

Who should be moved?

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Today we have published a report about the case of a Reigate resident's rights to be moved away from nuisance neighbours.

Why should she move? Why do the rights of the nuisance neighbours to stay trump the rights of their victim to remain and quietly enjoy her residence?

Is it because it is easier and less expensive for the authorities to shift the innocent than it is to move the guilty?

The report recounts the failure of Reigate and Banstead Borough Council to do either. The Local Government Ombudsman, who investigated the victim's complaint, does not address the powers of the police or the Council or the social housing landlord to tackle the nuisance neighbours. The latter having powers to apply to a court for an eviction of the anti-social neighbours (if also their landlord).

The complaint of the victim was limited to her claim that the Council had failed to deal with her request for re-housing in an appropriate way. Hence the Ombudsman's investigation was carried out within the narrow tramlines of a re-housing application process.

The wider context of all the issues raised by this case are not addressed. E.g., the impact on the neighbourhood or a future resident taking the victim's place, of the nuisance neighbours remaining. The responsibilities of the Council, her landlord and the police, to use their powers to inhibit the nuisance. Those powers ranging from warnings and anti-social behaviour orders to evictions.