


Document Title: Noise Procedure	1 of 13	Approval Date: 11.12.2025
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Noise Procedure

Introduction and Aim

This procedure is issued to staff of Cardiff and Vale University Health Board as one of the control measures contained in the University Health Board's Health and Safety Management System. Where there is an overlap between the Health Board's undertaking and a third party's activities, this procedure may be made available in the interests of improving health and safety in that area.

Third parties should not implement this procedure but use the information to understand the actions of the Health Board's operatives and assist in the development of their own safe systems of work that will complement the safe working arrangements for that overlap.

This procedure shall be reviewed every 3 years from date of issue or in light of any significant changes.

Objectives

This procedure describes the management arrangements in place to manage the control of noise exposure at work and the protection of staff from risk of noise-induced hearing loss, or other risks associated with the noise to which they are exposed. This procedure shall be enforceable from the date of issue.

Scope

This procedure is to be used by all Cardiff and Vale UHB colleagues including those with honorary contracts, and those who may come in to contact with the UHB's work activities.

Equality Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Assessment has not been completed. This is because the procedure has been written to support implementation of the Health and Safety Policy. The Equality Impact Assessment completed for the Policy found there to be no impact.

Documents to read alongside this Procedure

[Capital Planning and Estates Policies and Procedures](#)
[Health and Safety Policy](#)
 Health & Safety Risk Assessment Guidance Document
[Incident, Hazard and Near Miss Reporting Policy and Procedure](#)
 Risk Assessment and Risk Register Procedure
[Risk Management Policy](#)

Approved by

UHB Health and Safety Operational Group

Accountable Executive or Clinical Board Director

Executive Director of People and Culture

Author(s)

Health and Safety

Document Title: Noise Procedure	2 of 13	Approval Date:11.12.2025
Reference Number: IMS-10-04-CAV		Next Review Date:18.11.2028
Version Number: 1		Date of Publication:18.03.2026

Disclaimer: If the review date of this document has passed, please ensure that the version you are using is the most up to date either by contacting the document author or the Health and Safety Department.

Summary of reviews/amendments

Version Number	Date of Review Approved	Date Published	Summary of Amendments
1			New procedure to support the Health and Safety Policy.
2			

Document Title: Noise Procedure	3 of 13	Approval Date:11.12.2025
Reference Number: IMS-10-04-CAV		Next Review Date:18.11.2028
Version Number: 1		Date of Publication:18.03.2026

Content

1 Introduction	4
2 Roles and Responsibilities	5
3 Noise Assessments	6
4 Scope of Action.....	7
4.1 New Schemes and Scope.....	8
5 Noise Levels	9
6 Training.....	10
7 Health Surveillance	10
8 Monitoring of the procedure	11
9 Audits.....	11
10 Review	11
11 Records	11
12 Definitions	12
13 Appendices	12

Document Title: Noise Procedure	4 of 13	Approval Date:11.12.2025
Reference Number: IMS-10-04-CAV		Next Review Date:18.11.2028
Version Number: 1		Date of Publication:18.03.2026

1 Introduction

Noise in the workplace is unwanted sound caused by plant, machinery and work processes. It may also arise from external noise, for example passing road traffic, trains or aircraft. It is known that people subjected to prolonged exposure to noise above certain specified levels can suffer irreversible hearing damage and hearing loss as a direct consequence of the noise exposure. It is also known that exposure to sudden, very loud noise can cause instantaneous damage to hearing.

Damage to hearing due to noise exposure may take two forms:

- Noise Induced Hearing Loss (NIHL) is a reduction in the ability of the person to hear and typically is most pronounced at the frequencies of sound which are used in human speech.
- Tinnitus is the presence of 'sounds' heard by the sufferer that are not caused by external noise.

Risk of hearing damage can be minimised by reducing the level of noise to which the ears are exposed and/or by restricting the duration of the exposure to the noise.

This procedure is based on the Action Values defined in the Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005 (see definitions). These Action Values are intended to reduce the risk of hearing damage, but do not eliminate it entirely. For example, at the Upper Action Value of 85 dB(A), some employees exposed over a working lifetime may still develop NIHL.

