

### 1. Haringey Council Procedure

- 1.1 Noise is part of everyday life, but too much noise can cause permanent and disabling hearing damage. This can be hearing loss that gets worse over time, damage caused by sudden, extremely loud noises, or tinnitus (permanent ringing in the ears). Research estimates that over 2 million people are exposed to noise levels at work that may be harmful. Hearing loss is usually gradual due to prolonged exposure to noise. It may only be when damage caused by noise over the years combines with normal hearing loss due to ageing that people realise how deaf they have become.

The Control of Noise at Work Act 2005 requires employers to ensure that their employees are protected from exposure to excessive noise levels that could have a detrimental effect upon their hearing. If noise causes other risks such as poor communication of alarms, information, or distraction, irritation etc., then these should be dealt with under the general health and safety risk assessment.

The aim of the procedure is to provide a framework that enables Haringey Council to comply with the noise regulations.

### 2. Scope of Procedure

- 2.1 This procedure applies to all members of staff employed by Haringey Council, including temporary employees (who work directly for Haringey Council).
- 2.2 The duties in the noise regulations are in addition to the general duties set out in the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. These general duties extend to the safeguarding of the health and safety of people who are not Haringey Council employees, such as agency staff, students, voluntary workers, visitors and members of the public. This means that Haringey Council needs to do what is reasonably practicable to safeguard their health and safety by action similar to that taken for employees.
- 2.3 Employees also have duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act to take care of their own health and safety and that of others whom their work may affect; and to co-operate with employers so that they may comply with health and safety legislation.
- 2.4 It is likely that specific steps as required by the Noise at Work Regulations 2005 may only be required in the following situations:
- Generator rooms and compressor rooms (when the plant is in operation).
  - The main boiler house/plant room.
  - Engineering workshops which includes noise from machinery and impacts.
  - Grounds maintenance operations.
  - Activities using powered tools carried out by estates and facilities management staff or contractors.

### 3. Key Terms and Summary Information

#### 3.1 Key Terms

Lower Exposure Action Value	A daily or weekly average noise exposure level of 80 dB (or a peak sound pressure level of 135dB), at which the employer has to provide information and training and make hearing protection available.
Upper Exposure Action Value	This is set at a daily or weekly average noise exposure of 85 dB (or peak sound pressure level of 137dB), above which the employer is required to take reasonably practicable measures to reduce noise exposure, such as engineering controls or other technical measures. The use of hearing protection is also mandatory if the noise cannot be controlled by these measures, or while these measures are being planned or carried out.
Exposure Limit Value	This is a daily or weekly personal noise exposure level set at 87dB (or a peak sound pressure level of 140dB) above which no worker can be exposed (taking hearing protection into account).
Risk Assessment	The aim of the risk assessment is to help you decide what you need to do to ensure the health and safety of your employees who are exposed to noise.
Reasonably Practicable	In proportion to the level of risk. This involves weighing a risk against the trouble, time and money needed to control it.
Decibel (dB)	Measurement of noise level.
Noise	Any audible sound.
Control Measure	Any measure to reduce hazards in the workplace, e.g. procedures, physical measures, mechanical devices, restricted access zones, personal protective equipment.
Pascal	Measurement of noise pressure.

### 4. Responsibilities for Implementation

#### 4.1 Directors

- 4.1.1 Bring to the attention of all their staff the contents of this procedure and monitor its implementation.

#### 4.2 Managers

**Managers will, if required, seek support from Haringey Council's Corporate Health and Safety Team to assist with the management of noise at work, and:**

- 4.2.1 Assess their area of responsibility for noise. If following this, any employee is likely to be exposed to noise at or above the lower exposure action values, you must do a risk assessment to decide what action is needed, and a plan of action developed.

- 4.2.2 Take measures that are reasonably practicable to eliminate or reduce risks from exposure to noise so that hearing is protected. This would mean looking for alternative processes, tools, equipment and/or working methods which would make the work quieter or mean people are exposed for shorter times.
- 4.2.3 Ensure that noise-control equipment is maintained so that it continues to be effective in controlling noise. This can be incorporated into systems for routine and reactive maintenance.
- 4.2.4 When hiring or buying equipment, consider noise alongside other factors (eg general suitability, efficiency). Compare the noise data from different machines as this will help identify and choose the quieter ones.
- 4.2.5 Provide appropriate personal hearing protection to employees (free of charge):
- Where extra protection is needed above what has been achieved using noise control;
  - As a short-term measure while other methods of controlling noise are being developed.

Identify and select the most appropriate hearing protection by researching **manufacturer's and supplier's literature** in conjunction with the user's cooperation. Only CE-marked hearing protection shall be used.

