

CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

DRAFT CONTROL OF NOISE AT WORK POLICY

August 2008

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Mae'r cyhoeddiad hwn ar gael yn Gymraeg ac mewn ieithiodd neu fformatau eriall ar gais.

NOTE

Wherever the designation "manager" is used throughout this policy, it is taken to mean Head of Service, Head Teacher, Line Manager, Supervisor and the Officer in charge or anyone who has responsibilities for employees in the course of their work.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This document sets out the policy and outlines the protective and preventative measures to be implemented by Caerphilly County Borough Council (the Authority) to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its employees, with respect to controlling noise at work.
- 1.2. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Corporate Management Arrangements for the control of noise at work that sets out the arrangements and responsibilities for managing the exposure of employees to noise while undertaking work activities for the Authority.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.1. The Authority recognises that its employees are its most valuable resource in delivering high quality services to the community and will take all practical steps to ensure the health and safety of the Authority's employees, contractors and visitors to and users of Authority premises.
- 2.2. The effective control of these risks will be delivered through the correct management of noise in the workplace as set out in this policy with the provision of appropriate training, instruction and supervision. To be effective this policy requires the full co-operation of management and employees at all levels.
- 2.3. The Authority accepts it has specific duties under various pieces of health and safety legislation as set out in section 4.

3. SCOPE

- 3.1. This policy has been agreed with the Trade Unions and applies to all employees.
- 3.2. This policy will not apply to residential dwellings, owned, let or leased by the Authority as part of its role as a social landlord.
- 3.3. This policy will be reviewed at least annually to ensure it is in line with current legislation.
- 3.4. The effective date of the policy is:

4. LEGISLATION

- 4.1. This policy along with its supporting procedures is designed to ensure the Authority meets its legal obligation as stated in:
 - The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act, 1974.
 - The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
 - The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005
 - The Supply of Machinery (Safety) Regulations 1992 (as amended).
 - The Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992 (as amended).
 - The Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996

5. DEFINITIONS

5.1. Exposure Limit Value (ELV):

- A daily or weekly noise exposure level of 87dB(A) and
- A peak sound pressure level of 140 dB(C)

5.2. Lower Exposure Action Value (LEAV):

- A daily or weekly noise exposure level of 80dB(A) and
- A peak sound pressure level of 135dB(C)

5.3. Upper Exposure Action Value (UEAV):

- A daily or weekly noise exposure level of 85dB(A) and
- A peak sound pressure level of 137dB(C)

5.4. Weekly noise exposure level - the logarithmic average of daily noise exposure levels over a week normalised to five working days.

5.5. Noise Risk Assessment - A specific risk assessment, which identifies the hazards and control measures required in relation to noise.

5.5. Noise Assessment - A report of actual noise levels, frequency, duration and amplification, and recommendations for adequate control carried out by a competent person.

5.6. Competent Person - An individual with the knowledge and understanding of the conduct of noise assessments and interpretation of the results, and of the requirements of the Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005, and having had the appropriate level of training, experience and personal attributes to make informed decisions.

5.7. How is Noise Measured? – Noise is measured in decibels (dB). An ‘A-weighting,’ sometimes written as ‘dB(A),’ is used to measure average noise levels. A ‘C-weighting,’ or ‘dB(C),’ is used to measure peak, impact or explosive noises.

You might just notice a 3 dB change in noise level, because of the way our ears work. Yet every 3dB doubles the noise, so what might seem like small differences in numbers can be quite significant.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES

NB Please note that all employees have a legal responsibility to comply with health and safety law and the provisions of this policy. Failure to do so could result in personal and / or Corporate liability.

6.1. The Chief Executive Officer will:

- 6.1.1. Be ultimately responsible for ensuring compliance with this Policy within Caerphilly County Borough Council.

6.2. Directors will:

- 6.2.1. Be responsible for ensuring the effective implementation of this Policy and associated Directorate arrangements within their service areas

- 6.2.2. Ensure that appropriate resources are made available for the effective implementation of the Policy including training.

