

Giving evidence in court

We encourage customers who want to take action against antisocial behaviour, and we give them as much support as we can. People are often nervous or worried about giving evidence in court against an antisocial neighbour. This guide tells you what to expect if you have to go to court.

Why do we need witnesses to give evidence?

To make a successful case against an antisocial customer, we need to give the court lots of evidence. This means that we need to have enough evidence to show that it is 'more likely than not' that the person committed the antisocial behaviour. Whether we succeed or not will always depend on the specific case and the judge who is hearing it.

The best type of evidence is always 'first-hand' evidence given directly to the judge in court. We need to convince the judge that action is needed, and to do this we must show exactly how bad the situation is and the effect it has been having on people.

This also gives the judge the chance to ask any questions they need to get a clearer picture. If the witness is not there, a vital piece of evidence could be missed.

If you are concerned about giving evidence we can arrange for you to meet one of our customers who has previously given evidence.

What's wrong with anonymous evidence?

We can take anonymous evidence to court if witnesses can't attend or don't want to attend. The law calls this type of evidence 'hearsay' evidence. The problem with hearsay evidence is that the judge cannot ask any questions to find out more information.

It is completely up to the judge to decide how much weight to give to hearsay evidence. This means that if you give your evidence anonymously, it could be ignored. This can be very frustrating for us because we want to do all we can to get the best result for people who are suffering from antisocial behaviour.

Another problem with hearsay evidence is that we may have to leave out some important information because it might make it obvious who gave the evidence to us.

Should you be a witness?

People are often nervous about going to court. However, sometimes it is the only way to deal with serious antisocial behaviour. We can only get the best results with your help and courage, so we will do everything we can to support you every step of the way.

Here are some things to think about when deciding whether or not you want to go to court as a witness:

- How serious is the problem for you?
- Is the situation likely to get any better if you don't do anything about it?
- Have you already tried all the non-legal options (such as mediation) and have we done all we can to sort things out?
- Are you prepared to see it through to the end, even if things don't go the way you want them to?
- Are you prepared for possible delays? This is common when cases go to court and there is nothing we can do to stop it. However, we will always do all we can to support witnesses and make sure no one is put at any risk.
- Are you prepared to be questioned in court by a barrister, a judge and possibly the person who has been causing the problems, and stand your ground?

This may make it all sound very worrying but these are the worst things that might happen. Most people find that going to court is worth it, to help stop unacceptable behaviour and make their community a nicer place to live.

What we can do to support you

We know about the stress and worry that going to court as a witness can cause. However, we also know from experience how rewarding it can be. Once you decide to become a witness, we will support you throughout the process in the following ways.

- We can support you and make sure you feel comfortable and safe when the case goes to court.
- We can provide and pay for transport to and from court, as well as expenses for refreshments and childcare.
- We can arrange for our legal team to tell you what to expect, and arrange for you to visit the court with one of our team before the case comes up. This is so you can get used to the court and what goes on there.
- We can look at your security needs and, if we need to, we can get an injunction, which is a court order that gives the police the power to arrest the person responsible for the antisocial behaviour if they threaten or harass you.
- We can work with the police and tell them about possible intimidation of witnesses. If it is appropriate, we can ask for a police alarm to be fitted to your home.
- We can refer you to the national Victim Support service.
- We can arrange for you to have access to a 24-hour helpline where trained advisors will give you support.
- We can arrange one-to-one counselling sessions to help you if you need it.
- We can arrange translation services or an interpreter.

More information

You can find more information about giving evidence in court, including practical information about the process of giving evidence, on the [Crown Prosecution Service website](#).

Contact us

Online: www.a2dominion.co.uk/customers

By email: customer.services@a2dominion.co.uk

By phone: 0800 432 0077 (Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 5:30pm)

In person or by post: by visiting or writing to one of our main or local offices.

My Account

View your rent and service charge statement, update your contact details and track your repair online at www.a2dominion.co.uk/myaccount.

Translations

We'll consider requests for translations into other languages and formats including large print, audio and Braille.