- 4.2.6 Provide employees with appropriate hearing protectors if they ask for them, and their noise exposure is between the lower and upper exposure action values.
- 4.2.7 Identify hearing protection zones – areas of the workplace where access is restricted, and where wearing hearing protection is compulsory.
- 4.2.8 Train and instruct people how to use hearing protection properly and make sure they are doing this.
- 4.2.9 Where employees are exposed above the lower exposure action values the Manager shall inform them of the following:
- Their likely noise exposure and the risk to hearing this creates;
  - What is being done to control risks and exposures;
  - Where and how to obtain hearing protection;
  - How to maintain hearing protection;
  - How to identify and report defects in noise-control equipment and hearing protection;
  - What their duties are under the Noise Regulations;
  - What they should do to minimise the risk, such as the proper way to use noise-control equipment and hearing protection;
  - What **Haringey Council's health surveillance** procedure is.

The HSE's pocket card **Noise: Don't lose your hearing!** Can be given to employees to supplement the training given (See 'Advice for employees' at Section 6 'Other documents you may need to consider' section).

- 4.2.10 Monitor the use of equipment by staff and enforce this if an area has been designated a hearing protection zone or when individual members of staff have been advised that use of hearing protection is mandatory.

- 4.2.11 If employees persistently fail to use hearing protection properly, the manager shall where necessary commence disciplinary action.
- 4.2.12 Maintain records of issue and receipt for personal hearing protectors using the 'Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Issue Form'. Please refer to Haringey Council's Personal Protective Equipment Procedure for further information.
- 4.2.13 Arrange health surveillance (hearing checks) for all employees who are likely to be regularly exposed above the upper exposure action values, or are at risk for any reason, eg. they already suffer from hearing loss or are particularly sensitive to damage. Any health surveillance must be carried out during their paid employment and any costs covered by Haringey Council. For more information about health surveillance, contact the Corporate Health and Safety Team.

### 4.3 Employees

All employees shall:

- 4.3.1 Co-operate with managers in any hearing protection selection.
- 4.3.2 Sign for any personal hearing protection issued.
- 4.3.3 Participate in any training given for the use of personal hearing protection.
- 4.3.4 Wear or use any personal hearing protection correctly and in accordance with the findings of the noise risk assessment and the training and instruction given. If employees persistently fail to use hearing protection properly, the Manager may commence disciplinary action.
- 4.3.5 Ask the Manager for appropriate hearing protectors if your noise exposure is between the lower and upper exposure action values and hearing protection has not been provided to you.
- 4.3.6 Carry out hearing protection maintenance and cleaning where necessary and in **accordance with the training given and the manufacturer's guidelines**.
- 4.3.7 After use, store the hearing protection correctly and use the appropriate storage facilities where provided.
- 4.3.8 Report any defects or wear and tear to the Manager.
- 4.3.9 Obtain replacement for any lost or damaged hearing protection.
- 4.3.10 Not intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse any hearing protection provided.
- 4.3.11 Notify the Manager of any changes in hearing protection, materials and work methods as the noise assessment may need to be updated.
- 4.3.12 Co-operate with any health surveillance programme by attending the health surveillance appointments when required to do so. Appointments shall be arranged as part of your paid employment with any costs covered by Haringey Council.

### 4.4 Health, Safety and Wellbeing Champion

- 4.4.1 The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Champion shall bring any significant concerns reported to them, and in relation to noise at work, to the attention of their Director, Assistant Director or relevant Health and Safety Board.

### 4.5 Corporate Health and Safety Team

The Council's corporate Health and Safety Team shall:

- 4.5.1 Provide advice, support and technical assistance in matters relating to noise at work.
- 4.5.2 If required, assist managers in undertaking noise risk assessments and surveys; identification of appropriate noise control measures; and noise related incident investigations.
- 4.5.3 Carry out noise monitoring and noise assessments where there is a risk that staff may be exposed to noise levels above the Lower Exposure Action Level, Upper Exposure Action Level or Exposure Limit Value. Where these levels are exceeded, they shall provide advice on appropriate noise control measures.

### 5. Specialist Advice

- 5.1 Deciding if there is a problem with noise will depend on the noise level and how long people are exposed to it. Where a risk is identified, a risk assessment should be carried out to decide what action is needed and a plan of action developed.
- 5.2 Some examples of typical noise levels are shown in the graphic below produced by the HSE.



