

# Noise at Work Policy

<b>Department / Service:</b>	Health and Safety	
<b>Originator:</b>	Julie Noble	Head of Health & Safety
<b>Accountable Director:</b>	Scott Dickinson	Director for Estates and Facilities
<b>Approved by:</b>	Health and Safety Committee	
<b>Date of Approval:</b>	23 <sup>rd</sup> May 2024	
<b>Review Date:</b>	23 <sup>rd</sup> May 2027	
	<b>This is the most current document and should be used until a revised version is in place</b>	
<b>Target Organisation(s)</b>	Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust	
<b>Target Departments</b>	All	
<b>Target staff categories</b>	Various	

## Purpose of this document:

The statutory requirements for safely managing noise at work are detailed in the **Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005**. The regulations do not apply to members of the public exposed to noise from their non-work activities or to low level noise which is a nuisance but causes no risk of hearing damage. The Trust will wherever reasonably practicable reduce the risk of exposure to noise at work. It will undertake any necessary risk assessments and where reasonably practicable introduce noise reduction measures. This policy sets out the requirements for managing noise risks.

## Key amendments to this Document:

Date	Amendment	By:
04/12	Biennial review with only minor changes to layout	PG
04/14	Biennial review with only minor changes	PG
Aug 16	Document extended for 12 months as per TMC paper approved on 22 <sup>nd</sup> July 2015	TMC
June 17	Policy review with only minor changes	PG
Feb 2019	Document extended for 12 months due to no legislative changes	Paul Graham
Jan 20	Document extended for 12 months whilst in the process of appointing a new Health and Safety Manager.	Samantha Reid
February 2021	Document extended as per Trust agreement 11.02.2021.	
Jun 21	Full Review with minor changes to responsibilities	Neil Hodgkiss
Aprl 24	Names changes, full review, minor word changes. Added requirement for any noise readings to be conducted by	Julie Noble

	appropriate person and a Sound Level Meter	
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## 1. Introduction

Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust will do all that is reasonably practicable to prevent or reduce the risks to health and safety from exposure to noise at work. Where the Trust cannot suitably reduce the level of noise it will provide suitable hearing protection and ensure that employees are provided with adequate information, instruction and training.

## 2. Scope of the Policy

This Policy covers all employees and any contractors whilst working on site.

## 3. Definitions

To determine whether we have a noise problem at work the Trust will need to measure the **level of noise** and the length of time individuals are exposed to the noise.

**Noise** is measured in decibels (dB) and can cause hearing loss which can be temporary or permanent. The Regulations require the Trust to take specific actions when sound levels reach certain action values. These values relate to the levels of exposure to noise of staff averaged over a working day or week and the maximum noise (peak sound pressure) to which staff are exposed in a working day.

The following exposure values will apply:

	Lower exposure action value (dB)	Upper exposure action value (dB)	Exposure limit values
<b>Daily or weekly personal dose exposure</b> (LEP,d or LEP,w)	80	85	87
<b>Peak sound pressure</b> (LCpeak)	135	137	140

## 4 Responsibility and Duties

The Director of Estates and Facilities has delegated responsibility for health and safety and will delegate specific tasks to responsible managers.

### 4.1 Health and Safety Team

The H&S Team will provide support and professional advice to managers to allow them to assess their work areas and determine sufficient controls, when noise levels are above prescribed exposures limits.

They will assist with the organising of noise monitoring arrangements (where required) and provide information on suitable PPE requirements.

### 4.2 Managers Duties

- Managers responsible for work areas exposed to noise at work must ensure that risk assessments are used to determine what is needed to ensure the health and safety of employees who are exposed to noise; a general rule of thumb is that if you cannot

hear each other under normal conversation conditions then the level of noise may be a problem.

- Workers are consulted and allowed to participate in the assessment process;
- Risks are eliminated or reduced using good practice and known control and management solutions;
- For higher-risk cases, you plan and put in place technical and organisational noise-control measures;
- The legal limits on noise exposure are not exceeded; this may noise levels may need to be checked periodically if they are known to regularly be close to action values.
- Where appropriate employees are protected with hearing protection making it mandatory for high-risk cases;
- The use of appropriate signage indicating a noise zone;
- Employees make use of hearing protection with zones, instruction and supervision;
- All noise control equipment is fully and properly used;
- All noise control equipment is maintained;
- Health surveillance i.e. hearing checks are provided for those at risk and the results used to review controls and further protect individuals.
- Employees are given information, instruction and training about the risks, control measures, hearing protection and safe working practices

#### 4.3 Employees Duties

Staff must ensure that:

- They properly use any equipment provided for working with noise.
- They follow any training and instructions.
- A Datix is completed and their manager informed of any safety hazards associated with noise at work.

