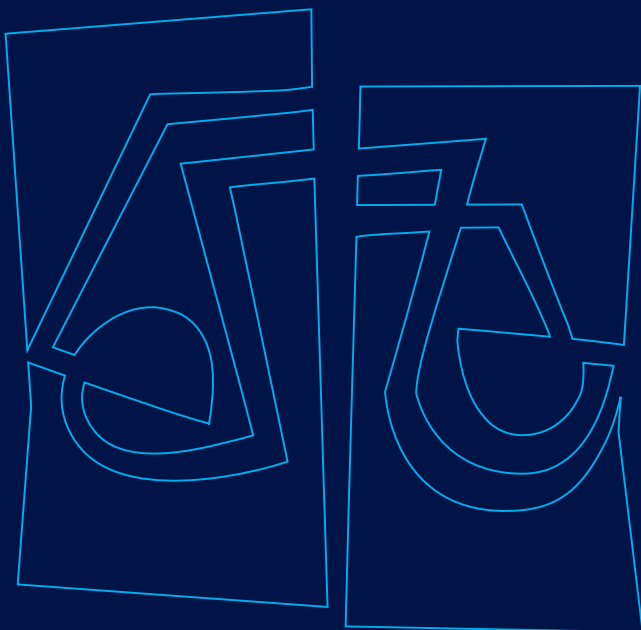


July 2015



neighbour disputes



In this leaflet we are going to look at steps you can take if you find yourself living next door to a noisy neighbour or a neighbour who behaves in an anti-social manner.

In most cases, making a complaint about a noisy neighbour is a civil matter as opposed to a criminal matter and there is no need for the involvement of the Gardaí. However, if the noise goes beyond being an annoyance and the neighbour's behaviour causes fear, danger, injury or loss, then it becomes 'anti-social behaviour'. There are a wider range of remedies available if this is the case. What you can do to stop anti-social behaviour depends on whether your neighbour owns his or her own home, is a tenant under the Residential Tenancies Act 2004 or is living in Local Authority Housing. In all of these cases, it is the responsibility of the person making the complaint to seek help and to resolve the matter before resorting to a formal process. In some cases, you will be asked to prove that you have done this, so keep a record of any engagement with neighbours or landlords with this in mind.

First we will look at noise as a nuisance.

When does noise become a nuisance?

Noise that is "...so loud, so continuous, so repeated, of such duration or pitch or occurring at such times as to give reasonable cause for annoyance..." can be classified as nuisance and you

S108 of
Environmental
Protection
Agency Act
1992

have a right to complain. There are no maximum noise levels set out in legislation in Ireland.

A general note regarding criminal actions:

In some situations, matters may escalate between neighbours such that you feel that a criminal sanction is needed, whereby you speak to the Gardaí. In this case, three different laws may apply. However, you should consider carefully before taking this route and we lay out other options for specific circumstances in this leaflet.

- Under Section 10 of Non Fatal Offences Against the Person Act 1997, any person who harasses another by persistently following watching, pestering, besetting or communicating with him or her shall be guilty of an offence.
- Under Sections 5 and 6 of the Criminal Justice (Public Order) Act 1994, people who are making noise out on the public roadway between midnight and 7am, or at any other time after having been asked to stop by a Garda, may be guilty of an offence. It can also be an offence for a person in a public place to use threatening or abusive words with intent to provoke a breach of the peace.
- Sections 113, 114 and 115 of the Criminal Justice Act 2006 covers Anti-Social Behaviour Order (see details below).

A. NOISY NEIGHBOURS

What can I do if I have noisy neighbours?

If you are suffering distress from living next door to people who make noise, play loud music or have regular parties, there are certain steps you can take:

- 1** You should first talk to your neighbour about the noise and loud music and explain how it is affecting your family – keep a note of these discussions (date, content, and so on).
- 2** Keep a noise diary, detailing the time, date and nature of the noise, how long it lasted and the effect it has had on you, such as an inability to sleep or difficulty doing your job due to tiredness.
- 3** You could obtain a report from an engineer who measures noise and sound as evidence of disturbance. This is generally strong evidence supporting a complaint, but does involve an additional cost.
- 4** You can write to your neighbour, setting out details of the noise and how it is affecting you. It is a good idea to suggest mediation and/or legal action if the matter cannot be resolved – remember you should keep copies of all correspondence with your neighbour.
- 5** Any complaints of a serious, anti-social or criminal nature should be reported to the Gardaí in the first instance to ensure a record is kept.

What should I do if the noise continues?

If attempts to resolve the complaint with your neighbour are unsuccessful, you may bring a case to the District Court under.

This is done by going to the District Court Office and advising the Clerk that you wish to make a complaint in relation to noise. The Clerk will provide you with a form called a 'Notice of Intention to make a Complaint'.

Section 108
of the
Environmental
Protection
Agency Act
1992

You are not required to have a solicitor represent you in Court – you can represent yourself. The cost of bringing this application is €22.

You will then have to serve your neighbour with a copy of the Notice of Intention to make the Complaint at least seven days before the court date. The Notice must be served by you on your neighbour either personally or by registered post. You also have to complete a *Statutory Declaration of Service* (of the Notice) and return it to the District Court at least four days prior to the court date. A Statutory Declaration of Service is a statement sworn before a Peace Commissioner, Commissioner for Oaths or Solicitor setting out how the Notice was served – whether it was served by registered post or personal service.

What is the first thing that happens in court?

The judge may decide to hear a brief summary of the case and adjourn (postpone) it for a

period to allow the parties to enter into mediation in an attempt to resolve the matter.

What is mediation?

In mediation, an impartial third person (the mediator) manages negotiations between the parties in a neutral way. The aim is to help the people involved in a dispute to reach an agreement that is acceptable to both sides.

The mediator acts as a "go-between" to help re-open channels of communication and broker agreement. Mediation can be a time-saving and cost-effective alternative to legal action. Ballymun Community Law Centre (Tel: 01 862 5805) provides a mediation service for people living in the Ballymun area.

Community Law and Mediation, based in Northside Civic Centre, (tel: 01 848 2988) provides a mediation service which is available to people countrywide as well as a branch in Limerick city (Tel: 061 536 100). You can also avail of private mediation services where you pay by the hour.

What happens if mediation fails?

If mediation fails, the case goes back before the judge for a full hearing.

What is required for the court hearing?

- You will need to give a detailed description of the noise – this is why keeping an accurate noise diary is so important.
- You should be able to give details of all communications with your neighbour regarding the noise. You should have a

copy of any letters you sent your neighbour explaining how the noise has affected you, as well as a note of any verbal discussions.

- If you have one, you should provide a copy of the engineer's report or have the engineer attend court to give evidence.

What will the court do?

The judge will hear both sides of the case, along with any professional witnesses, such as the engineer. If the judge finds in your favour, he/she can order your neighbour to reduce the noise to a specified level, to limit it to specified times or to stop it altogether.

What happens if my neighbour ignores the court order and continues with the noise?

Any person who does not obey the Court Order is guilty of an offence. However a private citizen cannot bring a case before the courts that may result in a criminal sanction on a fellow citizen. The criminal prosecution will need to be brought by the Environment Protection Agency. If the problem is continuing for you, you should contact your local authority.

Noisy Commercial Premises

I live near a very noisy commercial premises or construction site – what can I do?

- You should first contact the person responsible for the noise and explain how the noise is affecting you. You can contact your Local Authority, it may consider

serving a notice for the prevention or limitation of the noise coming from the industrial or commercial sources. You could also talk to other residents in the area to see if they have similar concerns and whether they want to join in the complaint.