In many workplaces it will be appropriate to consider providing improved working conditions for staff by adopting lower criteria than those required under the Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005. In the general UHB workplace environment, noise levels are usually much lower than in factories, and there is significantly less risk of NIHL. Further information on Action Levels can be found in section 13 Definitions. Alternative factors such as speech communication, speech intelligibility, satisfactory use of telephones, and localised requirements for privacy are likely to be of more relevance to determining 'acceptable' noise levels in workplaces. If problems of this type are found in the workplace, a detailed noise assessment by a member of the Health and Safety team should be considered. Levels for 'acceptability' in individual workplace situations will be determined by local circumstances such as the workplace layout and dimensions, the number of staff and their distance apart. Other factors to consider in noisy areas include the audibility of alarms, such as fire and gas alarms; and warning signals such as reversing signals on vehicles.

Cardiff and Vale UHB will ensure that noise is either eliminated at source or, where this is not reasonably practicable, reduced to as low a level as is reasonably practicable. This will be in order to seek to reduce the risk of noise damage to the hearing of employees and anyone else affected by its business activities, and, where necessary, to protect staff and others from unnecessary distraction and disturbance caused by noise.

Note: All employees are required to comply with this procedure and any associated Safe Working Methods by co-operating actively with the objectives of any noise control programmes in their workplace. Hearing loss is irreversible

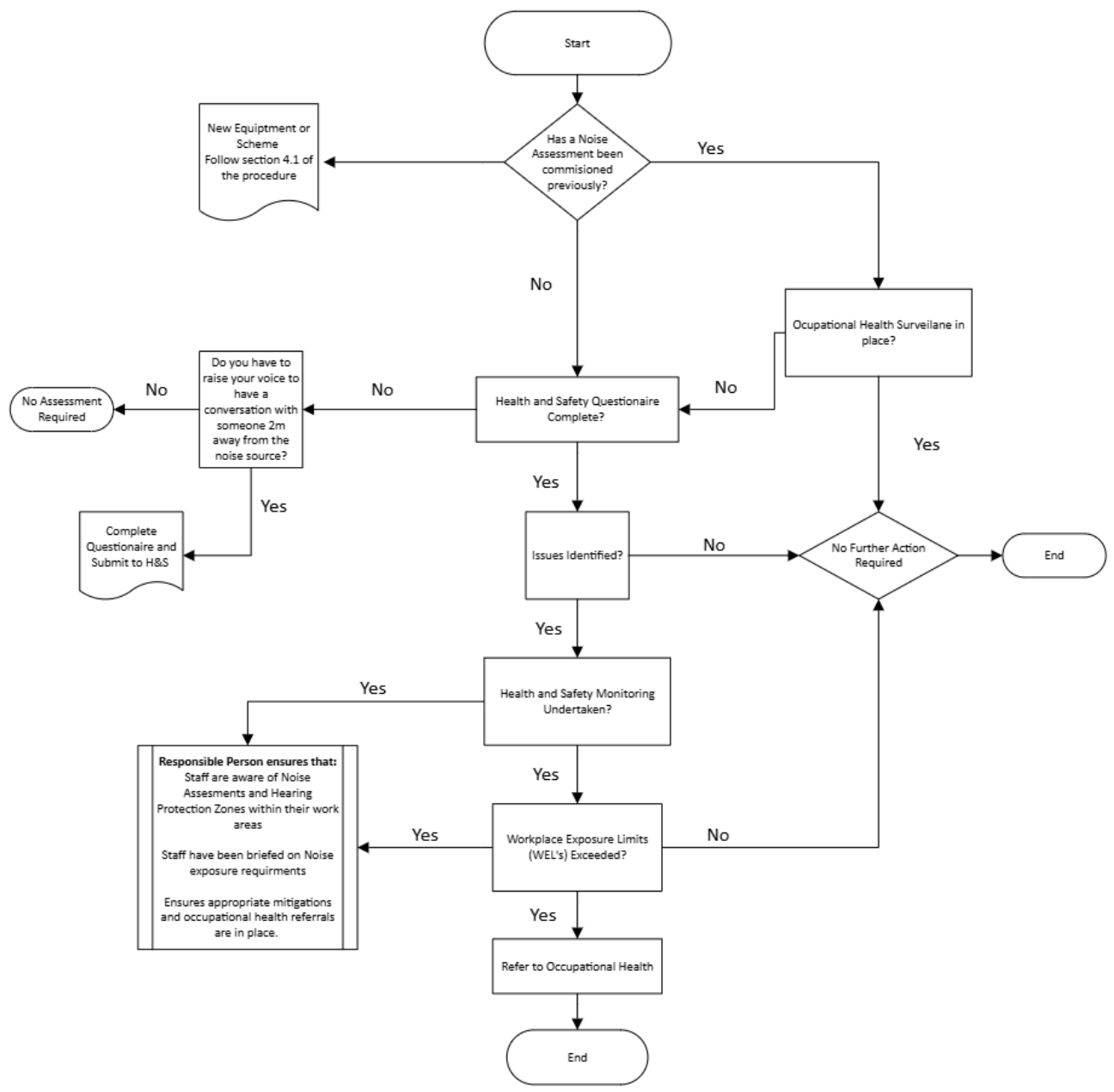
Document Title: Noise Procedure	5 of 13	Approval Date:11.12.2025
Reference Number: IMS-10-04-CAV		Next Review Date:18.11.2028
Version Number: 1		Date of Publication:18.03.2026