### 5. Policy detail

#### 5.1 Risk Assessment

The key to preventing injury from noise at work is to carry out a risk assessment as per the Trust's Risk Assessment Policy. This risk assessment should:

- Identify where there is a risk from noise and who is likely to be affected?
- Contain a reliable estimate of the employees' exposures, and compare the exposure with the exposure action values and action limits above.
- Identify what you need to do to comply with the law for example whether noise control measures or hearing protection are needed, and, if so, where and what type; and
- Identify any employees who need to be provided with health surveillance and whether any are at particular risk. (Refer to Occupational Health Department for guidance)

It is essential that the estimate of any employees' exposure is representative of the work that they carry out. It will need to take account of:

- The work they do or are likely to do;
- The ways in which they do the work; and
- How it might vary from one day to the next

**Note:** All noise measurements must be carried out by a competent person – contact the Estates Department for advice; NB Noise readings must only be taken by someone who has received instruction on taking sound readings and by use of a calibrated Sound Level Meter. A class II meter is recommended. This is to ensure an accurate sound reading is obtained.

## 5.2 Risk Control

When selecting noise reduction measures the following factors need to be considered:

- Can we use different, quieter process or quieter equipment;
- Can we introduce a low-noise purchasing policy for machinery and equipment;
- Can we modify the paths by which the noise travels through the air to the people exposed;
- Can we design and lay out the workplace for low noise emission; and
- Can we limit the time spent in noisy areas – every halving of the time spent in a noisy area will reduce noise exposure by 3dB.

Note: The Health and Safety Team can provide advice on the provision and use of hearing protection.

## 6 Implementation

### 6.1 Plan for implementation

This policy will be communicated to all members of the Health and Safety Committee, Managers and made available to all staff via the Trust's internet site.

### 6.2 Dissemination

This Policy will be made available on the H&S page of the Trust Intranet site. It will also be communicated to managers and staff-side health and safety representatives via the Trust Health and Safety Committee

### 6.3 Training and awareness

Staff will be informed on this policy during Corporate and local induction training and during their mandatory risk management update training.

## 7 Monitoring and compliance

The H&S Manager will monitor the effectiveness of this policy, as a standard, and the general level of compliance with its requirements.

## 8 Policy Review

The Trust Health and Safety Committee will review this policy every two years or upon any significant change to working practice or relevant legislation.

## 9 References

### References:

Code:

Health and Safety at Work, etc Act 1974	
Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999	
Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005	
INDG362 (Rev 2 – 11/12) Noise at work – Guidance form employers on the Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005.	
Health and Safety Strategy	
Health and Safety Policy	
Risk Management Handbook	

## 10 Background

### 10.2 Equality requirements

There are no equality issues associated with this policy.

### 10.3 Financial risk assessment

There are no financial implications associated with this policy in terms of complying with the Regulations.

### 10.4 Consultation

The following were consulted in the production of the original of the policy:

- Members of the Health and Safety Committee
- JNCC

### 10.5 Approval process

This policy will obtain final approval from the H&S Committee.

**Supporting Document 1 - Equality Impact Assessment Tool.**

To be completed by the key document author and included as an appendix to key document when submitted to the appropriate committee for consideration and approval.

Please complete assessment form on next page;





## Herefordshire & Worcestershire STP - Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Form

Please read EIA guidelines when completing this form

### Section 1 - Name of Organisation (please tick)

Herefordshire & Worcestershire STP		Herefordshire Council		Herefordshire CCG	
Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust	✓	Worcestershire County Council		Worcestershire CCGs	
Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust		Wye Valley NHS Trust		Other (please state)	

<b>Name of Lead for Activity</b>	<b>Julie Noble</b>
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<b>Details of individuals completing this assessment</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Job title</b>	<b>e-mail contact</b>
	Samantha Reid	Health and Safety Officer	Samantha.reid3@nhs.net
<b>Date assessment completed</b>			

### Section 2

Activity being assessed (e.g. policy/procedure, document, service redesign, policy, strategy etc.)	<b>Title: Noise at Work Policy</b>			
What is the aim, purpose and/or intended outcomes of this Activity?	Guidance			
Who will be affected by the development & implementation of this activity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Service User	✓	Staff
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Patient		
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Carers	<input type="checkbox"/>	Communities
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Visitors	✓	Other - Contractors
Is this:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Review of an existing activity <input type="checkbox"/> New activity <input type="checkbox"/> Planning to withdraw or reduce a service, activity or presence?			