- Contact the Environmental Protection Agency – if a licence is required for the activity, the Agency can require the noise-makers to take specific measures to prevent or limit the noise.
- You should check the Planning Register by going to the Planning Section of your Local Authority. The law provides that a Planning Authority may attach specific conditions in respect of noise to the planning permission for a development. The conditions may include restrictions on the times when construction work can be done.
- You can also make a formal complaint to the District Court under the *Environmental Protection Agency Act* (see page 5).

Section 34,
Planning &
Development
Act 2000

I am living next door to a noisy pub and there is noise and drunken behaviour from its customers out on the street. What steps can I take?

- Talk to the pub owner about how the noise is affecting you and keep a record of conversations between you and the pub owner.

- Keep a noise diary.
- Write to the pub owner outlining the specific problems and requesting a solution.
- If the noise continues, you can use the Environmental Protection Agency Act as outlined above.
- In addition, you can object to the renewal of the Intoxicating Liquor Licence at the annual licensing court.

Section 4 (6) of Courts (No 2) Act 1986
- Specifically in relation to the noise out on the street, you can make a complaint to the Gardaí. This might be necessary if people are being drunk or disorderly in a public place or being threatening or abusive or causing obstruction.

Sections 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9 of Criminal Justice (Public Order) Act 1994
- In the same respect, the Gardaí can also impose a fixed charge fine for disorderly conduct in a public place instead of court proceedings. The amount of the fixed charge, currently €140, is set by Regulations. In order to have the offence treated as a fixed charge offence, the person being charged must give his/her name and address to the Garda. If not, he/she may be arrested without warrant and convicted of a summary offence, for which the maximum penalty is a class C fine (that is, not exceeding €2,500). If the

Section 23A of Criminal Justice (Public Order) Act 1994

Gardaí choose to treat the matter as a fixed-charge offence, they may serve notice on the person being charged that he/she will not be charged if a stated amount is paid within 28 days.

Nuisance Caused By Barking Dogs

What can you do if your neighbour has a dog that is constantly barking?

- You should talk to your neighbour and explain the effects the barking dog is having on you.
- Keep a noise nuisance diary – record the time, dates and level of noise.
- Write to your neighbour explaining that the barking is interfering with your sleep and peaceful enjoyment of your property. You can state in the letter that if the barking continues you will have to take legal action.
- Go to your local District Court Office and obtain a *Notice of Intention to make a Complaint*. The stamp duty on this *Notice of Intention to make a Complaint* is currently €22.
- Serve *Notice of Intention to make a Complaint* on your neighbour. This will have a court date for hearing.
- Serve Witness Summons on witnesses if necessary.

Section 25
of Control
of Dogs Act
1986

- When you attend the District Court, you should bring all written correspondence as well as your noise nuisance diary.

In court, the judge can:

- a Order the occupier of the premises in which the dog is kept to reduce or stop the noise nuisance by exercising due control over the dog.
- b Make an order limiting for a specified period the number of dogs to be kept by the Respondent on his or her premises.
- c Direct that the dog be delivered to a dog warden to be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of the Control of Dogs Act 1986 as if the dog were a stray.

B. ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

How can I tell if my neighbour is behaving in an anti-social manner?

Anti-social behaviour can be defined in three different categories of legislation. You will need to decide which category applies to your neighbour to decide which avenue to pursue:

- i Where your neighbour is living in a private dwelling that he or she owns.
- ii Where your neighbour is a tenant in a private residential property;

Section 113,
Criminal Justice
Act 2006

Residential
Tenancies Act
2004

- iii Where your neighbour is in local authority housing and you are also living in local authority housing.

Housing
(Miscellaneous Provisions)
Act 1997 and
2014

1. Anti-social behaviour in privately owned accommodation

What can I do if my neighbour lives in a private dwelling and is behaving in an anti-social manner?