- 5.3 As a manager, you will probably need to do something about the noise if any of the following apply:
- The noise is intrusive – for example, as noisy as a busy road, a vacuum cleaner

- or a crowded restaurant – or worse than intrusive, for most of the working day;
- Your employees have to raise their voices to carry out a normal conversation when about 2 m apart for at least part of the day;
  - Your employees use noisy powered tools or machinery for more than half an hour each day;
  - Your sector is one known to have noisy tasks, eg construction; woodworking; engineering;
  - There are noises due to impacts (such as hammering, pneumatic impact tools etc);
  - There are areas of the workplace where noise levels could interfere with warning or danger signals.

Another sign that something should be done about the noise is having muffled hearing at the end of the day, even if it is better by the next morning. If a member of staff has any ear or hearing trouble, they should let the manager know.

## 6. Other documents you may need to consider

### 6.1 Legislation and Guidance

6.1.1 [Controlling Noise at Work. Guidance on Regulations L108 - HSE](#)

6.1.2 [Information on the reduction of noise through purchasing - HSE](#)

6.1.3 [Information on controlling noise - HSE](#)

6.1.4 [Advice for employees - HSE](#)

## 7. Action to Take

### 7.1 Risk assessment

7.1.1 The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) have produced a simple test below to get a rough estimate of whether a noise risk assessment will need to be carried out.

Test	Probable noise level	A risk assessment will be needed if the noise is like this for more than:
The noise is intrusive but normal conversation is possible	80 dB	6 hours
You have to shout to talk to someone 2 m away	85 dB	2 hours
You have to shout to talk to someone 1 m away	90 dB	45 minutes

7.1.2 If, when doing the test above and/or the information in the ‘Specialist Advice’ section apply, it is likely that further action will be required. The Manager will need to ensure a risk assessment is carried out using **Haringey Council’s generic risk assessment** template, to decide what action is needed and develop a plan of action. The

Corporate Health and Safety Team shall be notified so that they can assist with the assessment and selection of noise control measures.

### 7.1.3 The risk assessment should:

- Identify where there may be a risk from noise and who is likely to be affected
- Contain an estimate of the noise exposure levels to staff to noise. This can be done by observing work practices, referring to the probable noise levels of equipment in use and if necessary, measuring the noise level to determine whether staff are likely to be exposed to noise at or above a lower exposure action value, an upper exposure action value or an exposure limit value. (see 'Noise exposure levels');
- Identify what needs to be done to comply with the law, eg whether noise-control measures and/or personal hearing protection is required, or whether working practices are safe; and
- Identify any staff who need to be provided with health surveillance and whether any are at particular risk.

### 7.1.4 It may be necessary for a more detailed noise assessment/survey to be completed and this should be done by a competent noise assessor that has the relevant skills, experience, knowledge and training. Where this is not available within Haringey Council, information on obtaining/selecting an Occupational Hygienist to conduct a noise assessment can be obtained from the Corporate Health and Safety Team.

Once the workplace noise assessment is completed, a report must be submitted to the relevant Team/Department/School for action.

Based on the recommendations made by the assessment, a programme should be initiated to introduce engineering controls to reduce these noise levels to the lowest level reasonably practicable.

## 7.2 Elimination or Control of Exposure

### 7.2.1 An important measure in reducing workplace noise is by purchasing or hiring low-noise equipment and information can be obtained from the manufacturer or supplier about the likely noise levels for the conditions the equipment or machinery will operate in. Further advice can be found at [Information on the reduction of noise through purchasing - HSE](#).

Where noise cannot be eliminated at source then it should be reduced to as low a level as is reasonably practicable and where possible, below the Lower Exposure Action Value.

Basic noise control measures can be effective in reducing the noise exposure of staff, such as:

- Using quieter equipment or a different, quieter process;
- Engineering/technical changes to reduce the noise at source;
- Using screens, barriers, enclosures or absorbent materials;
- Laying out of the workplace to create quiet workstations;
- Improved ways of working to reduce noise levels;
- Limiting the time you spend in noisy areas.



Further advice on a range of noise control measures and their application can be found in [Part 3 of the HSE Guidance on the Noise at Work Regulations 2005](#).

### 7.2.2 Where staff are exposed to noise:

- At or above a Lower Exposure Action Value then they should be advised there may be risk to hearing and hearing protection made available should they want to wear it.
- At or above the Upper Exposure Action value, staff should be advised there is a risk to hearing and that the wearing of hearing protection is mandatory. This area should be demarcated as a hearing protection zone, identified as a hearing protection zone by the use of approved signage (see below) and access restricted where this is practical and the risk from exposure justifies it.



Hearing Protection Zone Sign

- Above an Exposure Limit Value then the noise source must be stopped immediately and further advice should be taken to reduce this below the Exposure Limit Value.

