

In the autumn of 2021 the project 'Controlling noise pollution in the Schildersbuurt' started. To find solutions for the disturbances together with all residents. Though it looks like most Covid measures are going to be lifted, it is still important to look for structural solutions. To ensure a neighborhood where everyone is living comfortably with and next to each other. This is a challenge the projectgroup faces. In this group the municipality and police are working together with representatives of different groups of residents and other stakeholders. We invite you to contribute!

What have we spoken about already?

In our first projectgroup meeting on the 17th of December we agreed on these actions:

- **Workgroup Samenleven** (Living together) is a group consisting of students and permanent residents. They will talk about making workable living agreements and ways to record and hold on to them. The first meeting was February 28th. Results will follow.
- **Owners and landlords of studenthousing** - a dialogue will be set up about what (more) they can do for the livability in the Schildersbuurt.
- **Enforcement** – we are going to investigate the possibilities of improving existing enforcement for those cases where other solutions have been proven insufficient.

The results will be recorded in an action plan. The final step is to ensure that measures and agreements are actually carried out.

What has already been done?

The police have started to enforce stricter rules by immediately issuing a fine or confiscating the sound system in case of a disturbance. Owners of particular buildings have been notified by the mayor to do something about the incidents. Talks between students, permanent residents and employees of WIJ Groningen resulted in the rule 'after 10 p.m. it is quiet in our neighborhood'. In addition, people are talking about problems on a large scale via media such as WhatsApp.

The general impression is that these actions and measures have worked, although this certainly does not apply to everyone and definitely not in all places.

A Joint approach

We need your help, we would like to invite you to come up with ideas and initiatives to reduce noise pollution in your street. We want emphatically encourage students to do so by sending an email to schildersbuurt@ groningen.nl

Please be considerate of each other

With spring approaching it is good be aware of your surroundings and that noise is resonating via balconies, in gardens and in the streets. We thank you in advance for understanding!

Let's make it a beautiful spring and summer.

On behalf of the project 'Controlling noise pollution in the Schildersbuurt'

Sibbe van der Molen,

projectmanager, municipality of Groningen

What can you do in case of (continuing) noise pollution?

1. It always starts with an conversation with the neighbors. Maybe they don't realize, or they don't know how noisy it can be, for example on the street or on te balcony. Practical agreements could be made about what to do if it happens again. Sometimes it helps to contact the owner or landlord (in writing) yourself, to discuss the situation.
2. If that doesn't help, or if it's difficult to do it yourself, there are a number op options. In first place the disturbance can be reported to the 'Meldpunt Overlast en Zorg' of the municipality. In addition to the fact that a disturbance is registered, help can be provided with follow-up steps. Depending on the situation, they will mediate or refer to neighborhood mediation, 'Stichting WIJ' or the local police officer. You can of course also contact these organizations yourself.
3. In the event of acute and repeated noise pollution the police can be called. If the police notes an offence, the owner or landlord will receive a letter containing the request tot take action. This can be repeated if necessary.
4. It can be useful to keep a log of all events, to record which steps have already been taken.
5. And if all preceding steps have failed, there may be other options through the courts or the municipality (Wet aanpak Woonoverlast). These are complicated proceedings. Whether this is useful strongly depends on the situation. It is wise to obtain legal advice if this is the case.

What can neighborhood mediation do for you?

Clutter in the stairwell, loud music, stench or barking. Minor annoyances between neighbors can lead tot bullying or arguing. You can often find a solution by talking about it, but this is not always successful. To prevent further conflicts and police intervention it is important to engage neighborhood mediation.

How does mediation work?

It helps to bring people together at the table and resolve disputes by listening to the story on both sides. Help is provided with the conversation on neutral ground, such as the local community center. The mediation is free of charge and it works: in almost 70 % of the cases neighbors indicate that the situation had improved.

Well-trained mediators

Mediators are volunteers and inhabitants of Groningen, specially trained en certified to resolve conflicts. They are independent, are good listeners and are bound to confidentiality. They don't pass judgment, but help both parties in making agreements.

Who can sign up?

Anyone who wants to resolve a conflict can sign up for mediation. Housing associations, the police and social work can also start proceedings.

Student affairs

Residents can also call upon mediation if it concerns a student accommodation. This already happens in about 10% of the 150 cases reported each year. In the past two years five issues concerning students got settled specifically in the Schildersbuurt.

Are you unable to find a solution together? Please contact neighborhood mediation Groningen:

Instantie	Telefoonnummer	Overig
Meldpunt Overlast en Zorg	+3150 5875885 (mon to friday 10 – 17)	Or via https://gemeente.groningen.nl/
Mediation	050 - 5878487	buurtbemiddeling@mjd.nl
Police	0900- 8844	
Stichting WIJ	050 – 3677202 (mon to friday 10 – 13)	wijchilderswijkcentrum@wij.groningen.nl