



## **High Hedges Complaint Form**

***Please complete this form in block letters, using black ink or type if you prefer. You are advised to read the guidance notes at the back and the leaflets "Over the Garden Hedge" and "High Hedges: complaining to the Council", before completing the form.***

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.**

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### ***Please provide your contact details***

**Title / Name**

**Address**

**Post Code**

**Telephone No.**

**Mobile No.**

**E-Mail**

**Preferred Method  
of contact**

Post

E-mail

Telephone

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

**Address**

(Please state property/company name if applicable)

### ***Please enter the owners details if known***

**Title / Name**

**Address**

**Post Code**

**Telephone No.**

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***Attempts made to resolve the complaint***

Please describe what you have done to try to settle this matter. Give dates and say what result occurred. 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.

Please provide copies of any letters or diary notes that you mention.

*(Please use additional sheets if needed)*

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***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?

Is the hedge evergreen or semi-evergreen?

Is it more than 2 metres above ground level?

Is it growing on land owned by someone else?

Is the property affected by the hedge used for residential purposes?

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

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

Has a previous written complaint been made to the Council?

If you have ticked "Yes", please enclose details of the complaint.

Date

Reference No.

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

**If nothing has changed, then the Council may decide to not to proceed with your complaint.**

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***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 >>>***

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***Grounds of complaint - continued***

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***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 length of hedge clearly marked on it.



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***Checklist of documents submitted (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 may have referred to.

Details of how the hedge affects your property

The required fee of £500.00\*

\*Note:- A discount of 50% of the fee may be obtained by residents of the borough who are currently receiving either housing or council tax benefits at the time the complaint is made. If you qualify for this discount, then you must complete the Application fee discount Certificate on the back of the form.

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### ***Sending the complaint***

I confirm that I have completed as much of this form as I can and that, 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, to the best of my knowledge, the owner / occupier of the property and hedge to which the dispute relates.

Signature

Date

Post this form to:

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Development Management

Stopford House

Piccadilly

Stockport

SK1 3XE

E-mail: admin.dc@stockport.gov.uk

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### **HIGH HEDGES COMPLAINT APPLICATION FEE DISCOUNT DECLARATION FORM**

I would like to apply for a 50% discount off the £500:00 application fee as I am currently in receipt of: (please tick appropriate box).

Housing benefit

Council tax benefit

In order that confirmation of my benefit claim can be checked, I hereby give consent for the Council to access my personal files under the Data Protection and Freedom of Information Act.

Name

Address

Post Code

Signature

Date

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## 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, do not provide the information requested or do not pay the correct fee. The current fee for making a complaint is £500. (Note:- A discount of 50% is available to applicants currently receiving housing or council tax benefits). You can obtain translations and large print versions of this guidance and the form through the Council.

### Contact details

We need all these names and addresses because 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, eg 'Land to rear of 12 to 18 High Street' or 'Park adjoining Station Road'. We need this information because we will have to contact these people for their comments, and to 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 check with the Land Registry. The relevant form (313) is on their website ([www.landregistry.gov.uk](http://www.landregistry.gov.uk)) or can be obtained from the Land Registry. The current fee for this service is £4, if you know the full postal address of the property.

Alternatively, Land Register Online ([www.landregisteronline.gov.uk](http://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 for £2 each. The register includes ownership details.

### Attempts to resolve the complaint

Please keep the descriptions brief but say how you made the approach (eg face to face, phone, letter) and what the result was. 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 settle it.

### Example

12 October 2004 - saw neighbour in their garden and asked if we could discuss hedge. Neighbour came round on 19 October. Saw the effect of the hedge for themselves. Sympathetic but unwilling to reduce the hedge as much as we wanted and was unwilling to try mediation.

23 April 05 - saw neighbour again and told them that, if we couldn't agree a solution, we would make a formal complaint to Council. Left it for a couple of weeks, no reply 21st May 2005 confirmed in writing that we would be going ahead with the complaint.

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### ***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 (eg because you are a tenant or a leaseholder), you can still make a complaint. But you should let the owner (eg 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 of its overall height. 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.

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 (eg 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. This will help us to check that we have got everything we need to deal with the complaint.

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 (eg 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 £500 (or claimed discount) should be paid when you return this form. Your cheque should be made payable to "Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council".

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