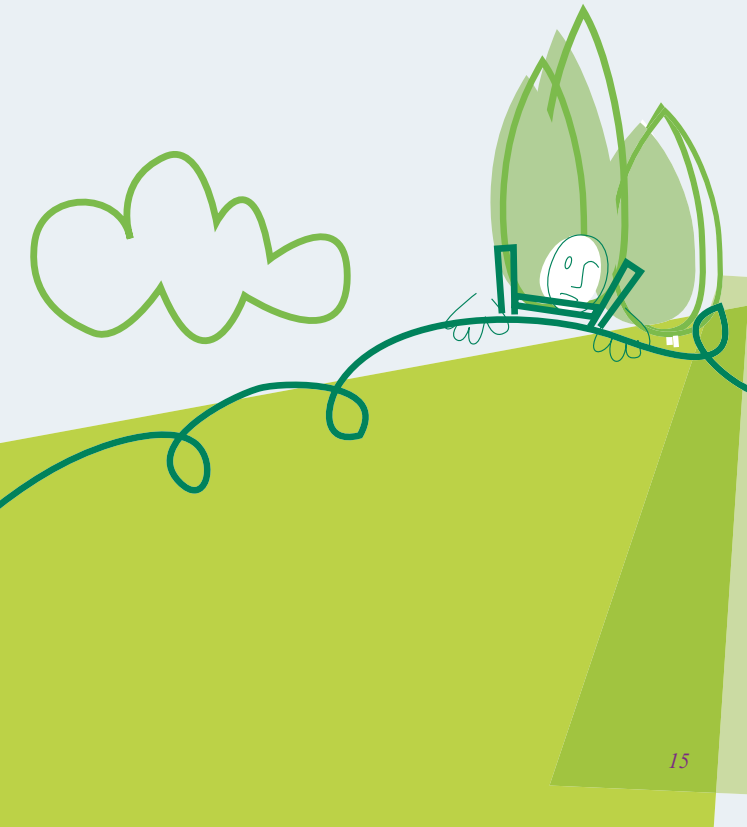


The Council will expect you to have gone through the steps outlined above before you approach them for help. They can turn away your complaint if they think that you haven't done enough to try to sort it out yourself.

Before you go to the Council, it's as well to write to your neighbour to let them know what you are going to do. Keep the letter short and simple. Don't make it sound like a threat.



Useful information

Finding the right answer

Privacy – on a level site, a 2 metre high hedge will usually prevent you being overlooked from a neighbour's ground floor or garden and so should be enough in urban and suburban areas.

Views – by the same token, in many situations a 2 metre high hedge will be enough to restrict views from a garden or downstairs rooms of the wider landscape. Bear in mind as well that no-one has a right to a particular view or outlook.

Shelter – a hedge will usually provide good shelter from the wind for a distance of 8 to 10 times its height.



Noise, smells – a hedge is not very good at stopping noise, smells and smoke. They will work their way through or around it.

Light – for evergreen hedges, you can do some calculations that will tell you what height the hedge should be if it is not to block too much daylight and sunlight. See the booklet '*Hedge height and light loss*' for further information.

Subsidence and other damage – a hedge that is growing close to buildings, paths or drains is not bound to cause damage. And there could be better, and more lasting ways, of solving such problems than cutting the hedge. See Arboricultural Research and Information Note 142 '*Tree Roots and Foundations*' for further information.

Putting the answer into practice

Protected trees – you might need permission from your local Council to cut back or remove a hedge if you live in a conservation area or if the trees in the hedge are protected by a tree preservation order. Check with your local Council before you do any work. For more information see the leaflet '*Protected Trees: A Guide to Tree Preservation Procedures*'.

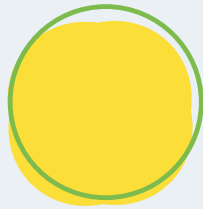
Planning conditions – some hedges must be kept under the terms of a planning permission. Check with your local Council. You would need their consent to remove such a hedge.

Covenants – some properties have legal covenants which lay down the size or type of hedge you can grow. Details should be in your deeds.

Health of the hedge – if the hedge has to be pruned drastically, it might not grow back again. What's left could look ugly or the hedge might die. You could be better off removing it and starting again. In these circumstances, it is a good idea to get professional advice

Personal safety – you will probably need specialist equipment or professional help to trim a hedge over 2.5 metres high.

Birds – it is against the law to disturb nesting wild birds. Before you start to cut the hedge, check there are no birds' nests currently in use. To be on the safe side, trim hedges during the winter months when there is no danger that birds may be nesting.



Useful contacts

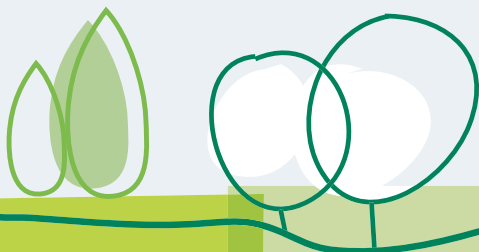
Arboricultural Association – for a list of approved contractors to carry out work on trees and hedges, search www.trees.org.uk or tel: 01794 368717

Citizens Advice Bureaux – offer free, confidential, impartial and independent advice. You can find your local office in Yellow Pages

Community Legal Service (CLS) – helps people to find the right legal advice. There are CLS Information Points in local libraries. Or else search www.clsdirect.org.uk or tel: 0845 345 4 345 for your nearest Community Legal Service provider

Gardening Which? helps its members with their gardening problems tel: 0845 903 7000

Hedgeline – help those affected by problem



hedges, drawing on the experience of their members. See their website at www.hedgeline.org or tel: 0870 2400 627

Mediation UK – to find your nearest community mediation service search www.mediationuk.org.uk or tel: 0117 904 6661

Royal Horticultural Society – helps its members with their specific gardening problems tel: 01483 479700. General advice on planting and looking after hedges is available at www.rhs.org.uk/advice

Tree Helpline – for impartial advice on anything to do with trees, hedges and shrubs tel: 09065 161147 (calls are charged at £1.50 a minute)



Useful publications

'The right hedge for you' – a leaflet to help you choose the most suitable hedge for you and your garden.

'Hedge height and light loss' – a booklet to help you assess whether an evergreen hedge is blocking too much daylight and sunlight to neighbouring properties. A printed copy costs £6.50.

'Protected Trees: A Guide to Tree Preservation Procedures' – a leaflet answering some of the most common questions about tree preservation procedures.

'High hedges: complaining to the Council' – a leaflet explaining the procedure for making a complaint to the Council when all other means of settling your hedge dispute have been exhausted (available from Spring 2005).

The above are all available at www.odpm.gov.uk/treesandhedges or from ODPM Publications (tel: 0870 1226 236)

Arboricultural Research and Information Note 142 '*Tree Roots and Foundations*'

Available from the Arboricultural Advisory and Information Service (www.treehelp.info or tel: 01420 22022)



Further copies can be obtained from
ODPM Free Literature. Tel: 0870 1226 236

For further information visit www.odpm.gov.uk

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Over the garden hedge