By law a person behaves in an anti-social manner if he or she causes, or is likely to cause, to one or more persons not living with him or her —

- a Harassment,
- b Significant or persistent alarm, distress, fear or intimidation or
- c Significant or persistent impairment of their use or enjoyment of their property

If anti-social behaviour occurs as defined in this Act, the Gardaí may issue a behaviour warning to the anti-social person. This can be issued verbally or in writing, but if issued verbally it should be recorded in writing as soon as reasonably practicable. The behaviour warning or the written notice will need to be served on the person; it will need to give details of the anti-social behaviour and demand that the person stop the behaviour.

Section 114,
Criminal
Justice Act
2006

A behaviour warning will remain in force for 3 months. The notice must specify that failure to stop may result in an application to the

District Court for a Civil Order, also called an ASBO (Anti-Social Behaviour Order).

What is a Civil Order?

A civil order is an anti-social behaviour order or ASBO made by the District Court. Before making an application for a civil order, at least one of the two following conditions must be met:-

Section 115,
Criminal
Justice Act
2006

- The person has already been issued with a behaviour warning and has not complied with one or more of the demands stipulated in that warning.
- The person has been issued with three or more behaviour warnings in less than 6 consecutive months. A civil order will remain in force for 2 years unless a shorter period is ordered by the court.

What other options might I have?

- Bring a civil case for noise to the District Court (see above under 'Noisy neighbours').
- If your neighbour is harassing you, you can make a complaint to the Gardaí under the *Non-Fatal Offences Against the Person Act*. This states that any person who harasses another by persistently following, watching, pestering, besetting or

Section 108 of
Environmental
Protection
Agency Act
1992

Section 10 of
Non-Fatal
Offences
Against the
Person Act
1997

communicating with him or her shall be guilty of an offence.

- If people are making noise on the public roadway between midnight and 7am or at any other time after having been asked to stop by a Garda, you can make a complaint to the Gardai. It can also be an offence for a person in a public place to use threatening or abusive words with intent to provoke a breach of the peace.
- If the property is in a multi-let complex, and you are unable to resolve the complaint with your neighbour, you should make your complaint to the Management Company which has a lease with the owner of each unit. Under the terms of the lease, the owner will generally have to comply with the obligations regarding noise and anti-social behaviour.

Sections 5 & 6 of Criminal Justice (Public Order) Act 1994

2. Anti-social behaviour in privately rented accommodation

What law applies if my neighbours are tenants in private rented accommodation and engage in anti-social behaviour?

‘Private rented accommodation’ means accommodation that is rented out under a private agreement between a landlord and a tenant. *The Residential Tenancies Act 2004* established the Private Residential Tenancies

Sections 15, 16 (h) 17(1) (a) (b) (c), 67 & 77 of Residential Tenancies Act 2004

Board (PRTB) in September 2004. The PRTB has powers to deal with anti-social behaviour.

- Section 15 states that there is a duty on a landlord to enforce the obligations of the tenants.
- A neighbour can seek to enforce this duty through the PRTB. The case will be heard by an independent adjudicator who can also award damages for distress caused by the landlord's failure to enforce these obligations.
- Section 16 (h) states that tenants or their visitors must not behave in a way that is anti-social.
- Section 17 states that to behave in a way that is anti-social means to act in a way that:-
 - a results in the commission of an offence which would affect the welfare of others.
 - b would cause fear, danger, injury, damage or loss to any person living in the place concerned or its vicinity – examples of which include violence, intimidation, coercion, harassment or threats to any such person.
 - c interferes with the peaceful occupation of any person living in the residence, in the vicinity of the residence or in the property containing the residence.

What steps can I take if my neighbours are tenants in private rented accommodation and engage in anti-social behaviour?

