# Cheltenham residents claim construction vibrations cause property damage and distress



Residents of Northfield Terrace in Cheltenham are raising alarms over what they describe as the daily disruptions of an “earthquake,” attributing the tremors to the construction of a new residential development by Wavensmere Homes. The ongoing project, which aims to build 147 homes, has reportedly left many homeowners living in distress as vibrations from heavy machinery have caused visible cracks in their properties.

The saga began when construction activities started in February, with local resident Emma Chetwynd Stapylton, 55, being among the first to notice substantial fissures appearing in her walls. Working from home, she has become acutely aware of the incessant noise and relentless vibrations disrupting her daily life. Emma conveyed the severity of the situation by highlighting not only the physical damage to her home—cracks in nearly every room—but also the emotional toll it has taken on her and her partner. They have been advised by both the developers and the Cheltenham Borough Council to file insurance claims for the damage, yet Emma expresses frustration that they may bear the financial burden of repairs amidst ongoing construction.

This concern resonates with other residents. Mike Harris, a local brand manager, reported that cracks in his home began “from day one” and have worsened over time. Sharing his worries about the impact of the constant disturbances on his family, especially with children aged 2, 7, and 11, he expressed an understandable desire for his home to be a safe and stable environment. Others, like Rory Parsons, highlighted how the construction has also resulted in significant dust pollution, leaving vehicles coated in dirt and exacerbating everyday conditions on the street.

Echoing these sentiments, other community members have likened the noise and tremors to a mini earthquake, voicing their feelings of helplessness amid the chaos. Bernadette Reed, from the council's public and environmental health department, acknowledged the disruptions but insisted that the construction activities are in compliance with legal standards. According to her, monitoring equipment is in place, and steps are taken to mitigate disruptions.

The local council’s history suggests a broader context of concern regarding construction noise and its impacts on residents. Previously, Cheltenham Borough Council had successfully prosecuted a construction firm for failing to control noise pollution from their work. Such precedents highlight ongoing tensions between development initiatives and community wellbeing.

Michael Gee of Wavensmere Homes expressed empathy towards the residents and reassured them that all construction is conducted per approved guidelines aimed at minimising inconvenience. He noted additional measures would be taken to further reduce noise and vibrations in response to resident feedback.

The situation in Cheltenham is not an isolated incident; residents in places like Swindon have reported similar disturbances from poorly maintained road surfaces, with vibrations adversely affecting their homes. Nationally, discussions around construction-induced vibrations have gained traction, with experts urging developers to implement proactive monitoring strategies to mitigate their impact on adjacent properties.

As the Wavensmere Homes development continues, local voices remain steadfast in their demand for accountability and transparency, underscoring the delicate balance between urban development and community rights. With critical voices in a collective uproar, questions linger about how local authorities and developers can better address the erupting concerns of those living in the shadow of major construction projects.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/locals-say-theyre-living-earthquake-31679838> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-wiltshire-64992456> - Residents in Swindon, Wiltshire, have reported that vibrations from heavy vehicles on poorly maintained road surfaces are causing damage to their homes and disturbing their sleep. They claim that the vibrations travel into their homes, leading to issues such as tiles shaking off walls. The local council acknowledged the problem and stated that the roadworks are on their 'radar'.
3. <https://www.americanbar.org/groups/construction_industry/publications/under_construction/2021/summer2021/issues-related-to-construction-vibrations//> - This article discusses the impact of construction-induced vibrations on existing buildings, particularly in densely populated urban areas. It highlights how vibrations from construction activities like pile driving and heavy machinery can disturb occupants and cause damage to adjacent structures. The piece emphasizes the need for proactive evaluation and monitoring to mitigate these effects and protect neighboring properties.
4. <https://www.gloucestershirelive.co.uk/news/cheltenham-news/what-constant-thumping-noise-driving-1341524> - Residents near the Richmond Care Village construction site in Cheltenham have complained about a constant 'thumping' noise from a piling machine, likened to a heartbeat rhythm. The noise has been disturbing local residents, with some hearing it from as far away as Springbank. The construction company acknowledged the issue and is working to reduce the disruption.
5. <https://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/news/article/2947/successful_prosecution_for_noise_pollution> - Cheltenham Borough Council successfully prosecuted Soldi Investments Ltd for failing to control noise pollution during the construction of a new supermarket on Cirencester Road. The company was fined £6,000 and ordered to pay compensation and costs totaling £12,835. The council received multiple complaints about construction noise outside approved hours, disturbing residents' sleep.
6. <https://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/info/66/environmental_protection_and_pollution/895/noise_nuisance/2> - Cheltenham Borough Council provides information on noise nuisance, including issues caused by noisy neighbors and construction activities. The council outlines the powers available to address noise complaints and emphasizes that excessive noise is unacceptable, regardless of the time of day. Residents are encouraged to report noise disturbances to the council for appropriate action.
7. <https://www.vibrationdamage.com/constdam.htm> - This guide discusses the effects of construction-induced vibrations on buildings, detailing how vibrations from activities like pile driving and heavy machinery can cause cracks and other damage. It emphasizes the importance of monitoring and controlling vibrations to prevent structural issues and provides advice on handling vibration damage claims.