2 Roles and Responsibilities

Roles	Responsibilities
Chief Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountable for the overall management of Health & Safety • Appointment of Executive Director
Executive Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Lead for Health & Safety
Assistant Director of Health, Safety & Fire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports the Executive Director • Ensuring appropriate systems, resources, and oversight are in place to support compliance with relevant health and safety legislation and internal UHB standards • Ensuring effective implementation of this procedure • Ensuring that specialist advice is available
Clinical / Service Board Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring the effective implementation of this procedure within their allocated Clinical / Service Board • Ensure unacceptable risks are recorded and escalated
Directorate / Locality Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Champion compliance with this procedure • Ensuring implementation of this procedure within their allocated directorate / locality. • Ensure all requirements of the procedure are maintained, kept up to date and remain effective • Responsible for instructing staff • Ensure high risks are escalated and added to risk registers
Ward / Departmental Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure this procedure is implemented. • Identify and reduce noise at source where able • Ensure correct signage is displayed where required • Provide adequate information, instruction, and training. • Ensure employees attend routine health surveillance where required. • Refer any staff displaying any new symptoms of hearing loss to the Occupational Health Service
Occupational Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise on the suitability and appropriateness of health surveillance. • Conduct health surveillance and maintain records. • Provide trend analysis where evident. • Advise managers on work restrictions due to health risks.
Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adhere to all requirements of this procedure and comply with controls in place. • Attend routine health surveillance where required. • Report short falls in work procedures, control measures or PPE • Replace lost or damaged PPE before exposure • Report any change in noise levels to line management.
Health and Safety Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report deficiencies in control measures to management. • Assist with noise risk assessments when requested. • Undertake monitoring where required • Advise on control measures. • Collaborate with the Occupational Health Department to determine the need for health surveillance.

Document Title: Noise Procedure	6 of 13	Approval Date:11.12.2025
Reference Number: IMS-10-04-CAV		Next Review Date:18.11.2028
Version Number: 1		Date of Publication:18.03.2026

3 Noise Assessments



Document Title: Noise Procedure	7 of 13	Approval Date:11.12.2025
Reference Number: IMS-10-04-CAV		Next Review Date:18.11.2028
Version Number: 1		Date of Publication:18.03.2026

4 Scope of Action

Any workplace and/or location which is identified as likely to expose people to high levels of noise (as stated in the flowchart above) will be subject to a formal assessment by a Competent Person (Noise Assessor).

The noise assessments will be undertaken by the Health and Safety team, these can be arranged through contacting your allocated Health and Safety Advisor or through emailing HealthandSafety.Training.cav@wales.nhs.uk

The condition of an employee's hearing **must** be established when they are first employed to provide a baseline for measurement. Noise assessments shall be at least yearly, and in light of any changes which may affect noise levels.