- You **must** make an effort to resolve the matter with the tenant and his or her landlord before you go the PRTB. You will have to provide evidence that you have done this, so keep a written note of any verbal discussions, and copies of any letters or emails sent.
- Keep a written log detailing the timeline of disturbances: The date, time and nature of the noise on each occasion that it is disruptive, how long it lasted and the effect it has had on you, such as inability to sleep and/or difficulty in concentrating at work as a result of tiredness.
- You should write a letter to your neighbours setting out details of the noise and how it is affecting you. Your letter can suggest that you will have to contact the landlord and take legal action if the matter cannot be resolved – remember to keep copies of all correspondence.
- Contact the landlord. The law requires a landlord to enforce the obligations of a tenant. This includes not behaving in a way which is anti-social.
- If the landlord does not take steps to enforce this obligation, any person that is affected by tenants engaging in anti-social behaviour can bring a complaint to the

Sections 15 & 16, Residential Tenancies Act 2004

Section 77 of RTA 2004

PRTB. The application form is available to download from the PRTB website.

- The PRTB may provide the contact details of the landlord. If the tenancy is not registered, the PRTB can take an enforcement action against the landlord compelling its registration. **Section 77 (3) of RTA 2004**
- If you are a landlord with tenants engaging in serious anti-social behaviour, you should be aware that you can terminate their tenancy by serving a notice of termination, giving the tenant 7 days' notice. **Section 67 (2) (a) RTA 2004**
- Make a complaint to the Gardaí. They will issue a warning followed by a Civil Order (ASBO) (see page 13). **Sections 113, 114, 115, of Criminal Justice Act 2006**
- Bring a civil case for noise to the District Court (see above on page 5). **Section 108 of EPA 1992**
- If your neighbour is harassing you, you can make a complaint to the Gardaí under the *Non-Fatal Offences Against the Person Act*. This states that any person who harasses another by persistently following, watching, pestering, besetting or communicating with him or her shall be guilty of an offence. **Section 10 of Non-Fatal Offences Against the Person Act 1997**

- If people are making noise on the public roadway between midnight and 7am or at any other time after having been asked to stop by a member of the Gardaí, you can make a complaint to the Gardai under the Criminal Justice (Public Order) Act. It can also be an offence for a person in a public place to use threatening or abusive words with intent to provoke a breach of the peace.
- If the property is in a multi-let complex, and you are unable to resolve the complaint with the neighbour, you should make your complaint to the Management Company which has a lease with the owner of each unit. Under the terms of the lease, the owner will generally have to comply with the obligations regarding noise and anti-social behaviour and ensure that their tenants comply with these obligations.

Sections 5 & 6 of Criminal Justice (Public Order) Act 1994

3. Anti-Social Behaviour in Local Authority Housing

What is viewed as anti-social behaviour in local authority housing?

Under law, anti-social behaviour in local authority housing includes either or both of the following sets of behaviours:

- a The manufacture, production, preparation, importation, exportation, sale, supply,

possession for the purposes of sale or supply, or distribution of a controlled drug.

- b** Any behaviour which causes or is likely to cause significant or persistent danger, injury, damage, alarm, loss or fear to anyone living, working, or otherwise lawfully in or in the vicinity of a house provided by a housing authority (see laws in panel on right) or a housing estate in which the house is situated.

Housing Acts
1966 - 2014
or Part V of
Planning and
Development
Act 2000)

This includes —

- i** Violence, threats, intimidation, coercion, harassment or serious obstruction of any person,
- ii** Behaviour which causes any significant or persistent impairment of a person's use or enjoyment of his or her home, or
- iii** Damage to or defacement by writing or other marks of any property, including a person's home.

As a local authority tenant, what can I do if my neighbour is engaging in anti-social behaviour?

You should talk to your neighbour about the problem and explain how it is affecting you – keep a note of these discussions. You can also:

- 1** Keep a noise diary, detailing the time, date and nature of the noise, how long it lasted and the effect it has had on you.

Write to your neighbours setting out details of the noise and how it is affecting you. Your letter should suggest mediation, making a complaint to the Local Authority and taking legal action if the matter cannot be resolved – you should keep all copies of correspondence sent to your neighbour.

