

NOISE CONTROL POLICY

1 Scope of Policy

Noise induced hearing loss (NIHL) or industrial deafness has long been recognised as a preventable industrial disease and, to this end, the Control of Noise at Work Regulations outline the necessary preventative measures. The Regulations place statutory obligations on the college to carry out an assessment on the noise levels in those areas where staff, students and visitors are likely to be exposed to noise at or above defined action levels. Depending on the levels of noise measured and the period of exposure, the College is obliged to introduce certain preventative and/or protective measures.

The college is committed to the provision of a healthy and safe working environment. Hearing damage caused by exposure to noise at work is permanent and incurable. Hearing loss is usually gradual due to prolonged exposure to noise. Hearing damage can also be caused immediately by sudden, extremely loud noises. Exposure to noise can also cause tinnitus which is a sensation of noises in the ears such as ringing or buzzing. Tinnitus may occur in combination with hearing loss. These conditions are preventable.

In order to help prevent staff suffering work related hearing loss or tinnitus the College will:

- identify noise hazards associated with college activities
- eliminate or reduce risks using good practice and known control and management solutions
- estimate likely staff exposures to noise
- write and record what will be done in an action plan
- make sure the legal limits on noise exposure are not exceeded
- provide hearing protection to staff where required or requested
- make hearing protection use mandatory for the high-risk cases
- designate any part of the campus where staff or students are likely to be exposed to levels that reach or exceed the second action level as a "hearing protection zone" (HPZs) and install appropriate signage
- manage the use of hearing protection within HPZs
- maintain any noise-control equipment and hearing protection
- ensure that equipment supplied to control noise is used properly
- provide health surveillance (hearing checks) for those at risk
- use the results of any noise surveys to review controls and further protect individuals
- provide staff with information, instruction and training about the risks, control measures, hearing protection and safe working practices.
- review
 - o what is being done
 - o as things change:
 - o changes in work practices
 - o changes in noise exposures
 - o new ways to reduce risks

Staff will:

- use the controls provided and report any defects
- use hearing protection where its use is mandatory
- co-operate and attend hearing checks when required to do so

2 References

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/noise/regulations.htm>
- INDG 362 (rev 1) – Noise at Work
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg362.pdf>
- L108 – Controlling Noise at Work [Controlling noise at work – L108 \(hse.gov.uk\)](#)

3 Key Legal Requirements

- Adopt an appropriate policy
- Assess the risks within College activities
- Implement appropriate control measures and procedures to reduce risks identified to an acceptable level
- Provide staff with information, training and supervision
- Provide suitable equipment/PPE to aid with noise control

Employees have a duty under the HSWA and Noise at Work Regulations to safeguard their hearing and are responsible for co-operating with the measures introduced by the College to protect their health and safety. These duties include making use of any noise reduction or hearing protective equipment provided.

Contractors will be obliged by the college to identify any equipment or work method brought into the college premises or grounds whose operation will exceed the action levels. The University reserves the right to prohibit noisy items of equipment or work methods where quieter alternatives are available. This requires to be covered in the contractor induction by the contract administrator.

4 Exposure limit values and action levels

Lower exposure action values

The lower exposure limit is split into two different action values - the daily or weekly personal noise exposure of 80 dB and a peak sound pressure of 135 dB.

Upper exposure action values

The upper limit is also split into two different action values - the daily or weekly personal noise exposure of 85 dB and a peak sound pressure of 137 dB.

Exposure limit values

The exposure limit is split into two different action values - the daily or weekly personal noise exposure of 87 dB and a peak sound pressure of 140 dB.

Note - Where personnel are subjected to marked variations in noise levels then the weekly personal noise exposure number will apply.

Exposure action values

The Noise Regulations define 'exposure action values' – levels of noise exposure which, if exceeded, require you to take specific action. There are 'lower' and 'upper' action values.

You need to compare your estimated noise exposure with the action values to know what specific actions are required of you in addition to your general duty to reduce risks from noise.

	Lower exposure action value (decibels)	Upper exposure action value (decibels)
Daily or weekly personal noise exposure ($L_{EP,d}$ or $L_{EP,w}$)	80	85
Peak sound pressure (L_{Cpeak})	135	137

5 Assessment of risk

Where the College carries out work which is liable to expose any person to noise at or above a lower exposure action value, the Department shall make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risk from that noise to the health and safety of those personnel, and the risk assessment shall identify the measures which need to be taken to meet the requirements of the Control of Noise at Work Regulations.

As an approximation, a noise risk assessment should be carried out wherever personnel have to shout to be clearly heard by someone at 2 metres distance, or they find it difficult to talk to each other because of the noise levels.

Noise risk assessments should be reviewed if there is any reason to consider they are no longer valid or there has been a significant change in the work. The change could arise from the installation or removal of machinery, changes in work patterns or use of machines, changes in building structure, machine layout or the age of the equipment (wear and tear) and lack of maintenance.

Dependent on which noise action level is exceeded will determine the measures to be adopted to protect personnel. In some circumstances the issue of ear protectors will suffice, in others, noise reduction techniques will be required. Reliance on ear protectors should be seen as a last resort.

Where ear protectors are recommended, wearers require to be instructed as to why they are being issued, where and how they should be worn, and how they should be stored, maintained and replaced. Whenever possible users should be given a personal choice of protectors to ensure that the user is comfortable. All hearing protection is personal issue only.