**Note, this procedure represents a general set of guidelines for a typical workplace environment. If there is anything unusual about the environment or the activities undertaken within that is likely to present a special hazard, such as the continuous operation of machinery in a department etc, a site/activity-specific noise assessment should be undertaken and these guidelines adapted accordingly in consultation with a competent person. Individuals are responsible for conducting dynamic risk assessments for the need to wear hearing protection when additional noise is present in the working environment.*

Examples include, but are not limited to,

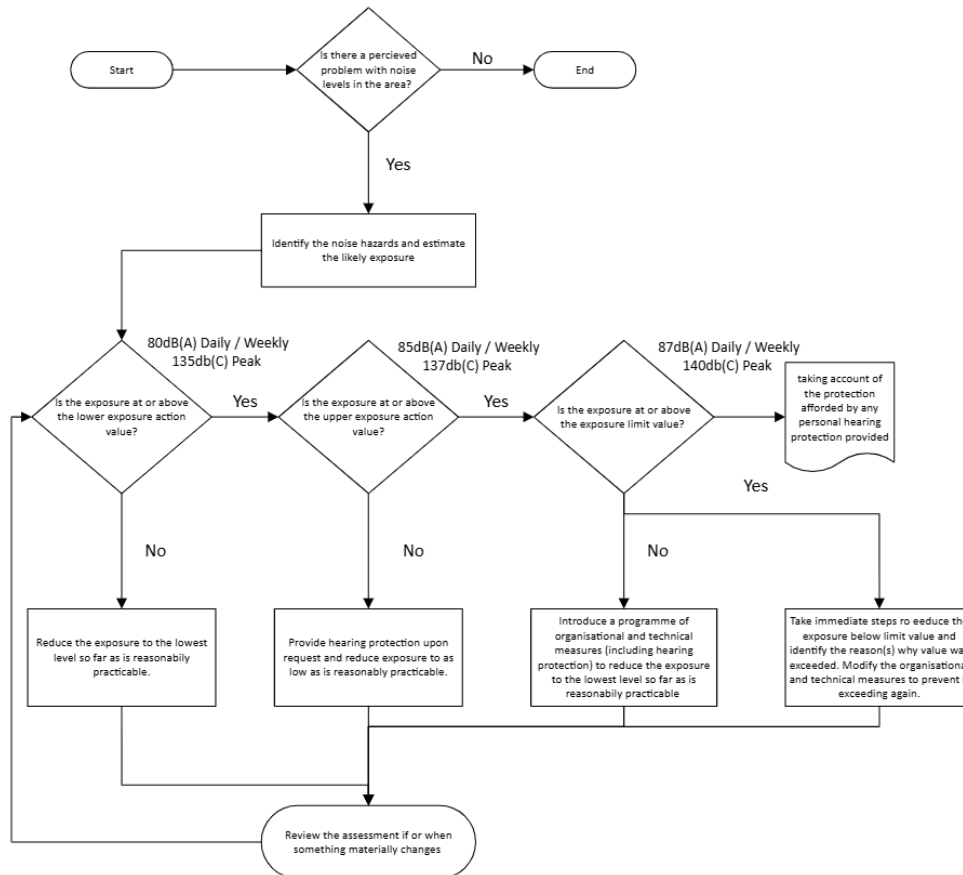
- *conducting tasks that increase noise, such as the use of powered tools, or contractor activity in the vicinity adding to the overall noise levels. The sort of temporary short-term activity that would not warrant a site/activity noise assessment but more of a common-sense response from persons to wear hearing protection.*

Any indications of symptoms, including diseases, should be recorded and notification made to the occupational health function.

Notwithstanding the sound levels recorded during any assessment, the employer is required by the Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005 to ensure that noise is either eliminated at source or, where this is not reasonably practicable, reduced to as low a level as is reasonably practicable.

Document Title: Noise Procedure	8 of 13	Approval Date:11.12.2025
Reference Number: IMS-10-04-CAV		Next Review Date:18.11.2028
Version Number: 1		Date of Publication:18.03.2026

The following flow diagram visualises that explained above:



4.1 New Schemes and Scope

All new equipment and new schemes shall adhere to the following principles: Designers, as part of their duties under the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations, shall utilise the 'principles of prevention' to 'eliminate, so far as is reasonably practicable, foreseeable risks to the health and safety of any person.' This would include noise exposure risks.