What are some additional steps / possible solutions?

- 1 Contact the Estate Manager (if there is one) with your complaint.
- 2 Write to the Local Authority advising of the problem and request a copy of its policy for dealing with anti-social behaviour. Local Authorities have specific powers to evict a person who is engaging in anti-social behaviour:
 - A housing authority may issue a tenancy warning to a tenant where, in the opinion of the authority, the tenant or a member of his or her household has breached a specified term of the tenancy agreement.
 - If the breach continues during, or is repeated within, 12 months of the tenancy warning coming into effect, then the authority may either:
 - Apply to have the local authority tenant evicted; or
 - Where appropriate, apply to the District Court for an Excluding Order against the household member who caused that breach (see below).

Section 7 of
Housing
(Miscellaneous
Provisions) Act
2014

Any person who is served with a summons for repossession of their home by the local authority should get legal advice as a matter of urgency.

- 3 Look into the possibility of applying to the District Court for an Excluding Order. An Excluding Order is a court order excluding a tenant, resident or visitor from a particular house and sometimes the street or neighbourhood where the house is situated.

Section 3 of
Housing
(Miscellaneous
Provisions) Act
1997 &
Statutory
Instrument
133 of 2006

Excluding Orders relate to local authority housing only. An Order can also prohibit the offending person from causing or attempting to cause any intimidation, coercion, harassment, or obstruction or threat to or interference with the tenant or any other occupant of any house concerned.

In some situations where there is an immediate risk of harm to a tenant or other occupant in a house, a Judge can grant a temporary Interim Excluding Order whilst waiting for the full hearing. If an Excluding Order is made, it can have serious consequences for the respondent in terms of access to housing. The local authority will likely be aware that the person has been excluded from his or her home, and this may affect him or her being offered a house. An application for rent supplement can also be refused by the

Department of Social Protection's representative (formerly known as a Community Welfare Officer) if the applicant has an Excluding Order made against him/her or has been found to have engaged in anti-social behaviour.

Breaching an Excluding Order is a criminal offence and, if convicted, the person charged could get up to 12 months in prison and/or a fine.

The Local Authority can apply to the District Court for an Excluding Order on behalf of a tenant complaining about anti-social behaviour, if it believes that the tenant may be prevented by violence, fear or threat from applying for an Excluding Order in person.

Section 3(a) of
Housing
(Miscellaneous
Provisions) Act
1997

How can I apply for an Excluding Order?

- a** Attend your local District Court Office and complete a Summons which the courts service will supply.
- b** The District Court Clerk will provide a date for the hearing.
- c** If you are applying for the Excluding Order, you must serve a copy of the summons on the respondent (the person at risk of being excluded) either in person or by ordinary or registered post. You must also complete a statutory declaration of service of the summons and lodge it (hand it in) along with the original summons in the District Court Office.

- d When the case comes up for hearing in Court, as applicant you must provide evidence of the behaviour about which you are complaining. Witnesses may be necessary and you may have to serve witness summonses.
- e An Excluding Order can be appealed to the Circuit Court.
- f An Excluding Order can last for a maximum of three years. An application can be made during this time to vary the Order.

What other options do I have?

- Make a complaint to the Gardaí under the *Criminal Justice Act 2006*. They will issue a warning followed by a Civil Order (ASBO) (see above under 'Anti-social behaviour in privately owned accommodation').
Sections 113, 114, 115 of Criminal Justice Act 2006
- Bring a civil case for noise to the District Court (see above under 'Noisy neighbours').
Section 108 of EPA 1992
- If your neighbour is harassing you, you can make a complaint to the Gardaí under the *Non-Fatal Offences Against the Person Act*. This states that any person who harasses another by persistently following, watching, pestering, besetting or communicating with him or her shall be guilty of an offence.
Section 10 of Non-Fatal Offences Against the Person Act 1997

- If people are making noise on the public roadway between midnight and 7am or at any other time after having been asked to stop by a member of the Gardaí, you can make a complaint to the Gardai under the Criminal Justice (Public Order) Act. It can also be an offence for a person in a public place to use threatening or abusive words with intent to provoke a breach of the peace.

