

Light pollution

What to do to reduce it or if you experience it



Basingstoke
and Deane

Light pollution

Artificial light is essential and we all use it for many different things including:

- to light streets and roads at night
- as a security measure to protect homes and businesses
- to increase the hours we can play sports outdoors.

However, increased use of lighting has resulted in problems.

Light in the wrong place at the wrong time can be intrusive and there have been more complaints about light pollution in recent years.

What is light pollution?

Light pollution can be described as artificial light allowed to illuminate, or pollute, areas not intended to be lit.

It consists of several elements:

- **light trespass** – light spilling beyond the boundary of the property on which a light is located, sometimes shining through windows and curtains.
- **glare** – the uncomfortable brightness of a light source when viewed against a darker background.
- **sky glow** – the pink or orange glow we see for miles around towns and cities caused by a scattering of artificial light by airborne dust and water droplets.

To see how much light pollution there is in your area visit www.cpre.org.uk and view the light pollution maps.

Sources of light pollution

These include:

- security lights that light up buildings and their surroundings
- floodlights used to illuminate games pitches, places of entertainment and buildings
- street lighting
- advertising and display lighting.

The impact of light pollution

This can:

- harm people's quality of life. For example, it can disturb sleep when it shines into homes
- interfere with our view of the night sky
- waste energy and is therefore a waste of resources and money
- have an impact on the ecology and wildlife of an area, affecting the behavioural patterns of mammals, birds, insects and fish.

Tackling light pollution

The extent of light pollution can be dramatically reduced by a number of simple inexpensive measures. And you can play your part in reducing complaints of light pollution.

Ask yourself whether:

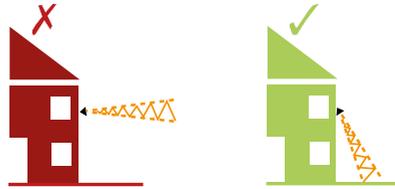
- the lighting is necessary?
- safety could be achieved by other measures, such as a fence or screen around an area?
- the lights have to be on all night or could be switched off or a timer switch installed?
- the lighting is causing a nuisance to others?

Make sure that outdoor lights are not wasteful

1. Use minimum wattage lamps. For domestic security lights a 150W lamp is adequate. High power lamps (300/500W) create too much glare, reducing security.

A 9W lamp is adequate for an allnight porch in most situations.

2. Angle your lights downwards, so they only illuminate the surface intended and do not throw light onto a neighbouring property. Main beam angles of all lights should be below 70 degrees, to reduce the effects of glare.



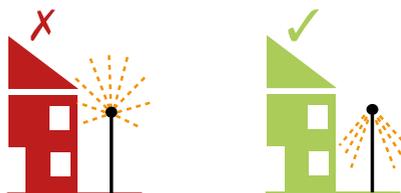
3. Security lights should be correctly adjusted, to only pick up the movement of people in the area intended and not beyond.



4. Direct lights downwards. If uplighting has to be used, install hoods or shields above the light, to reduce the amount of wasted upward light.



5. Do not install equipment that spreads light above the horizontal.



What can you do if you are experiencing light pollution?

If you are bothered by a light source, approach the person responsible for it and explain your concerns politely and calmly. You may find this difficult, but they might not be aware of the distress being caused. Chatting to them about it may result in a solution. A minor adjustment may be all that is required or an agreement about when the lights should be on.

Mediation

An alternative solution could be to consider mediation. For further information contact: UK Mediation call 0845 200 8232 or see www.ukmediation.net.

New developments

The best method of dealing with light pollution is at the planning stage of new developments. This is an ideal time to influence the design or installation of lighting schemes. However, only developments involving building engineering or making material changes to existing buildings or land require planning consent.

If you have concerns about proposals that may contribute to light pollution, please contact the council's planning and development team on 01256 844844.



Making a complaint to the council

Under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 and Environmental Protection Act 1990, some types of light pollution can now be designated a statutory nuisance, if it is proved to be prejudicial to health or a 'nuisance'.

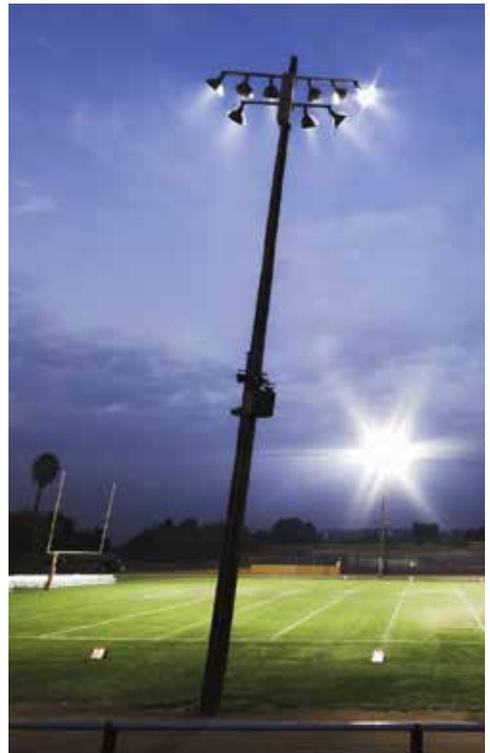
This includes 'light trespass' where particularly bad lighting from a property affects a neighbour. It excludes light from sources such as airports, railway and bus stations, goods vehicle depots, lighthouses, defence premises and prisons.

You can make a complaint by letter or in person to Environmental Health, Civic Offices, London Road, Basingstoke. RG21 4AH or by calling 01256 844844 or emailing ehteam@basingstoke.gov.uk



Private action

You may be able to take private action for nuisance regarding a lighting problem, if you can show to a court that you are being unreasonably disturbed. A nuisance can be described as 'a substantial interference with an individual's use and enjoyment of his or her property'. If you wish to follow this route, we advise you to contact the Citizens' Advice Bureau or a solicitor, to find out what action may be appropriate to deal with your complaint. Also see our leaflet entitled '*How To Take Your Own Action*'.



Useful contacts

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council

Environmental Health, Civic Offices, London Road, Basingstoke.
RG21 4AH

tel 01256 844844 fax 01256 845200

email ehteam@basingstoke.gov.uk

website www.basingstoke.gov.uk/go/lightpollution

The following organisations provide information on light pollution:

Environmental Protection UK

44 Grand Parade, Brighton BN2 9QA

tel 01273 878770 fax 01273 606626

email admin@environmental-protection.org.uk

website www.environmental-protection.org.uk

Institution of Lighting Engineers

Regent House, Regent Place, Rugby. CV21 2PN

tel 01788 576492 fax 01788 540145

email info@ile.org.uk

website www.ile.org.uk

Campaign to Protect Rural England

128 Southwark Street, London. SE1 0SW

tel 020 7981 2800 fax 020 7981 2899

email info@cpre.org.uk

website www.cpre.org.uk



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