## 7.3 Personal Hearing Protection

### 7.3.1 Hearing protection should be issued to employees:

- Where extra protection is needed above what has been achieved using noise control;
- As a short-term measure while other methods of controlling noise are being developed.

Hearing protection should not be used as an alternative to controlling noise by technical and organisational means.

## 7.4 Assessment Review

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- The assessment should be reviewed in the event of any significant changes in the work to which the assessment relates or where there is reason to suspect that the assessment is no longer valid. Otherwise it should be reviewed on an annual basis.

## 7.5 Maintenance and Use

- ### 7.5.1
- How machinery is located, installed, maintained and operated can affect the noise levels produced. Departments/Teams/Schools should ensure advice and information



is sought from the manufacturer and/or supplier so that noise levels are kept to as low as possible.

7.5.2 All personal hearing protection provided by Haringey Council for the benefit of staff in compliance with these regulations shall be fully and properly used. The Manager shall ensure that:

- Suitable and sufficient stocks of hearing protection is maintained.
- Provision is made for the cleaning of hearing protection.
- Information and awareness raising is introduced to promote hearing protection. Anyone using hearing protection is provided with suitable information, training and instruction on the following:
  - why it is needed
  - how to use it properly
  - when to use, repair or replace it
  - how to report it if there is a fault
  - and its limitations
- Staff use hearing protection properly
- Records of issue and receipt for hearing protection are maintained using the 'Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Issue Form'.

This should be read in conjunction with the Council's Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Procedure [see 'Other documents you may need to consider'].

## 7.6 Provision of Information, Instruction and Training

7.6.1 Staff that are exposed to noise at or above a lower exposure action value will be given information, instruction and training by their Manager on the risk of hearing damage from exposure to high volume noise levels; how to minimise the risk; how to obtain hearing protection; how to report any shortcomings in the noise protection in place; their obligations under the noise at work regulations; and the purpose and result of any Health Surveillance Programme to which they are part.

## 7.7 Health Surveillance

7.7.1 Where the assessment shows that there is a risk to the hearing of a member of staff (generally when there are regular exposures above the *upper exposure action value*), regardless of hearing protection, then the individual will be subject to a Health Surveillance programme. This will be arranged by their Manager, making a referral to Occupational Health.

This will also apply to any individual who is regularly exposed to levels above the *lower exposure action value*, and already has an existing hearing deficiency, or who has indicated a family history of early deafness.

7.7.2 Referral for Health Surveillance (Hearing) should be made through Occupational Health so that an appointment can be made, and the appropriate testing carried out.

7.7.3 For any abnormal results or clinical symptoms, the Manager will arrange referral to the Occupational Health Physician or GP, in accordance with clinical indicators

(Managers can seek advice from the Corporate Health and Safety Team if required). If Health Surveillance indicates that a member of staff has suffered ill health as a result of exposure to noise, then the individual will be provided with information and advised to talk to their own GP. The Manager shall make a report of this to the Corporate Health and Safety Team using **the Council's incident form**. A letter will be provided to their GP providing information and results of the Health Surveillance.

Following completion of a hearing test (audiometry), notification of results will be made to the referring Manager and member of staff so that appropriate action can be taken. The recommendation provided by the doctor or audiometrist carrying out such Health Surveillance will be implemented fully.

7.7.4 Any member of staff will be allowed full access to their Health Surveillance Records.

## 8. Record Keeping

8.1 Records of all assessments and subsequent reviews shall be made and stored in a retrievable format. Where a noise assessment is carried out, a record of the results and recommendations should be provided to the Manager for action. This record will be kept, until a subsequent assessment has been undertaken and should be archived in a retrievable format.

8.2 The health record shall be retained for at least as long as the employee remains in Haringey's employment, and preferably longer as enquiries regarding the state of an **individual's hearing may arise many years after they have left Haringey's** employment or exposure to noise has ceased.

## 9. Monitoring and Review

9.1 Managers should regularly check that hearing protection **is used**. If it isn't, managers must find out why not and put measures in to ensure it is worn.

9.2 **This safety procedure must be reviewed by the Council's Corporate Health, Safety and Wellbeing Board** within a period not greater than 26 months and where necessary, it will be revised as soon as practicable where changes in statute or industry best practice deem the content out of date.

10. Approval of the Procedure

- 10.1 This safety procedure was reviewed by the Corporate Health, Safety and Wellbeing Board and approved by the Council's Head of Organisational Resilience on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2021. Any required variations from this safety procedure should be brought to the attention of the Council's Head of Organisational Resilience.

Approved by (print name): Andrew Meek, Head of Organisational Resilience

Signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'AMeek', is positioned to the right of the 'Signature:' label.

Date: 15.02.2021