6.3. Managers will:

- 6.3.1. Take action to prevent risk from noise exposure, wherever it is reasonably practicable to do so. If this is not possible noise exposure should be reduced to a minimum eg. engineering controls such as silencers, dampeners or enclosures.
- 6.3.2. Ensure a competent person carries out and records a noise risk assessment where employees are likely to be exposed at or above a lower exposure action value (LEAV)
- 6.3.3. Ensure that if employees are likely to be exposed at, or above a lower exposure action value (LEAV), suitable and sufficient hearing protection is made available that effectively reduces personal exposure to a level below the lower exposure action value.
- 6.3.4. Ensure that where employees are exposed to noise above the lower exposure value (LEAV), relevant information is made available and that employees receive suitable and sufficient instruction and training regarding noise induced hearing loss and of the measures to reduce noise exposure.
- 6.3.5. Ensure that employees identified in the noise risk assessment as likely to be exposed to noise levels at, or above, a lower exposure action value is offered audiometric testing via Occupational Health.
- 6.3.6. Ensure a list of those employees identified as requiring audiometric testing is provided to Occupational Health and Directorate Health and Safety Officers.
- 6.3.7. Ensure that employees identified in the noise risk assessment as being likely to be exposed to noise levels at, or above, an upper exposure action value (UEAV), that exposure is eliminated at source, or where this is not reasonably practicable, reduced as far as is reasonably practicable by means other than the provision of hearing protection. This will require a programme of control measures, eg engineering controls such as silencers, dampeners or enclosures.
- 6.3.8. Ensure that, if you are unable by all other means to reduce the levels of noise to which an employee is likely to be exposed to below an upper exposure action value (UEAV), suitable and sufficient hearing protection is supplied and used. NB. At 85dB(A) it is mandatory for employees to wear hearing protection and its use must be enforced. The Directorate Health and Safety officer should be informed of work areas or work activities to which this point relates.
- 6.3.9. Ensure that where a noise risk assessment identifies that in any area of the workplace employees are likely to be exposed at or above an upper exposure action value (UEAV):
 - The area is designated a hearing protection zone and identified with suitable signage at all points of entry to the ear protection zone.

- Access to the area is restricted as far as possible, and that no employee or other person enters the area unless wearing suitable and sufficient hearing protection unless the source of noise is eliminated, eg. machinery is turned off.
- 6.3.10. Ensure that employees are not exposed to the exposure limit value (ELV) of 87 dB(A). If the exposure limit value is exceeded then the Manager must:
- Take action to reduce exposure to below the exposure limit value (ELV) and identify why the exposure limit value is being exceeded
 - Modify any work practices or equipment to prevent it happening again.
- 6.3.11. Ensure that any hearing protection selected eliminates the risk or reduces it to a minimum. Training and information must be provided on how to use and look after the protection provided.
- 6.3.12. Ensure that anything provided for the purposes of this policy is properly used and is maintained in an efficient state
- 6.3.13. Ensure Procurement are provided with specifications for the ear protection to be provided to employees requiring it, taking into account noise pressure levels and frequency. The specification should be based on a combination of risk assessment and noise measurements, and should ensure that the equipment is fit for the purpose and job. The ear protection purchased should be the most effective to do the job, but should not necessarily be that offering the highest noise reduction rating.

6.4. The Competent Person will:

- 6.4.1. Ensure that suitable noise risk assessments are carried out and the findings reported to the Section Manager, and if required also to the Directorate Health and Safety Officer and the Corporate Health and Safety Unit.
- 6.4.2. Where required, make recommendations in their assessment for, engineering controls to reduce noise levels and/or personal hearing protection.
- 6.4.3. Where required, make recommendations in their assessment for, the selection of personal ear protectors required for the conditions where they will be used and are efficient in providing protection.

