I can and to the best of my knowledge, the information provided is accurate.

I have given notice of this complaint to every person, who, on the day of making it, was the owner of the hedge to which the dispute relates.

Signature

Date

Post or E-mail this form to:
Blackpool Council
Planning Enforcement
PO Box 4, Corporation Street
Blackpool
FY1 1NA

E-mail: planning.enforcement@blackpool.gov.uk



Method of payment of fee

PLEASE NOTE THIS FEE IS NOT REFUNDABLE

By Cheque - Please make your cheque payable to "Blackpool Council". Remember to date and sign your cheque.

By Credit / Debit Card: Please contact Customer First Centre on 01253 477477.

Guidance notes for completing this form

General notes

These guidance notes are to help you fill in the form to make a complaint about a neighbouring high hedge. **You should also read the leaflet 'High hedges: complaining to the Council'.**

Consideration of your complaint will be delayed if you do not complete the form properly, nor provide the information requested or do not pay the correct fee. The current fee for making a complaint is £450.00.

You can obtain translations and large print versions of this guidance and the form through the Council.

Contact details

All relevant names and addresses are required as there are some documents that we are required, by law, to send to the owner **and** occupier of the land on which the hedge grows. This includes our decision on the complaint.

If the site where the hedge is growing does not have a postal address, use the box to describe as clearly as possible where it is, e.g. 'Land to rear of 12 to 18 High Street' or 'the Park adjoining Main Road'. This information is required in order to contact the other relevant parties for their comments and arrange to visit the site where the hedge is growing.

If you are in any doubt about who owns the property where the hedge is situated, you can obtain this information from the Land Registry office, their website (www.landregistry.gov.uk).

Alternatively, Land Register Online (at www.landregisteronline.gov.uk) provides easy access to details of registered properties in England. Copies of title plans and registers held in electronic form can be downloaded in PDF format. The register includes ownership details.

Attempts to resolve the complaint

Please keep the descriptions brief, but say how you have approached them (e.g. face to face, phone, letter) and what the result was.

Example 1

12 March 2005 - phoned to ask if we could discuss hedge. Met on 19 March but couldn't agree a solution;
15 April - mediators visited;
29 April - met neighbours and mediators, but still couldn't find an answer we were both happy with;
14 May - wrote to inform neighbour would be complaining to Council.

Example 2

12 March 2005 - wrote to ask if we could discuss hedge. 2 weeks later still no reply;
9 April - wrote to ask if would speak to mediator. 2 weeks later still no reply;
7 May - wrote to inform neighbour would be complaining to Council.

Example 3

12 March 2005 - saw neighbour in their garden and asked if we could discuss hedge. Neighbour came round on 19 March and saw the effect of the hedge for themselves. Sympathetic, but unwilling to reduce the hedge as much as we wanted and unwilling to try mediation.
23 April - Saw neighbour again and told them that, if we couldn't agree a solution, we would make a formal complaint to the Council. Left it for a couple of weeks then confirmed in writing that we would be going ahead with the complaint.

It is not necessary to send copies of all correspondence with your neighbour about the hedge, especially if the dispute is a long-running one. You need only provide evidence of your latest attempts to resolve this matter.

Criteria for making a complaint

You must be the owner or occupier of the property affected by a high hedge in order to make a formal complaint to the Council. If you do not own the property (e.g. because you are a tenant or a leaseholder), you can still make a complaint, but you should let the owner (e.g. landlord or management company) know what you are doing.

The property does not have to be wholly residential, but must include some living accommodation otherwise we cannot consider the complaint.

Previous complaints to the Council

We only need to know about written complaints made under the High Hedges part of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003. You don't need to tell us about telephone calls or other informal contact with the Council about your hedge problems.

Grounds of complaint

It will help if you provide as much information as you can, but keep it factual. Remember that a copy of this form will be sent to the person who owns the site where the hedge is growing.

Concentrate on the hedge and the disadvantages you actually experience because it is too tall. We cannot consider problems that are not connected with the height of the hedge. For example, if the roots of the hedge are pushing up a path. Nor can we consider things that are not directly about the hedge in question. For example, that other people keep their hedges trimmed to a lower height; or that the worry is making you ill.

Please also provide a photo of the hedge and a plan showing the location of the hedge and surrounding properties.

When drawing your plan, please make sure that you:

- Mark and name surrounding roads.
- Sketch in buildings, including adjoining properties. Add house numbers or names.
- Mark clearly the position of the hedge and how far it extends.
- Mark which way north is.

Please include copies of any professional reports that you may have had prepared. If you are complaining about the hedge blocking light, please mark which way is north on your plan and provide relevant measurements (e.g. size of garden, distance between the hedge and any windows affected). All measurements must be in metres (m).

Supporting documents

Please make sure you have ticked all the relevant boxes.

If you have ticked the last box, please list these documents by date and title (e.g. January 2005 - surveyor's report). This will help us to check that we have got everything.

If you are submitting this form by email, but will be posting supporting documents to us separately, put a reference number or title on them (e.g. hedge complaint, 12 High Street) so that we can match them up with your complaint.

Sending the complaint and method of payment of fee

You should post or e-mail the completed form to address stated in this section.

The fee of £450.00 should be paid when you return this form. Your cheque should be made payable to "Blackpool Council" or complete the authorisation slip if paying by Credit/Debit Card.

Alternatively you can pay cash at the Council's Customer First Centre, Corporation Street, Blackpool.

Further copies of this form can be obtained from

Blackpool Council
Planning Enforcement
Public Protection Division
PO Box 4
Corporation Street
Blackpool
FY1 1NA

Telephone: 01253 476230

Planning Enforcement



email: planning.enforcement@blackpool.gov.uk