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act and the Supply of Machinery Regulations, suppliers of machinery must: **Noise Procedure Issue 1.0 18th November 2025**

- Provide machinery that is safe and without risk to health, with the necessary information and instructions to ensure those aims can be met during installation, use and maintenance.
- Design and construct machinery so that the noise is as low as possible.
- Provide information about the noise the machinery produces, including descriptions of the operating conditions under which the noise was measured.

When hiring or buying new equipment noise should be considered alongside other factors e.g. by comparing noise data for different equipment.

Document Title: Noise Procedure	9 of 13	Approval Date:11.12.2025
Reference Number: IMS-10-04-CAV		Next Review Date:18.11.2028
Version Number: 1		Date of Publication:18.03.2026

All new works and modifications are subject to comply with the relevant engineering standards.

5 Noise Levels

At or above upper exposure action value

Cardiff and Vale UHB will, so far as practicable, take noise control action by means other than hearing protection to reduce the noise exposure to as low a level as is reasonably practicable, of any person identified as being subject to a Daily Personal Noise Exposure Level at or above an Upper Exposure Action Value (see definitions).

Staff identified will be advised of the noise level to which they are exposed. If noise reduction measures cannot be affected immediately, the employees exposed shall be provided with, and be required to wear, hearing protection. Appropriate training and instruction about hearing and protection will be provided by management to these persons with further information and guidance available via the Health and Safety Team and SharePoint page.

Hearing protection

Hearing protection provided to employees will be adequate for the identified exposure, determined by analysis of the frequency of noise produced. PPE should be purchased from an approved supplier via Oracle. The Health and Safety team can support with this process.

Hearing Protection Zones

All areas in which persons are likely to be subject to Daily Personal Noise Exposure Levels at or in excess of the Lower Exposure Action Value will be designated as Hearing Protection Zones and warning signs, such as shown below, will be placed within and at entrances to these areas. Persons working in or entering these areas must wear suitable hearing protection provided.



Document Title: Noise Procedure	10 of 13	Approval Date:11.12.2025
Reference Number: IMS-10-04-CAV		Next Review Date:18.11.2028
Version Number: 1		Date of Publication:18.03.2026

6 Training

Suitable training and instruction should be provided by management, using the guidance available via the Health and Safety SharePoint page. This should be delivered to all staff whose noise exposures are assessed as likely to be at or above any of the Lower Exposure Action Value of 80dB(A) (see definitions). The provision of such training will provide staff with a better understanding of the issues involved and should include how to use and care for hearing protectors as well as ensuring they understand the risks they may be exposed to.

Cardiff and Vale UHB will address how other staff using the workplace, for example contractors and temporary staff, may be provided with adequate information about the noise hazards that are present, and the measures that they need to take to protect themselves against noise during the time they are on site. This will be achieved utilising UHB 163 Control of Contractors procedure.

It is also important that supervisory staff receive the same training as other staff members, even though the noise exposures of the supervisory staff may be lower than those of the main workforce due to their work pattern. This will be provided by management utilising the Health and Safety SharePoint.

7 Health Surveillance

Where there is a risk identified to employee's health due to exposure to noise, suitable health surveillance shall be provided.

Where exposure is between the lower and upper exposure action values, health surveillance shall be provided if it is found out that an individual may be particularly sensitive to noise. This may be from past medical history, audiometric test results from previous jobs, other independent assessments, or a history of exposure to noise levels exceeding the upper exposure action values. A few individuals may also indicate a family history of becoming deaf early on in life.

Employees who are identified as being at risk of exposure to noise levels at or above and Upper Exposure Action Value shall undergo Occupational Audiometry as part of the health surveillance programme.

Where, through Occupational Audiometry, employees are identified as having NIHL, extra care must be placed on the individual, and they will be subject to annual surveillance to monitor further loss where advised by the competent Occupational Health provider. This is opposed to a 3 yearly assessment for hearing levels at a normal level.

Document Title: Noise Procedure	11 of 13	Approval Date:11.12.2025
Reference Number: IMS-10-04-CAV		Next Review Date:18.11.2028
Version Number: 1		Date of Publication:18.03.2026

8 Monitoring of the procedure

Line management shall monitor the implementation of the management of procedures in their areas of responsibility to ensure that persons are following procedure and maintaining the required records.

Where deficiencies are found, line management shall take corrective actions which may include instruction, re-training etc. as necessary.