6.5. Each employee of the Authority will:

- 6.5.1. Make full and proper use of any control measures provided for the purposes of this policy, including the use of enclosures, dampeners and ear protection where provided.
- 6.5.2. Report any defects in hearing protection or any other control measures to their manager as soon as possible.
- 6.5.3. Ensure their attendance for audiometric testing when required to do so.

- 6.5.4. Bring to the attention of their manager any concerns regarding noise levels and exposure.

6.6. The Corporate Health and Safety Unit will:

- 6.6.1. Ensure that this policy is reviewed at least every 2 years to ensure it is in line with current legislation and working effectively.
- 6.6.2. Provide advice and information on legislation or guidance relating to the control of noise exposure.
- 6.6.3. Audit compliance with this policy.

6.7. The Directorate Health and Safety Officers will:

- 6.7.1. Ensure that any necessary Directorate arrangements are developed in accordance with this policy.
- 6.7.2. Ensure the communication of this policy, the associated Corporate Management Arrangements, and Directorate arrangements to all relevant employees.
- 6.7.3. Monitor the effective implementation of this policy and Directorate arrangements.
- 6.7.4. Provide Occupational Health with a list of those employees requiring audiometric testing within their Directorate.

6.8. Procurement Division will:

- 6.8.1. Ensure that prior to purchasing new equipment consideration is given to the noise emissions of the equipment and the potential effect on employees.
- 6.8.2. Ensure that prior to purchasing or leasing new equipment that information regarding the normal operating noise emission levels are obtained from the supplier in advance of the purchase or lease. Where noise emissions from the equipment is likely to exceed 70dB(A) during normal use, information obtained from the supplier should be submitted to the Directorate Health and Safety Officer for approval of purchase.
- 6.8.3. Ensure that managers are provided with information regarding the noise levels produced during the normal use of equipment by the supply of relevant information obtained from the equipment supplier.

6.9. Occupational Health Department will:

- 6.9.1. Ensure audiometric tests` are carried out for all relevant employees identified by managers and identify any employees who require ongoing monitoring. i.e. those regularly exposed to noise levels above the lower exposure action value ($L_{EP,d}$ of 80dB(A)).
- 6.9.2. Ensure that audiometric test results are monitored and where trends indicate noise induced hearing loss, or above expected decreases in hearing ability gives cause for concern, refer individuals to an occupational health physician.

- 6.9.3. Ensure information on work areas and activities are provided to the Directorate Health and Safety Officers to aid investigation into compliance with this policy.
- 6.9.4. Maintain records of any audiometric testing of employees relating to the above. These records must be kept for at least forty years.

6.10. Contract Supervisor/Competent Contract Officer will:

- 6.10.1. Inform the contractors if they are working in an ear protection zone, and carry out spot inspections to ensure compliance.

6.11. Contractors, temporary employees and visitors will:

- 6.11.1. Notify contract supervisor / employees in the area if their work activities are likely to produce noise levels above the lower exposure action value (LEAV)
- 6.11.2. Comply with this policy, including the requirement for wearing personal ear protectors in designated ear protection zone areas.

CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE CONTROL OF NOISE AT WORK

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NOTE

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1. CORPORATE MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The main requirements of the new Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005 can be seen in Appendix 1. Action must be taken to prevent risk from noise exposure completely, wherever it is reasonably practicable to do so. If not then noise should be reduced to a minimum. This requires taking into account whether there are alternative work methods, equipment or processes, which can be adopted to eliminate or reduce noise exposure.

1.1 Noise Risk Assessments:

1.1.1 A noise risk assessment shall be undertaken wherever noise exposure exists to enable a valid decision to be taken about whether action is necessary to prevent or adequately control exposure to noise.

1.1.2 A noise risk assessment shall be undertaken by a competent person; ie. someone who is familiar with the Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005, and who has received suitable and sufficient training in the use of appropriate noise measuring equipment and the interpretation of noise measurements.

