

Fact Sheet - Your Concerns Answered

Barking Dogs

Neighbour concerns

Q: The dog constantly barks. Just come out and listen.

A: Council does not have the resources to have an authorised officer physically investigate all barking dog complaints from the initial stages. Once a complaint has been made, the dog owner will receive notification of the complaint and information on how to reduce their dog's barking. They will be given time to address the dog barking issue.

You will be asked to re-contact Council 14 days from the first complaint to report if the dog is still causing a nuisance. If this is the case, you will be asked to complete a noise nuisance questionnaire that tracks the barking behaviour over a 10 day period. Once this completed questionnaire is received by Council, a Council officer will look at the information received to check if the barking breaches the law. If it is found to breach the law, Council will investigate the matter further. This may include doorknocking in the area to survey the neighbours and listening to the dog's barking.

Be aware that a barking dog may be an issue for you but this barking may not be a breach of the local laws.

Q: I am concerned the dog owner will find out I have made the complaint.

A: A customer's details are protected by the Privacy Act for all complaints made to Council. If the dog owner approaches you and advises that the Council informed them it was you who complained, they could be trying to get information from you to determine who made the complaint. Be assured that Council never releases a complainant's details unless required by law.

Dog owner concerns

Q: Tell me who complained about me.

A: Council will not release details of the complainant unless required by law. Focus on the information provided about your dog's barking rather than 'who'. In many cases, there are multiple complainants.

Q: It isn't my dog that barks - it's the neighbour's dog.

A: If this is the case, it will be discovered during further investigation once the Noise Nuisance Questionnaire is returned. Most people are able to provide a description of the dog at the time the complaint is lodged, cases of mistaken identity are extremely rare.

Q: My dog never barks.

A: If this is the case it will be discovered during further investigation once the Noise Nuisance Questionnaire is returned.



Q: My neighbours have it in for me.

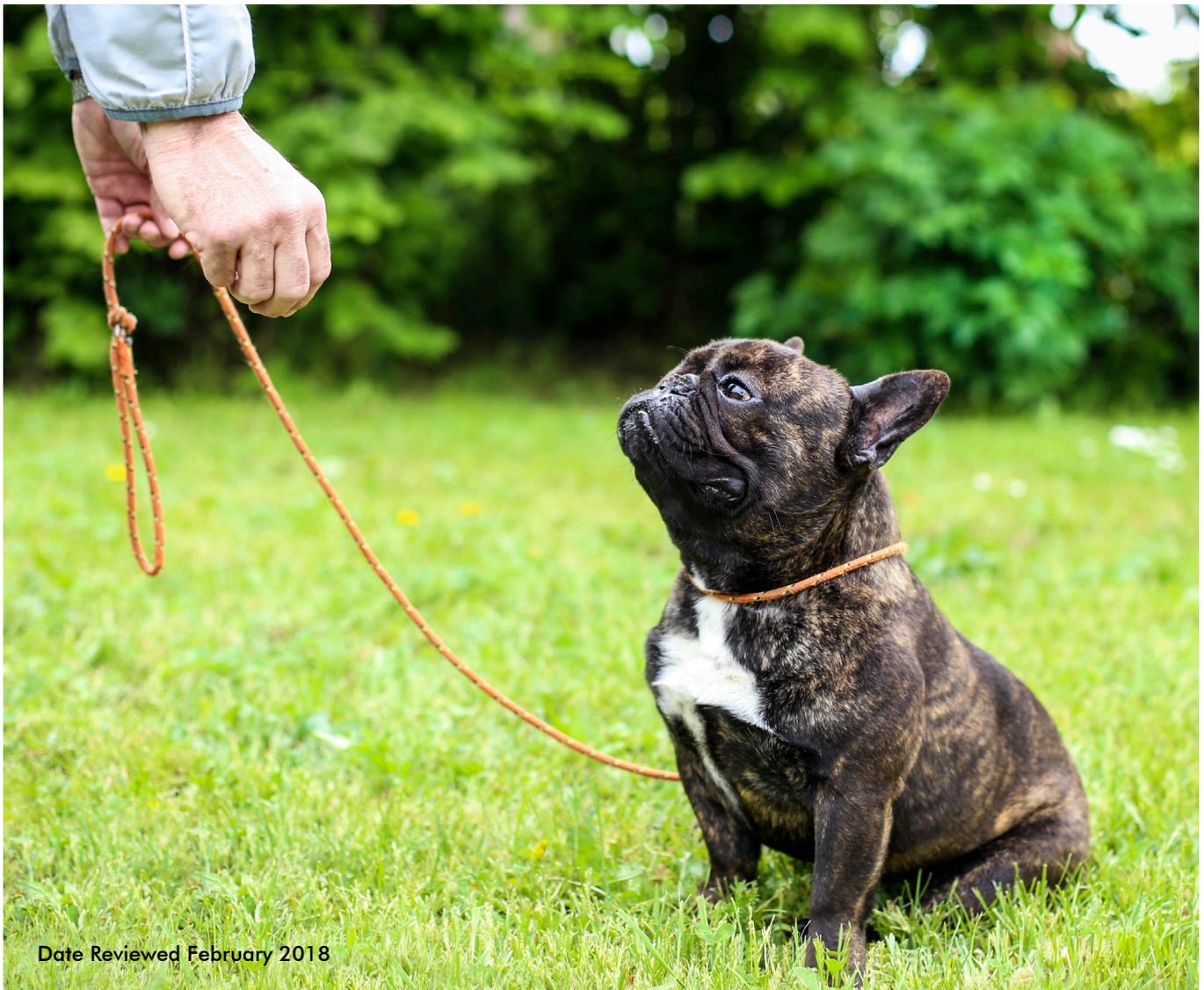
A: If the customer believes they are being harassed, they can lodge a complaint with the police. Also, if this is the case it will most likely be discovered during further investigation once the Noise Nuisance Questionnaire is returned. It's helpful to keep in mind that our officers deal with many complaints each year, only a small number are the result of neighbourhood disputes.

Q: I've received Council's letter - what do I do now?

A: Monitor your dog more closely when you are at home. Also ask your neighbours about your dog's behaviour when you are not at home. If it appears your dog is causing a nuisance you should take steps to modify the dog's behaviour. You may like to contact the RSPCA, or check local guides or the Internet to obtain professional advice from an animal behaviourist.

Q: What actions could Council take?

A: Council can issue compliance notices, warnings, and fines where a dog causes a nuisance and the owner does not take steps to reduce the barking. Council may also seek undertakings from the dog owner, and in a very small number of cases, the removal of the dog from the property.



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