

*These notes refer to the High Hedges Act (Northern Ireland)  
2011 (c.21) which received Royal Assent on 3 May 2011*

# High Hedges Act (Northern Ireland) 2011

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## **EXPLANATORY NOTES**

### **BACKGROUND AND POLICY OBJECTIVES**

3. The Act will introduce a system to encourage high hedge problem issues to be resolved through neighbourly discussion or mediation, and failing that, the facility for persons alleging that they are suffering a loss of the reasonable enjoyment of their property due to a neighbouring evergreen/semi-evergreen high hedge (by way of causing a barrier to light) to lodge a formal complaint with their local council.
4. In relation to complaints, the role of the council will be to act as an independent and impartial third party. It will not negotiate or mediate between individuals but will adjudicate on whether the hedge is adversely affecting the complainant's reasonable enjoyment of their property.
5. Where a council considers that a person has made reasonable attempts to resolve a problem informally and that the hedge in question is having an adverse impact on their enjoyment of their property it may issue a Remedial Notice, requiring the hedge owner to prune and/or reduce the height of the hedge.
6. The Act provides powers for councils to carry out work in default where appropriate, creates offences for non compliance with Remedial Notices and enables hedge owners and complainants to appeal against council decisions.
7. The creation of a formal system - which could potentially result in a hedge owner having to comply with a Remedial Notice - should encourage people to resolve high hedge disputes informally through discussion and compromise.