

CONTROLLING NOISE AT WORK

Corporate Health and Safety Arrangement

May 2022

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Summary

What is this document about?

The arrangement for controlling noise at work is intended to ensure a healthy and safe workplace and learning environment for anyone who works, studies, visits or has business at the University. This arrangement is equally intended to ensure that the University of Portsmouth is compliant with current legal requirements and best practise.

Who is this for?

This arrangement is intended for all University staff and students as well as visitors and contractors whilst on University controlled property or off-campus whilst conducting University activities.

How does the University check this is followed?

Corporate Health and Safety monitor University activities to ensure compliance with legislation, best practise, University policies, arrangements and procedures. The University monitors health and safety performance in a number of ways.

Active methods monitor the design, development, implementation and operation of management arrangements. These tend to be preventative in nature. For example: inspections of premises, plant and machinery/equipment or health surveillance¹ to prevent harm and auditing to ensure effective implementation of arrangements.

Reactive methods monitor evidence of poor health and safety practice but can also identify better practices that may be transferred to other parts of the University. For example: investigating accidents, incidents and monitoring cases of ill health and sickness absence records.

Who can you contact if you have any queries about this document?

Any questions about this arrangement should be directed to the [Corporate Health and Safety Team](#).

¹ Health surveillance is a program of systematic health checks to identify early signs and symptoms of work-related ill health and to allow action to be taken to prevent its progression. It is also useful in monitoring the effectiveness of control measures, though it is not in itself a control measure or a substitute for controlling risk at source. Health surveillance means regular hearing checks (audiometric testing).

Introduction

Many work-related activities in the University have the potential to produce noise. Examples include:

- Use of powered work machinery/equipment, such as electric drills, air nail guns, sanders, CNC milling machines and air compressors
- Entertainment such as working at an event with loud music
- Use of air powered tools such as riveter or air gun

Excessive noise levels can lead to physical damage to the ear, which in turn can lead to acute (temporary) and chronic (permanent) hearing problems. Excessive noise levels can also lead to psychological ill health such as workplace stress. The University follows the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE), 'Buy Quiet' best practice and where possible, staff should purchase machinery/equipment that produces lower noise levels.

Implementing this procedure will ensure that the University of Portsmouth is compliant with legal requirements to control exposure to noise, protecting staff, students and visitors from the effects of excessive noise.

Scope

This arrangement applies where occupational exposure to noise at work is equal to or exceeds the statutory action levels or exposure limits. Although there is no legal obligation to provide the same duty of care for students, the University will, wherever possible, treat student's health in the same way as that of staff.

The arrangement shall have immediate effect with a view to protecting staff and students against the risk from excessive noise in the University, whether symptoms are immediate or delayed and arising from University activities and applies to:

- All Managers
- All Staff and Students of the University
- All Contractors and Service Providers working on behalf of the University.

Responsibilities

University Executive Board

Areas of responsibility in relation to the senior team i.e. University Executive Board, Board of Governors and associated committees are defined in the University Health and Safety Policy. This arrangement forms part of the University's Health and Safety Policy and should be read in conjunction with the Health and Safety Policy which outlines senior responsibilities. In particular the following responsibilities are specific to this arrangement:

Corporate Health and Safety

Corporate Health and Safety are responsible for:

- 1.1 Protecting the health, safety and wellbeing of staff and students, contractors and visitors by the early detection of exposure to hazardous noise activities that have the potential to cause adverse health effects.
- 1.2 Assessing, monitoring, analysing and advising on the management of risks associated with noise exposure in the University.
- 1.3 Evaluation of existing control measures and identification of areas where improvements may be required.
- 1.4 Collect, maintain and utilise results and the information to assist in determining and evaluating hazards to health.
- 1.5 Demonstrating compliance against regulatory requirements and providing assurance to the Board of Governors.

Occupational Health Service

Occupational Health are responsible for:

- 1.6 Providing and managing an occupational health service that gives timely, effective advice to managers, and staff on health issues deriving from exposure to excessive noise and how they may affect an individual.
- 1.7 Providing health surveillance for staff who are exposed to excessive noise including following a work-related incident, accident, injury or ill health.

- 1.8 Reporting to Corporate Health and Safety and the Corporate Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee any concerns and areas of improvement following incidents, accidents, injury or ill health.
- 1.9 Ensure an ongoing health surveillance programme informed by Corporate Health and Safety risk assessments is carried out for all staff identified as may be using or intend to use machinery/equipment posing a noise risk, including if it has been identified by risk assessment or the University Job Hazard Information Sheet.

Estates and Campus Services

Estates and Campus Services are responsible for:

- 1.10 Assist Corporate Health and Safety in carrying out noise monitoring and implementing recommended controls to reduce exposure.
- 1.11 Ensuring any areas where excessive noise has been identified by Corporate Health and Safety has appropriate noise warning signage in place.
- 1.12 Managing the Facility Management Software; Planon ensuring that requests concerning excessive noise from the Estates and Campus Services Department machinery, equipment and plant are investigated and where necessary carry out any modifications, repairs or replacements.
- 1.13 Managing the University's electrical supply systems, Redundant Equipment and WEEE (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment).
- 1.14 Ensuring the level of noise generated is considered when a new piece of work machinery/equipment is purchased or hired.

Senior Managers (Deans, Directors, Associate Directors and Heads)

Senior Managers are responsible for ensuring:

- 1.15 Implementing 'Buy Quiet' best practise for machinery and equipment and register new machinery or equipment where noise levels come close to the lower action values.² Following the requirements under Regulation 4 of the Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005 on the 'Machine Noise Level Register'

² *Machinery/equipment that is purchased new and comes close to the lower exposure action values can become louder over time, therefore this machinery/equipment may need to be subject to further monitoring as it gets older.*

- 1.16 Ensuring staff who have been identified as being at risk from excessive noise via a Risk Assessment or the Job Hazard Information document are referred to the Occupational Health Service for Health Surveillance.
- 1.17 This arrangement is effectively communicated and implemented in their areas of responsibility.
- 1.18 Ensure all work identified as involving excessive noise is subject to a Risk Assessment which is communicated and documented to all staff concerned. When conducting a risk assessment for exposure to noise adhere to the requirements under Regulation 5 of The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005.
- 1.19 All health and safety systems, processes and resources are in place and monitored.
- 1.20 Ensuring staff follow the controls communicated and implemented and where staff have been issued personal protective equipment, the requirements under the Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 1992 (PPE), are adhered to by following the University Procedures put in place to protect individuals.
- 1.21 Provide adequate information and instruction relevant to noise exposure levels from any machinery or equipment in use and the controls in place.
- 1.22 Ensure regular maintenance is carried out on machinery, particularly older machinery that may increase noise levels with age.
- 1.23 Ensuring the level of noise generated is considered when a new piece of work machinery/equipment is purchased or hired.
- 1.24 Appropriate controls are put in place to manage noise hazards in line with the Principles of Prevention outlined in Schedule 1 of The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

Faculty Managers

Faculty Managers are responsible for:

- 1.25 Ensuring this arrangement is effectively communicated and implemented in their areas of responsibility.
- 1.26 All work identified as involving excessive noise is subject to a Risk Assessment which is communicated and documented to all staff concerned. When conducting a risk assessment for exposure to noise adhere to the requirements under Regulation 5 of The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005.

- 1.27 All staff are aware of impacts of excessive noise to their health and their responsibilities in relation to controlling noise, wearing any PPE provided and reporting early signs of hearing damage.
- 1.28 Appropriate controls are put in place to manage noise hazards in line with the Principles of Prevention outlined in Schedule 1 of The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
- 1.29 Ensuring staff who have been identified as being at risk from excessive noise via risk assessment or the Job Hazard Information Sheet are referred to the Occupational Health Service for Health Surveillance.
- 1.30 Work machinery/equipment that is known to emit excessive noise must have the appropriate warning signage in compliance with The Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996.
- 1.31 Ensuring the level of noise generated is considered when a new piece of work machinery/equipment is purchased or hired.
- 1.32 In areas where noise levels are a problem, measures are taken to ensure that emergency alarms are visible (i.e. flashing beacon), particularly when a high level of hearing protection is in use.
- 1.33 Providing hearing protection where necessary if risks cannot be adequately reduced by other means.

Managers and Supervisors

Managers and Supervisors are responsible for ensuring they are familiar with and adhere to this arrangement and Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Guidance regarding controlling noise at work and in summary must ensure that:

- 1.34 This arrangement is effectively communicated and implemented in their areas of responsibility.
- 1.35 All staff and students are aware through the provision of suitable and sufficient information, instruction, supervision and training of the actions required to ensure safe working practices are followed.
- 1.36 All work identified as involving excessive noise is subject to a Risk Assessment which is communicated and documented to all staff concerned. When conducting a risk assessment for exposure to noise adhere to the requirements under Regulation 5 of The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005.
- 1.37 Follow 'Buy Quiet' best practise for machinery and equipment and register new machinery or equipment where noise levels come close to the lower action values. Following the

requirements under Regulation 4 of the Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005 on the 'Machine Noise Level Register'

