



Housing LIN

Connecting people, ideas and resources

Sounds, noises and housing

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Hearing loss in older years doesn't mean losing either our wits or our ability to choose what to listen to. None of us want complete silence; but quiet atmospheres increase our ability to hear discrete sounds, especially those we want to hear. When we find ourselves in these, everyone benefits from us not having to ask for a repeat of a comment or question, or having to turn the radio or TV or music up to full volume to compete with unwanted background noise.

At the top of my own and my friends' lists of sounds we *want* to hear, through an open window or indoors, are the ebb and flow of children's games, shouts, arguments, songs; and anyone's unmediated, unamplified chatter. Those of us who live near mature trees, or the sea, or in rural areas, add natural sounds to their favourites. While at the bottom of our lists are repetitive mechanical noises, especially traffic, and boombox music with monotonous bass elements.

For our homes, this means that sound-wise we prefer to live, when we can, in adequately soundproofed spaces, facing away from roads, next to a playground or an outdoor gathering spot where amplification is discouraged. This can be well catered for in refurbishments or new builds designed for multi-age occupancy built around a communal green space, preferably near a primary school or a sportsground. The multi-age aspect ensures children, encourages community use and care for communal space, as well as the likelihood of ad hoc help from neighbours, perhaps in exchange for babysitting, and very local employment for carers. Everyone benefits, especially when teenagers with different priorities have 'somewhere to go' to escape us all.

To view a selection of other blogs published by the Housing LIN including Judith's blog, 'Plenty of food for thought to address my housing in retirement', visit:
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