1.1.3 A suitable and sufficient noise risk assessment will:

- Identify the employees who are exposed above the lower exposure action value (LEAV)
- Contain information on noise exposure derived from measurements (noise surveys) with information on duration, frequency and type of exposure (where exposure is likely to be at or above the upper exposure action value (UEAV), making use of the Health and Safety Executive's 'noise exposure calculator' or 'ready reckoner' available on their website, or other similar noise risk assessment tools available elsewhere where appropriate.
- Identify measures necessary to eliminate risks or reduce to a minimum.

1.1.4 Measurement is not required in all noise risk assessments, if it can be established that exposure is:

- Below the lower exposure action values (LEAV).
- Above the upper exposure action values (UEAV).

If unsure, measurements should be taken to clarify.

1.1.5 Once a reliable estimate of noise exposure has been established (see Appendix 2) then it should be compared to the exposure limit values. If exposure is likely to be above the:

- **Lower exposure action value (LEAV)** - information and training must be provided and hearing protection must be made available (the wearing of which is not enforceable).
- **Upper exposure action value (UEAV)** - a programme of noise control measures are required and use enforced where required.

- **Exposure limit value (ELV)** - immediate action must be taken to reduce noise to below these values without the reliance of hearing protection. ie specific design control reduction methods.
- Where noise exposure is found to be close to the lower exposure action value (LEAV) it is recommended that information and training be provided and hearing protection be made available (the wearing of which is not enforceable).
- Noise risk assessments must be recorded in writing and be kept for 40 years by the Occupational Health Department.

1.2 Control

- 1.2.1** Noise must be eliminated at source, or where this is not reasonably practicable, reduced to a minimum. Where any employees are likely to be exposed to noise at, or above, the upper exposure action values (UEAV) then exposure must be reduced to a minimum by a programme of noise control measures. This programme shall not rely on hearing protection alone.
- 1.2.2** Employees must not be exposed to noise levels above the exposure limit value (ELV), including whilst wearing hearing protection. Noise levels should be reduced to as low a level as is reasonably practicable.

1.3 Hearing Protection

- 1.3.1** Hearing protection must only be used as a last resort when attempts to control noise at source are insufficient to bring employees noise exposure below the exposure action values, or as an interim measure.
- 1.3.2** The duty to provide hearing protection depends on the exposure levels:
- Where employees are exposed between the lower and upper exposure action values (LEAV & UEAV) then hearing protection must be made available to them, together with suitable information regarding the risks of noise induced hearing loss and the benefits of wearing ear protection. It is not, however, mandatory for ear protection to be worn.
 - Where employees are exposed to levels at or above the upper exposure action values (UEAV), hearing protection must be provided and worn
- 1.3.3** Hearing protection must be suitable and sufficient. i.e. it must be suitable for use and protect against the noise in the area. Different machines or activities generate different frequencies of noise and the hearing protection must decrease exposure to the correct frequencies in order to be suitable. This should be established during a noise assessment.

1.3.4 Steps must be taken to ensure:

- The wearing of appropriate hearing protection is enforced where necessary, including arrangements for monitoring and recording the findings of such monitoring.
- Where disposable hearing protection is used, supplies are regularly restocked.
- Where non disposable hearing protection is used that it is inspected, repaired and replaced as necessary by a competent person and cleaning materials are made available and used
- Storage bags and lockers are provided where required
- Employees know what protection is available, how it is to be worn and maintained, and how to report defects or comfort issues.

1.4 Ear Protection Zones

1.4.1 Wherever reasonably practicable, all entrances to designated ear protection zones should be suitably signed, showing that they are areas where the wearing of ear protection is mandatory. Suitable signs may be affixed to entrance doors and work equipment, and/or painted onto the floor surface. .

1.4.2 Where noise measurements show areas are well below the lower exposure action value (LEAV) of 80dB(A), the wearing of hearing protection should be discouraged. This provision has been put into place to avoid the easy option of designating buildings as mandatory hearing protection zones and controlling noise exposure using hearing protection as opposed to reducing or controlling noise at source. In addition, the wearing of ear protection may itself put persons at greater risk of injury, particularly in areas where vehicles circulate, due to being unable to hear warning sounds.

