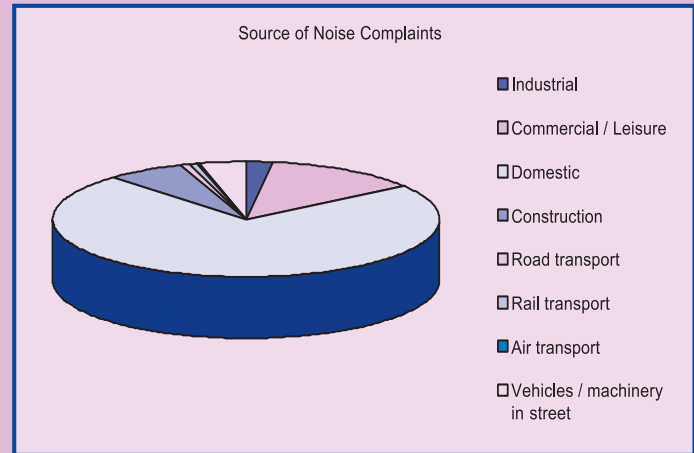


# noise



Noise can perhaps be defined as any unwanted sound. People's attitude towards noise depends upon the particular circumstances in each case. Noise arises from a large number of different sources and, together with other factors such as the time the noise occurs, the loudness and in many cases the unpredictable nature of the occurrence of the noise, determine whether a person makes a formal noise complaint.

This chart opposite illustrates the main types of noise complaint made to the ten Hertfordshire local councils in 2002/3.





Surprisingly, there has been a fall in the total number of complaints, as compared to 2001/2, of 4%. Domestic noise continues to be the main category of complaints made to local authorities (75% of complaints received).

The recently (20 November 2003) enacted Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 gives local authorities further powers to tackle noise nuisance, amongst other matters. Environmental Health Officers will have the right to issue fixed penalty notices of up to £100 and to take action by confiscating equipment such as TVs and stereos if the noise continues or the fine cannot be paid.

Monitoring of fireworks complaints may be necessary in future. Fireworks are increasingly being used all year round for concerts, outdoor events, religious festivals, weddings and birthday parties. The noise, time and duration of the use of fireworks are not currently controlled.

However, the Fireworks Act should be in force for Winter 2004. This will ban the use of fireworks during anti social hours; and limit to 120dB the noise from an individual firework; other restrictions will restrict the supply and use of fireworks. It is hoped that this will limit the noise and nuisance which fireworks give rise to.

## Aircraft Noise

The major civil airports of London, Luton and London Stansted lie just outside the county's borders. Aircraft noise is therefore an important factor for many Hertfordshire residents' quality of life.

Noise from civil aircraft is monitored by the airports themselves. Complaints recorded for the period October 2002 to September 2003 were:

**London Luton: 1,377**

**London Stansted: 6,925**

(These figures are for total number of complaints to each airport, not just from Hertfordshire residents)

Although it is not possible to arrive at a precise figure, approximately 3,390 aircraft noise complaints were made by Hertfordshire residents, carrying on the increasing trend from last year's 2150.

However, the number of complaints is an inadequate measure of disturbance as many people will not complain about events which they feel they have no way of influencing, while on other occasions campaigns can artificially boost complaint numbers.

The Government announcement (Department for Transport) in December 2003 that London Luton's runway should be extended and for the provision of a second runway at London Stansted by 2012, has implications for both the size and number of aircraft flying over Hertfordshire. Whilst it is anticipated that some noisier aircraft will be replaced by less noisy types in the future, these developments are likely to cause increased disturbance.

## Indicator

### NO1: Noise complaints received per 1000 population

The graph below shows the number of noise complaints made to each council in Hertfordshire in 2002/3 in terms of its population size:

