

Isle of Anglesey County Council

Noise Policy

Version 1.0 September 2016

About this policy

This procedure explains the principles of controlling noise at work and is aimed at all employees throughout Ynys Mon County Council.

The Policy is supported by resources on the Council's website.

Revision history

| Version | Date | Summary of changes |
|---------|----------------|--------------------|
| 1.0 | September 2016 | |
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| Date of next review | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| This policy will be reviewed in: | May 2021 |
| The review will be undertaken by: | Health and Safety |

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We are happy to provide this policy in alternative formats on request. Please use the above contact details.

Mae'r ddogfen yma ar gael yn y
Gymraeg.

This document is available in Welsh.

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1.0 Background

Ynys Mon County Council under the Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005 has the duty of care to reduce risks to health from exposure to noise at work, whilst assessing the risks to staff from noise at work. The council will issue employees with suitable hearing protection where the council cannot reduce the risk and make sure the noise limits are not exceeded.

2.0 Definition

Sound is essentially a form of energy. The energy is transmitted through the air as pressure waves. The ear is capable of detecting these pressure waves which it perceives as sound or noise. Noise usually means unwanted sound at an unnecessary volume, or audible acoustic energy that adversely affects the physiological or psychological well-being of the person who is exposed to it.

3.0 Duties Under the Regulations

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974: Employers owe a duty of care for the health, safety and welfare of all employees whilst they are at work and to other people who may be affected by their activities.

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 2002 as amended: Employers are required to tell all workers, including young workers, about the risks to their health and safety, identified by risk assessments, and the measures put in place to control them.

Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005: The Noise Regulations 2005 require employers to prevent or reduce risks to health and safety from exposure to noise at work.

4.0 Preventive Measures in the Workplace

Ynys Mon County Council will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the risk of hearing damage to employees who work with noisy equipment or within a noisy environment is reduced to a minimum. All noise hazards shall be identified, assessed and controlled accordingly to protect employees from the exposure to noise levels that are deemed to be harmful as stated in the Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005.

Regulation 4: Exposure Limits and Action values

Under Regulation 4 of the Noise at Work Regulations 2005 places a requirement upon employers to take specific action at certain action values. These relate to the levels of exposure of noise to employees averaged over a working day or week; and the maximum noise (peak sound pressure) to which employees are exposed in a working day.

Exposure limit values and action values

The lower exposure action values are:

- a daily or weekly personal noise exposure of 80 dB
- a peak sound pressure of 135 dB

The upper exposure action values are:

- a daily or weekly personal noise exposure of 85 dB
- a peak sound pressure of 137 dB

The exposure limit values are:

- a daily or weekly personal noise exposure of 87 dB
- a peak sound pressure of 140 dB

Such noise exposure can cause problems such as disturbance, interference and stress. All reasonable steps will be taken to reduce noise levels as far as reasonably practicable. This will include, if required, use of reduced exposure time to ensure that the dose rate for an average 8 hour working day is not exceeded.

Regulation 5: Assessment

Ynys Mon County Council will carry out regular noise exposure assessments and noise level surveys of noisy areas, processes and equipment in order to assess the noise levels where employees are 'likely' to be exposed to the lower or upper action levels. Assessments and surveys will be recorded and updated regularly, particularly when changes in work practice cause changes in noise exposure levels of employees.

The risk assessment will ensure the following areas are included:

- Identify those employees who are exposed to noise at work;
- Provide the employee(s) with the necessary information, training and instruction;
- Review the assessment annually, or when equipment, legislation changes;
- Keep a record of the assessment.

Management who undertake the risk assessment must record the significant findings of the noise assessment as soon as is practicable after the risk assessment is carried out. This must include the measures which have/are intended to be taken to ensure the requirements of Regulations 6: Elimination or Control of Exposure to Noise at the Workplace, Regulation 7: Hearing Protection and Regulation 10: Information, Instruction and Training, are complied with.

Regulation 6: Elimination / Control of Noise exposure

Ynys Mon County Council shall ensure that the risk from exposure to noise for council employees is either eliminated at source or where this is not reasonable practicable, then it is reduced to as low a level as is reasonably practicable.

If any employee is likely to be exposed to noise at or above an upper exposure action value, management within Ynys Mon County Council shall reduce exposure to as low a level as is reasonably practicable by establishing and implementing a programme of organisational and technical measures.

Regulation 7: Hearing Protection

The council accepts that the use of hearing protection is a last resort, and is committed to continuing to seek and introduce alternative methods for reducing noise exposure levels whenever possible in the future. Ynys Mon County Council will comply with Regulation 7 under the Noise at Work Regulations 2005 by ensuring the authority:

- Provide employee's with hearing protectors;
- Provide employee's with hearing protectors and make sure they use them correctly when their noise exposure exceeds the upper exposure action values;
- Identify hearing protection zones. E.g. areas where the use of hearing protection is compulsory, and marks them with signs if possible;
- Provide employee's with training and information on how to use and care for there hearing protection and details of the circumstances in which they should be used;
- Ensure that the hearing protection is correctly used and maintained by employees;
- Advice on the selection of suitable hearing protection;
- Provide advice on the maintenance and repair / renewal of the hearing protection equipment.

Regulation 8: Maintenance and Use of Hearing Equipment

In order to comply with Regulation 8 of the Noise at Work Regulations 2005, managers will comply so far as is practicable, that anything provided to employees complies with the regulations, is in good working efficient order and well maintained.

Employees must ensure they comply with the statutory regulations by ensuring their hearing protection works effectively and check the following:

- It remains in good, clean condition;
- Earmuff seals are undamaged;
- The tension of the headbands is not reduced;
- There are no unofficial modifications;
- Compressible earplugs are soft, pliable and clean;
- If they discover any defect(s) with the hearing protection they must report the defect(s) to their line manager as soon as possible.

Regulation 9: Health Surveillance

Ynys Mon County Council will provide health surveillance for all employees who are likely to be frequently exposed to noise or above the upper exposure action values, or who are at risk for any reason. Health surveillance for council employees will start before employees are exposed to noise (e.g. for new starters or those changing jobs), to give a baseline.

Health surveillance, however, can be introduced at any time for employees already exposed to noise. This would be followed by a regular series of checks, usually annually for the first two years of employment, and then at three-yearly intervals (although this may need to be more frequent if any problem with hearing is detected or where the risk of hearing damage is high).

The purpose of health surveillance is to identify when employees are showing early signs of hearing damage; to implement control measures to prevent the damage from getting worse and also highlight if the existing control measures are working.

If the noise risk assessment indicates employees are at risk or liable to be exposed to noise, managers shall ensure employees are placed under suitable and sufficient health surveillance. Line managers will refer employees to the Occupational Health Department, where they will be assessed. The occupational health department will be able to advise both the manager and employee on the following:

- A suitable hearing programme
- How to set up the programme

- Provide the employer with reports on employees' fitness to continue work with noise exposure
- Provide employees with feedback on the state of their hearing including their results and general advice on how to look after their hearing.

Where an employee has undergone health surveillance and found to be suffering from hearing damage / loss then Ynys Mon County Council shall ensure:

- Noise risk assessment is reviewed;
- Assign employee to alternative work where the risk of noise is very low or none apparent;
- Make employees' records available to them;
- Act upon any recommendations made by the Occupational Health Section;
- Ensure that any employee with suspected hearing damage is referred to a doctor, to ensure that the employee receives advice from an occupational health professional.

Regulation 10: Information, Instruction and Training

Ynys Mon County Council shall provide employees with information, instruction and training regarding to noise, so that all employees understand the risks they may be exposed to. Employees shall be informed of the following:

- The likelihood of noise exposure and the risk to hearing noise creates.
- What the council will do to control the risks and exposures to noise.
- Where and how employees can obtain hearing protection from.
- Provide training in the selection and fitting of hearing protectors.
- How to report defects in hearing protection and noise control equipment.
- Inform employee's of there duties are under the Noise Regulations 2005.
- What employee's should do to minimise the risk such as, the correct way to use hearing protection and other noise control equipment. How to look after it and store it and where to use it.
- Health surveillance systems.

5.0 Responsibilities

Health and Safety Level One Managers

The Chief Executive Officer is the person ultimately responsible for ensuring compliance with health and safety legislation. The Chief Executive Officer and Assistant Chief Executive Offices should ensure Heads of Service carry out their duties as contained within this procedure.

Health and Safety Level Two Managers

Heads of Service must ensure line managers and employees are provided with adequate information, instruction and training to all personnel regarding to noise. Management should prevent or reduce risks to health and safety from exposure to noise at work to employees.

Health and Safety Level Three Managers

Level three managers need to assess the risks to employee(s) where noisy activities are present within employees working environment. Where noise hazard(s) have been identified, a noise risk assessment must be undertaken. The noise risk assessment should identify where there may be a risk from noise and who is likely to be affected. It should contain a reliable estimate of the employees' exposures, and compare the exposure with the exposure action values and limit values.

Management will take action to reduce the noise exposure that produces those risks. Managers will provide employees with hearing protection if management cannot reduce the noise exposure enough by using other methods. Ensure the legal limits on noise exposure are not exceeded.

Employees shall be given information, instruction and training on noise. Managers will identify any employee(s) who need to be provided with health surveillance and whether any are at particular risk. Managers must ensure they adhere to the following:

- Ensure suitable and sufficient noise risk assessments are carried out.
- Assess equipment at procurement, for the lowest reasonable noise levels.
- Provide hearing protection to employees, when requested, when noise levels are 80dB (A) for an 8-hour period, and peak sound pressure of 135dB (C).
- Arrange routine noise health surveillance within their Service when the noise risk assessment indicates a risk to employees' health.
- Arrange and provide pre-employment health screening for all new 'at risk' employees.
- Ensure that 'at risk' employees within their Service are given suitable information, instruction, and training on noise risks and the appropriate controls.

- Review the noise risk assessment with the aim of correcting any problems and implement any improvements.

Employees

Employees must co - operate with management and make sure they use any noise control devices and follow any safe working practices that are put in place. Ensure employees wear any hearing protection they are given, ensuring they wear it all the times whilst carrying out noisy work, and when they are in hearing protection areas.

- Employees should report any problems with there hearing protection or noise control devices straight away. Employees must ensure they adhere to the following;
- Co-operate with the Noise Procedure and Guidance provided. Wear any personal hearing protection provided;
- Communicate to their line managers any adverse health effects that have developed and may be associated with noise exposure;
- Report any defects in work equipment, including Personal Protective Equipment, (PPE) to their line manager. Take care of hearing protectors and noise control equipment they use.

Further Information

For further information contact the Corporate Health and Safety Team on 01248 752820.