1.5 Maintenance and Use of Equipment

1.5.1 Anything provided for the control of exposure to noise must be properly used, and maintained. This will involve introducing a system for reporting and investigating defects and ensuring action is taken.

1.5.2 A maintenance programme should include:

- Periodic inspection of noise control equipment by a competent person (e.g. silencers or enclosures) to ensure they are operating correctly.
- Monitoring effectiveness.
- Taking action where defects are reported.

1.5.3 All noise measuring equipment used for the conducting of noise assessments must be calibrated prior to each use or in accordance with the manufacturers instructions, and a record kept to ensure that the meter readings are accurate.

1.6 Audiometric Testing

1.6.1. Audiometric testing should identify the early signs and symptoms of noise induced hearing loss, and allows any required actions to be identified and taken to prevent progression. It is also used to monitor the effectiveness of control measures in place. Audiometric testing is required for all employees who:

- Are likely to be exposed to noise at or above the lower exposure action value (LEAV) if it is assessed that that person is susceptible to noise induced hearing loss.
- Where individuals show symptoms of noise induced hearing loss (NIHL), or show an above-expected decrease in hearing ability, they will be referred to an Occupational Health physician. Their work area and activities should also be investigated by the Directorate Health and Safety Officer to ensure compliance with policy arrangements.

1.7 Information, instruction and training

1.7.1 Suitable information, instruction and training must be provided to employees. This may be provided in the form of toolbox talks or team meetings etc, and should include:

- The risks of damage to hearing that exposure to noise might cause;
- What steps can be taken to minimise the risk, e.g. how to use noise exposure reduction measures;
- An explanation of the exposure limit values and upper and lower exposure action values;
- The significant findings of noise risk assessments, particularly work equipment and processes that require ear protection to be worn;
- How to obtain suitable ear protection, and how it should be worn, cleaned and maintained;
- Where ear protection should be worn, and where it must be worn (ie location of designated ear protection zones);
- Work activities where ear protection should be worn, and where it must be worn (where the provision of signage is not practicable, eg. for outdoor work);
- How to report defects with ear protection or noise control measures;
- Employees' responsibilities under the policy;

- Symptoms of noise induced hearing loss and what to do if they experience them;
- Informing employees of their entitlement to health surveillance (audiometric testing) and its purpose;
- Informing employees that they must attend their health surveillance appointment;
- The increased risks from other activities that may arise when wearing hearing protection eg inability to hear vehicle movement, audible alarms etc.

1.8 Review

1.8.1 The noise risk assessment should be reviewed if there is any reason to think that it no longer reflects the current noise situation in the area / workplace or noise risks are not being adequately controlled. For example:

- If new equipment is added to an area, or if there is any change in work patterns that is likely to affect the noise exposure of employees in that area;
- If there is any improvement in noise control techniques relating to the workplace or equipment;
- If audiometric testing results suggest that employees' hearing is becoming damaged;
- Following complaints or concerns raised by employees in the areas.

1.9 Supply of Machinery:

1.9.1 Under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, the Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005 and the Supply of Machinery (Safety) Regulations 1992 (as amended), a supplier of machinery must do the following:

- Provide equipment that is safe to use and without risk to health, and supply suitable information, such as an instruction manual, to ensure that the equipment can be used safely and without risk to health;
- Design and construct work equipment so that the noise produced during normal use is as low as possible;
- Provide information about the level of noise emitted from the work equipment during normal use, and whether it is likely to cause people to be exposed to the lower exposure action value or peak action level or above.