9 Audits

The use of this procedure shall be subject to internal and external audit.

10 Review

This Procedure shall be subject to review every 3 years or in light of significant change.

Any party who feels that an amendment to this procedure would be beneficial to increasing its effectiveness should contact the procedure author to request change.

11 Records

All IMS-10-04-Noise forms can be completed and stored. Users are encouraged to complete all forms via MS Forms where possible. The IMS-10-04-Noise forms can also be found on Health and Safety Sharepoint.

Health, Safety and Wellbeing > Information Management System > IMS 10

Record	Reference	Retained by	Retention
Noise Assessments		Health and Safety Team	6 years
Noise Assessment Report			6 years
Health Surveillance Records		Occupational Health	6 years post-employment *40years for high-risk areas

Document Title: Noise Procedure	12 of 13	Approval Date:11.12.2025
Reference Number: IMS-10-04-CAV		Next Review Date:18.11.2028
Version Number: 1		Date of Publication:18.03.2026

12 Definitions

Action value: A level of noise above which action must be taken.

The *lower exposure action values* are:

- daily or weekly personal noise exposure of 80 dB (A-weighted); and
- peak sound pressure of 135 dB (C-weighted).

The *upper exposure action values* are:

- daily or weekly personal noise exposure of 85 dB (A-weighted); and
- peak sound pressure of 137 dB (C-weighted).

The *exposure limit values* are:

- daily or weekly personal noise exposure of 87 dB (A-weighted); and
- peak sound pressure of 140 dB (C-weighted).

dB(A): Noise is measured on a logarithmic scale, so that an increase of 3dB corresponds to a doubling of the noise level. Normal conversation is at about 50dB, whilst traffic noise is at 80dB.

When noise is measured at work the scale is adjusted to take account of the frequencies that most affect the human ear. The scale used is called the 'A weighted decibel scale' or dB (A).

LEPd: is a worker's daily exposure to noise at work (normalised to an 8-hour day), taking into account the average levels of noise and the time spent in each area

Occupational Audiometry: Occupational Audiometry is a surveillance technique used to detect early damage to hearing resulting from exposure to noise. Identifying any damage allows appropriate follow-up, remedial action in the workplace and any necessary medical referral of the individual. Audiometry is not a diagnostic technique, although it can be used to pick up changes in hearing due to many causes, including noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL).

13 Appendices

References

Document Name	Reference
Health and Safety at Work Act (HSWA) 1974	Chapter 37
Control of Noise at Work Regulations	L108
Health Surveillance for hearing	HSE

Document Title: Noise Procedure	13 of 13	Approval Date:11.12.2025
Reference Number: IMS-10-04-CAV		Next Review Date:18.11.2028
Version Number: 1		Date of Publication:18.03.2026

IMS-10-04- Noise – Noise Monitoring Request – Indicative Risk Form

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).

With hearing damage, conversation becomes difficult or impossible, your family complains about the television being too loud, you have trouble using the telephone, and you may be unable to sleep.

Generally hearing loss is gradual and by the time you notice it, it may be too late. You can also suffer instant damage from very loud or explosive noises. We want to prevent hearing loss before it happens.

Name:	
Email:	
Telephone:	
Department:	
Location:	

Am I at risk?

Do any of the following apply to you?	Additional comments
Are there intrusive noises, like those of a busy street, a vacuum cleaner or a crowded restaurant, for most of the working day?	
Do you have to raise your voice to have a normal conversation when about 2 m apart for at least part of the day?	
Do you use noisy powered tools or machinery for over half an hour a day?	
Are there noises because of impacts. For example, hammering, pneumatic impact tools, cartridge-operated tools etc.?	
Is anyone experiencing muffled hearing at the end of the day, even if it is better by the next morning?	

Early signs to look out for:

Are you or others in your department experiencing any of the following?	Yes	No
Conversation has become more difficult or impossible?		
Complaints are raised at home about the television being too loud?		
Difficulties when using the telephone?		
Difficulty catching sounds like 't', 'd' and 's', so similar words get confused		
Permanent tinnitus (ringing, whistling, buzzing or humming in the ears)		

Please return to your allocated Health and Safety advisor.

Revision 1IMS-10-04-CAV Noise Indicative Risk Form April 2025