- 1.38 Ensuring staff who have been identified as being at risk from excessive noise via a Risk Assessment or the Job Hazard Information Sheet are referred to the Occupational Health Service for Health Surveillance.
- 1.39 Work equipment has appropriate markings and warnings and that all faulty or defective equipment is reported and taken out of use.
- 1.40 This arrangement is communicated, and adhered to by staff and students who use work equipment at the University.
- 1.41 Ensuring a process for monitoring performance against this arrangement is in place and reported on appropriately, liaising with Corporate Health and Safety.
- 1.42 Inductions are carried out for staff and students, and recorded with records of the training provided including equipment specific training.
- 1.43 Ensuring that the inspections and regular maintenance is carried out and defects reported, and recorded (where appropriate) and any safety critical faults immediately remedied or equipment put out of use until defects remedied.
- 1.44 Inspections - to identify whether work equipment is safe to use.
- 1.45 Regular Maintenance - as specified by the manufacturer and often included in the instruction manual, or when a fault is detected through inspections. Often 6 monthly or annually.
- 1.46 Defective machinery/equipment is taken out of use and disposed of via the Estates and Campus Services Department Redundant Equipment procedure.
- 1.47 Ensuring the level of noise generated is considered when a new piece of work machinery/equipment is purchased or hired.
- 1.48 In areas where noise levels are a problem, measures are taken to ensure that emergency alarms are visible (i.e. flashing beacon), particularly when a high level of hearing protection is in use.
- 1.49 Providing hearing protection where necessary if risks cannot be adequately reduced by other means.

Health and Safety Coordinators

Health and Safety Coordinators are responsible for:

- 1.50 Keeping up to date with the requirements of University policies, arrangements and legislation and to promote a positive health and safety culture within their area of responsibility.

- 1.51 Referring health and safety issues promptly to the relevant Head of Department or Manager. If the problem cannot be resolved locally on a timescale commensurate with the risk then the matter must be referred to the Corporate Health and Safety Team.
- 1.52 Disseminating any necessary information, instruction and training to enable departmental staff and students to perform their work/activity in a safe manner and encourage and support their attendance at relevant University and external health and safety training events.
- 1.53 To assist staff and students with the preparation of risk assessments in liaison with the Corporate Health and Safety Team.
- 1.54 To assist the Corporate Health and Safety Team with health and safety inspections and audits.
- 1.55 Assist with incident reporting, investigations and compliance with health safety and wellbeing committee recommendations.
- 1.56 To assist with review, continual improvement and performance monitoring of this arrangement including implementation in collaboration with Faculty Managers and Corporate Health and Safety.
- 1.57 To advise staff whose health is being affected by their work or whose ability to perform their work is being affected by health issues to speak to their line manager in the first instance to resolve the problem, in liaison with Occupational Health Service.
- 1.58 In the absence of the Pro Vice Chancellor, Dean, Head of Department or Manager, act with the delegated authority to suspend or stop any dangerous activity not carried out within the requirements of the University Health and Safety Policy.
- 1.59 Ensure hearing protection is provided and used where necessary if risks cannot be adequately reduced by other means.

Staff and Students

All University staff and students must ensure that:

- 1.60 Their own or others health, safety and wellbeing is not put at risk when carrying out work activities and to take due care of their own and others health, safety and wellbeing.
- 1.61 To advise staff whose health is being affected by their work or whose ability to perform their work is being affected by health issues, to speak to their line manager in the first instance to resolve the problem, in liaison with Occupational Health Service.
- 1.62 In the absence of the Pro Vice Chancellor, Dean, Head of Department or Manager, act with the delegated authority to suspend or stop any dangerous activity not carried out within the requirements of the University Health and Safety Policy.

- 1.63 They comply with instruction, information and training which is provided.
- 1.64 They report any safety hazards, incidents or concerns to their Line Manager and Corporate Health and Safety using the [Online Reporting Portal](#). Or in the case of no computer access, ensure this is done by the line manager.
- 1.65 They do not, intentionally or recklessly, interfere with or misuse machinery/equipment or PPE provided by the University in the interests of health, safety and welfare.
- 1.66 They do not, without consent from the manager/supervisor, introduce any equipment for use in connection with the University, alter any fixed installations, alter or remove health and safety notices or machinery/equipment or otherwise take any action which may create hazards for others.
- 1.67 They undertake any pre-use inspections of work machinery/equipment as required.
- 1.68 Immediately stop using any defective machinery/equipment. Ensure that 'Do not Use' tags are displayed where relevant and report defects to their line manager/supervisor.

Training Requirements

All staff who are identified as being exposed to noise above the Lower Exposure Action Value should be given training to include:

- The adverse effects of excessive and/or continuous noise levels.
- Why and how to detect hearing damage and report signs of hearing damage.
- The results of risk assessments.
- The measures required to reduce harmful noise exposure
- The need for hearing protection
- The correct use, storage and reporting defects of hearing protection
- The need and procedure for health surveillance
- The responsibilities on staff.

Managers need to ensure new staff receive appropriate training prior to exposure to noise. Staff and students must be given information, instruction, training (induction), and supervision regarding the correct use and proper care of ear defenders and ear plugs; with hearing protection zones (areas where the use of hearing protection is compulsory), clearly identified.