Sections 5 & 6
of Criminal
Justice (Public
Order) Act
1994

Children and anti-social behaviour

Children aged between 12 and 18 years of age may also be subject to *Anti-Social Behaviour Orders*.

Part 13 of
Criminal
Justice Act
2006

What is anti-social behaviour?

The law defines that a child is behaving in an anti-social manner if he / she causes or, in the circumstances, is likely to cause to one or more people who are not living in the same house as the child:-

- Harassment; or
- Significant or persistent alarm, distress, fear or intimidation; or
- Significant or persistent impairment of their use or enjoyment of their property.

What can you do if a child is behaving in an anti-social way?

You can make a complaint to the Gardaí who can issue an anti-social behaviour warning to a child. The behaviour warning can be issued verbally by the Garda to the child, but it must be served in writing on the child and his/her parents or guardian. The written notice must contain the following:

- A statement that the child has behaved in an anti-social manner;
- A description of the type of behaviour and where it took place;
- A demand that the child cease the behaviour;
- A notice that failure to comply with a demand to cease the behaviour may result in an application being made to the court for a behaviour order.

Good Behaviour Contract: If the Garda who has issued the behaviour warning has concerns about the child's behaviour, he/she can make a report to the Garda Superintendent outlining these concerns which may lead to a meeting with the child and his or her parent(s)/guardian(s), especially where it is felt such a meeting might benefit the child. Such a meeting will usually result in a written undertaking from the child and his or her guardian(s) known as a 'good behaviour

contract' which remains in force for 6 months. Breach of this contract may result in the Superintendent recommending that the child be admitted to the Juvenile Diversion Programme or he or she may apply to the Children Court for a Behaviour Order.

How does an Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) apply to a child?

Where a child has not complied with previous arrangements, the Gardaí can apply to the Children Court for an Anti-Social Behaviour Order (also called ASBO). The Court can impose whatever terms and conditions it consider to be appropriate in this order, such as keeping away from a particular house or area. The Order can remain in force for a maximum 2 years, but the court can end it or change the terms on application from any party concerned. If the child breaks the order, he or she is guilty of an offence and can be fined and/or sent to a children's detention school for up to 3 months.

Can I get Legal Aid for my situation?

You may be eligible for legal aid if you are a person of moderate means. There are two categories of legal aid. For criminal cases where you are accused of an offence, legal aid is granted at the discretion of the court. For civil legal aid, you must apply to the Legal Aid Board and you will be assessed for means and merits. For further details on financial eligibility requirements or for details of other allowances that apply to civil legal aid,

contact your local Law Centre. A full list is available at www.legalaidboard.ie. FLAC has prepared a guide to the state legal aid system which you can download at www.bit.ly/CLAflacsheet.

Please note however that most of the procedures above will not require the assistance of a solicitor. You can however contact FLAC for free basic legal information where required or attend one of the legal advice centres countrywide.

Need more information?

Legal information leaflets are also available from FLAC on a variety of other areas of law. They are free to download as PDFs from the FLAC website or in print from your local FLAC centre or Citizens Information Centre.

FLAC Mission Statement

FLAC (Free Legal Advice Centres) is a human rights organisation which exists to promote equal access to justice for all.

While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this leaflet, it is provided for general legal information only and is not intended as a substitute for legal advice. The information it contains is correct as of date of publication. FLAC does not accept any legal liability for the contents of this leaflet. People with specific legal problems should consult a solicitor.

FLAC offers free, confidential basic legal information via its lo-call telephone information line at 1890 350 250 (or 01 874 5690 from a mobile number) and one-on-one legal advice through its network of voluntary advice centres countrywide - www.flac.ie/gethelp

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