1.9.2 New machinery must be provided with:

- A 'Declaration of Conformity' to show that it meets essential health and safety requirements,
- A 'CE' mark,
- Instruction for safe installation, use and maintenance,
- Information on the risks from noise at workstations including:
 - Sound pressure level, where this exceeds 70dB(A),
 - Instantaneous sound pressure values, where this exceeds 63 pascals (130dB),
 - Sound power (a measure of the total sound energy) emitted by the machinery, where the sound pressure level exceeds 85dB(A).
 - A description of the operating conditions under which the noise tests were carried out.

1.10 Accident / Incident Reporting and Investigation:

1.10.1 Managers must investigate and report all accidents and incidents in line with the Authority's policies relating to Accident Investigation and Reporting.

2. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

2.1 Guidance

- L108 Controlling Noise at Work: The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005: Guidance on Regulations. ISBN 978 0717661644
- Noise Toolbox Talk Pack. ISBN 978 0717629985
- INDG362 Noise at Work: Guidance for Employers on the Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005.
- INDG363 Protect Your Hearing Or Lose It! (pocket card for employees)
- HSE website: www.hse.gov.uk/noise
- Supply of Machinery (Safety) Regulations 1992 (as amended), - DTI URN 98/644

**Appendix 1 – The main requirements of the Control of Noise at Work
Regulations 2005**

APPENDIX 1 - The main requirements of the Noise at Work Regulations

Action required where $L_{EP,d}$ is likely to be :	Below 80 dB(A) ¹	LEAV At 80 dB(A) ¹ or below 85 dB(A)	UEAV At 85 dB(A) ¹ or above ²
EMPLOYERS' DUTIES			
General duty to reduce risk			
Risk of hearing damage to be reduced to the lowest level reasonably practicable	✓	✓	✓
Assessment of noise exposure			
Noise assessments to be made by a competent person		✓	✓
Record of assessments to be kept until a new one is made		✓	✓
Noise reduction			
Elimination if practicable but to reduce exposure to noise as far as is reasonably practicable by means other than ear protectors			✓
Provision of information to workers			
Provide adequate information, instruction and training about risks to hearing, what employees should do to minimise risk, how they can obtain ear protectors (if they are exposed to an $L_{EP,d}$ between 80 and 85dB(A)), and their obligations under the Regulations)		✓	✓
Mark ear protection zones with safety signs, so far as reasonably practicable			✓
Ear protection			
Ensure so far as is practicable that protectors are:			
- To be made available upon request where exposure is at or above the lower exposure action value, $L_{EP,d}$ of 80dB(A)),		✓	
- Compulsory to all exposed at or above the upper exposure action value of 85 dB(A)			✓
- maintained and repaired (Reg 10(1)(b))		✓	✓
- properly used by all exposed			✓
Ensure so far as reasonably practicable that all who go into a marked ear protection zone use ear protectors			✓ ³
Provision of Health Surveillance			
Ensure audiometric testing and continued health surveillance where employee exposure is identified at or above 80dB(A)		✓	✓
Maintenance and use of noise control equipment			
Ensure so far as is practicable that:			
- all equipment provided under the Regulations is used, except for the ear protectors provided between first action level and second action level		✓	✓
- ensure all equipment is maintained		✓	✓
EMPLOYEES DUTIES			
Use of equipment; so far as is practicable:			
- use ear protectors			✓
- use any other protective equipment		✓	✓
- report any defects discovered to employer		✓	✓
MACHINE MAKERS' AND SUPPLIERS' DUTIES			
Provision of information			
Provide information on the noise likely to be generated		✓	✓

Notes

1. The dB(A) action levels are values of daily personal noise exposure $L_{EP,d}$
2. All the actions indicated at 85 dB(A) are also required where the peak sound pressure is at or above 137 pascals
3. This requirement applies to all who enter the zones, even if they do not stay long enough to receive an exposure of 85dB(A) $L_{EP,d}$

**APPENDIX 2 – CONTROL OF NOISE AT WORK REGULATIONS 2005 –
MAIN REQUIRMENTS FLOW PROCESS**

APPENDIX 2 – CNAW REGULATIONS 2005 - MAIN REQUIRMENTS FLOW PROCESS