Information on staff training can be found on the [Corporate Health and Safety webpage](#) along with the training calendar.

Monitoring and Reporting Compliance

Element to be monitored	Lead	Tool	Frequency	Reporting arrangements
Responsibilities as per Arrangement	Head(s), Line Manager(s), Those with Line Management Responsibilities, Faculty Managers and Health and Safety Coordinators	Determined by each individual School and service.	Periodically at least Annually or following a significant change or incident, whichever is soonest.	Faculty Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee(s) periodic reports and minutes of meetings submitted to Corporate Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee.
Arrangement Suitability, Effectiveness and Implementation	Corporate Health and Safety Occupational Health	Audit and Inspection Programs Staff News, H&S Newsletters, Communications. All details including risk assessment, noise monitoring, analysis and occupational health data	Periodically at least every three years or following a significant change or incident, whichever is soonest.	Corporate Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report, Audit reports and monitoring reports. Occupational Health reports submitted to Corporate Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee.
Incidents and complaints	Senior Manager/Managers in conjunction with Corporate Health and Safety, Occupational Health and Human Resources	Incident reports, reviews and investigation. Risk Register(s). Occupational Health cases and data analysis of statistical management information.	When reported; ad-hoc and periodically when necessary.	Corporate Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report, Individual incident reports and Faculty quarterly reports.
Performance Reporting including Risks	Senior Management and Faculty Managers	Faculty Health, Safety and Wellbeing report. Risk Registers Risk Assessments	Periodically as determined by business cycle.	Faculty Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee(s) periodic reports and minutes of meetings submitted to Corporate Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee.

Legislation

[The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974](#). Section 2, places a duty on employers to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and wellbeing of all employees at work.

[The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005](#). Designed to protect against risks to health and safety from exposure to noise; the health risk of hearing damage/loss to those exposed, and safety risks such as noise affecting the ability to hear instructions or warning sounds. The regulations were extended to the music and entertainment sectors from 6 April 2008.

[The Management of Health and safety at work Regulations 1999](#). Sets out the requirement to risk assess, the specific requirements on new and expectant mothers, the restriction on employing young people where there is a risk to health from noise, and the requirement to provide health surveillance.

[The Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 1992](#). Specifies that where an employee has to wear or use different PPE simultaneously, they must be compatible and continue to be effective.

[The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998](#). Require work equipment that is provided to be suitable, and in selecting the equipment employers must consider: the risks to the health and safety of employees and others where the equipment will be used, plus any additional risks that may be posed by that work equipment.

[The Supply of Machinery \(Safety\) Regulations 2008](#). Apply to noise at work, since they require manufacturers, importers, and suppliers to ensure that the machinery they supply meet the appropriate standards, including reducing noise emissions to the lowest level possible.

[The Health and Safety \(Signals Signs and Signals\) Regulations 1996](#). Determines when certain types of signals and signs should be used in the University and warning signage on machinery and equipment.

[The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations 2013](#). Work-related Noise Induced Hearing Loss (NIHL) is an occupational disease and is therefore required to be reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), by way of this regulation.

[The Supply of Machinery \(Safety\) Regulations 2008](#). Manufacturers and suppliers of machinery and equipment are obliged to reduce risks to a minimum and to provide data on noise levels, including information on risks to health and their controls.

Associated Documentation

University Arrangements

- [Incident Reporting](#)

University Forms

- [Manager's Request for Noise Monitoring](#)

- [Job Hazard Form](#)
- [University Induction Checklist](#)

University Guidance Notes

The Arrangements should be used in conjunction with the technical notes which can be found on the Health and Safety [Noise at Work Webpage](#) which provide guidance on areas such as:

- [Technical Guidance Note \(TGN 011\) Control of Noise](#)

Health and Safety Executive Guidance

- [Controlling Noise at Work](#). Approved Code of Practise (ACOP) L108
- [‘Buy Quiet’ Webpage](#). Offering advice about purchasing work equipment.
- [Noise at Work](#). A Brief Guide to Controlling the Risks’. Guidance.
- [Sound Advice; Control of Noise at Work in Music and Entertainment](#). Guidance.
- [Controlling Noise at Work](#). HSE Webpage.
- [Noise Health Surveillance](#). Webpage. Provides details about noise health surveillance.
- [Assessing Noise Risks](#). HSE Webpage.

Record Keeping

Records of health surveillance will be kept and staff given access to their own records on request. Enforcing authorities may be required to have copies of health surveillance records. Records must be stored in a suitable format, in accordance with the University's Retention Schedule for forty years from the date of the last entry.

Document Control

This arrangement is issued and managed by Corporate Health and Safety.

Change Record

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Reviewers / Contributors

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