What information and evidence have you reviewed to help inform this assessment? (Please name sources, eg demographic information for patients / services / staff groups affected, complaints etc.	Datix incidents
Summary of engagement or consultation undertaken (e.g. who and how have you engaged with, or why do you believe this is not required)	Members of the Health and Safety Committee Estates
Summary of relevant findings	

### Section 3

Please consider the potential impact of this activity (during development & implementation) on each of the equality groups outlined below. **Please tick one or more impact box below for each Equality Group and explain your rationale.** Please note it is possible for the potential impact to be both positive and negative within the same equality group and this should be recorded. Remember to consider the impact on e.g. staff, public, patients, carers etc. in these equality groups.

Equality Group	Potential positive impact	Potential neutral impact	Potential negative impact	Please explain your reasons for any potential positive, neutral or negative impact identified
Age		✓		
Disability		✓		
Gender Reassignment		✓		
Marriage & Civil Partnerships		✓		
Pregnancy & Maternity		✓		
Race including Traveling Communities		✓		
Religion & Belief		✓		
Sex		✓		
Sexual Orientation		✓		
Other Vulnerable and		✓		

Equality Group	Potential <u>positive</u> impact	Potential <u>neutral</u> impact	Potential <u>negative</u> impact	Please explain your reasons for any potential positive, neutral or negative impact identified
<b>Disadvantaged Groups</b> (e.g. carers; care leavers; homeless; Social/Economic deprivation, travelling communities etc.)				
<b>Health Inequalities</b> (any preventable, unfair & unjust differences in health status between groups, populations or individuals that arise from the unequal distribution of social, environmental & economic conditions within societies)		✓		

## Section 4

What actions will you take to mitigate any potential negative impacts?	Risk identified	Actions required to reduce / eliminate negative impact	Who will lead on the action?	Timeframe
<b>How will you monitor these actions?</b>				
<b>When will you review this EIA?</b> (e.g in a service redesign, this EIA should be revisited regularly throughout the design & implementation)				

## Section 5 - Please read and agree to the following Equality Statement



### 1. Equality Statement

1.1. All public bodies have a statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010 to set out arrangements to assess and consult on how their policies and functions impact on the 9 protected characteristics: Age; Disability; Gender Reassignment; Marriage & Civil Partnership; Pregnancy & Maternity; Race; Religion & Belief; Sex; Sexual Orientation

1.2. Our Organisations will challenge discrimination, promote equality, respect human rights, and aims to design and implement services, policies and measures that meet the diverse needs of our service, and population, ensuring that none are placed at a disadvantage over others.

1.3. All staff are expected to deliver services and provide services and care in a manner which respects the individuality of service users, patients, carer's etc, and as such treat them and members of the workforce respectfully, paying due regard to the 9 protected characteristics.

# Trust Policy

<b>Signature of person completing EIA</b>	 Samantha Reid
<b>Date signed</b>	25 <sup>th</sup> April 2024.
<b>Comments:</b>	
<b>Signature of person the Leader Person for this activity</b>	 Julie Noble
<b>Date signed</b>	26/04/2024
<b>Comments:</b>	



**Supporting Document 2 - Financial Risk Assessment**

To be completed by the key document author and attached to key document when submitted to the appropriate committee for consideration and approval.

	<b>Title of document:</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
1.	Does the implementation of this document require any additional Capital resources	No
2.	Does the implementation of this document require additional revenue	No
3.	Does the implementation of this document require additional manpower	NO
4.	Does the implementation of this document release any manpower costs through a change in practice	NO
5.	Are there additional staff training costs associated with implementing this document which cannot be delivered through current training programmes or allocated training times for staff	No

If the response to any of the above is yes, please complete a business case and which is signed by your Finance Manager and Directorate Manager for consideration by the Accountable Director before progressing to the relevant committee for approval.