In conducting the risk assessment, it must assess the levels of noise to which people are exposed by means of:

- Observation of specific working practices.
- Reference to relevant information on the probable levels of noise corresponding to any equipment used in the particular working conditions.
- If necessary, measurement of the level of noise to which personnel are likely to be exposed and the College shall assess whether any persons 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.

The risk assessment shall include consideration of:

- The level, type and duration of exposure, including any exposure to peak sound pressure.
- The effects of exposure to noise on persons whose health is at particular risk from such exposure.
- So far as is practicable, any effects on the health and safety of persons resulting from the interaction between noise and the use of toxic substances at work, or between noise and vibration.
- Any indirect effects on the health and safety of personnel resulting from the interaction between noise and audible warning signals or other sounds that need to be audible in order to reduce risk at work.
- Any information provided by the manufacturers of work equipment.
- The availability of alternative equipment designed to reduce the emission of noise.

- Any extension of exposure to noise at the workplace beyond normal working hours, including exposure in rest facilities supervised by the department or Service.
- Appropriate information obtained following health surveillance, including, where possible, published information.
- The availability of personal hearing protection, with adequate attenuation characteristics to prevent hearing being damaged.

The risk assessment shall be reviewed regularly, and forthwith if:

- There is reason to suspect that the risk assessment is no longer valid, or
- There has been a significant change in the work to which the assessment relates and where, as a result of the review, changes to the risk assessment are required, those changes shall be made.

The personnel concerned or their representatives shall be consulted on the assessment of risk under the provisions of this regulation.

6 Eliminate or control exposure to noise

The College shall ensure that risk from the exposure to noise for all personnel is either eliminated at source or, where this is not reasonably practicable, reduced to as low a level as is reasonably practicable.

If any person is likely to be exposed to noise at or above an upper exposure action value, the School or Service shall reduce exposure to as low a level as is reasonably practicable by establishing and implementing a programme of organisational and technical measures, excluding the provision of personal hearing protectors, which is appropriate to the activity.

The college shall consider the following:

- Other working methods which reduce exposure to noise.
- Choice of appropriate work equipment emitting the least possible noise, taking account of the work to be done.
- The design and layout of workplaces, workstations and rest facilities.
- Suitable and sufficient information and training for personnel, so that work equipment may be used correctly in order to minimise their exposure to noise.
- Reduction of noise by technical means.
- Appropriate maintenance programmes for work equipment, the workplace and workplace system.
- Limitation of the duration and intensity of exposure to noise and appropriate work schedules with adequate rest periods.

The College shall ensure that personnel are not exposed to noise above an exposure limit value or, if an exposure limit value is exceeded, then they must carry out the following:

- Reduce exposure to noise to below the exposure limit value.

- Identify the reason for that exposure limit value being exceeded.
- Modify the organisational and technical measures taken in accordance with the maintenance and use of equipment to prevent it being exceeded again.

7 Personal hearing equipment

If in any area of the workplace under the control of the College where people are exposed to noise at or above an upper exposure action value then the department shall ensure that:

- The area is designated a Hearing Protection Zone.
- The area is demarcated and identified by means of a sign specified for the purpose of indicating that ear protection must be worn.
- Access to the area is restricted where this is practicable and the risk from exposure justifies it.

No person shall enter this area unless they are wearing the correct type of personal hearing protection.

Personal hearing protection must be made available so that it eliminates the risk to hearing or reduces the risk to as low a level as is reasonably practicable.

8 Maintenance and use of personal protective equipment

- Ensure that the Personal Protective Equipment for personal use is properly used, in efficient working order and in good repair.
- Any defects need to be reported to the line manager.
- Any defective equipment is to be removed from use and replaced.
- Ensure that maintenance is carried out on noise producing equipment to maintain or improve on noise emissions.

9 Health Surveillance

- If the risk assessment indicates there is a risk to the health of any person, then the provision of health surveillance shall include testing their hearing.
- A record will be kept of any employee undergoing health surveillance by the occupational health support.
- Where an identifiable hearing damage issue is found then the individual will be examined by a doctor.
- The individual requires to be informed by a suitably qualified person.
- The risk assessment will need to be reviewed.

- That individual must be assigned to alternative work where there is no risk from further exposure to noise, taking into account any advice given by the doctor or occupational health professional.
- Continued health surveillance is provided for a review of the health of any person who has been exposed.

10 Information, Instruction and Training

Where an employee is exposed to noise which is likely to be at or above a lower exposure action value, the College shall provide those individuals with suitable and sufficient information, instruction and training.

The information, instruction and training shall take into account any significant changes in the type of work carried out.

Any persons carrying out work in a noisy area must have suitable and sufficient information, instruction and training.

Further information

HSE Noise calculator

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/noise/calculator.htm>

Brief guide to controlling noise <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg362.pdf> –

Newbattle Abbey College is committed to the active pursuit of challenging discrimination, advancing equality and celebrating diversity

This Policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant College policies, procedures and guidance documents, whether specifically listed above or subsequently published or amended.

The College reserves the right to update, introduce, or revise policies and procedures from time to time.

Compliance with the most current versions of applicable policies and procedures, as published, is expected.

Title:	Noise Control Policy
Lead Officer:	Health and Safety Consultant
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