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| **Date Agreed:** | **11 January 2024** |
| **Department:** | **All Departments** |
| **Agreed by:****Reference:** | **Corporate Health and Safety Leadership Board****TBC** |

**Health and Safety**

**Management Arrangement**

CONTROLLING NOISE AT WORK

HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENT

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| **SCOPE** |
| This document is applicable to all Departments / Services that have employees in roles where they may be exposed to noise within the workplace that could lead to a range of health conditions that affect hearing, including noise induced hearing loss. Examples of roles within the authority which may involve levels of noise that need to be controlled include highway services, grounds maintenance, theatre staff and refuse collection. |

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| **INTRODUCTION** |
| Noise at work can cause hearing loss that can be temporary or permanent. People often experience temporary deafness after leaving a noisy place. Although hearing recovers within a few hours, this should not be ignored. It is a sign that if an individual continues to be exposed to the noise, then their hearing could be permanently damaged. Permanent hearing damage can be caused immediately by sudden, extremely loud, explosive noises. The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005 imposes duties on Carmarthenshire County Council to protect employees who may be exposed to noise. This document outlines measures that need to be in place to protect employees, including assessing the risks and taking measures to reduce noise exposure. Providing training and information for employees on the risks from noise and the measures in place to reduce these and providing health surveillance where the risk assessment shows that this is appropriate. |

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| **DEFINITIONS**  |
| **Noise**- any audible sound |
| **CNWR 2005** – The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005 |
| **LCpeak** - C-weighted peak sound pressure level in decibels |
| **LEPD -**worker's daily exposure to noise at work (normalised to an 8-hour day) |
| **Decibel -** is a relative unit of measurement equal to one tenth of a bel (B). |

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| **RESPONSIBILITIES** |
| Director/Head of Service | * Ensure that arrangements are in place to eliminate the risk from noise are as far as is reasonably practicable. If the noise cannot be eliminated, then the HOS will follow the hierarchy of control to reduce the risk.
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| Line Managers/Supervisor | * Undertake a risk assessment process to identify noise exposure hazards and the accompanying risks.
* Ensure implementation of control measures identified in the risk assessment are being implemented.
* Ensure safe systems of work are in place and ensure the reduction of noise levels so far as is reasonably practicable, and in any case within the legal requirements, by means other than personal protective equipment.
* Undertaking the noise assessment if the risk assessment indicates that there is a foreseeable risk of the noise exposure being greater than 80db.
* Providing staff with information and training related to hearing loss and the risks they are exposed to.
* Noise exposure is considered when undertaking procurement or equipment replacement process.
* Inspection and Preventative maintenance are carried out on noise producing equipment.
* Suitable hearing protection is provided and information and training is given on the use and maintenance.
* Supply/replace appropriate personal protective equipment, as may be necessary and free of charge.
* Ensure that personal protective equipment is worn in line with training and instruction.
* Noise assessments and risk assessments are reviewed regularly.
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| Employees | * Use controls identified in risk assessment and safe working practises for applicable activities.
* Wear hearing protection in line with risk assessment, manufacturers guidance and instruction and information they have received.
* Ensure they are aware of the ear protection zones.
* Report any symptoms of hearing loss to supervisor or line manager
* Attend health surveillance as required.
* Maintain and store hearing equipment appropriately.
* Report any defects to the hearing equipment.
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| Employee Wellbeing Manager | * Promote good health amongst all employees, in liaison with our Occupational Health and safety Advisors by raising awareness of the risk of damage to hearing through the exposure to excessive levels of noise from leisure or work activities.
* Ensure effective supportive mechanisms &/or specialist advice to managers regarding the management of noise at work.
* Ensure effective supportive mechanisms &/or specialist advice to employees regarding the management of noise at work.
* Arrange for Statutory health surveillance of employees identified in accordance with the relevant procedures.
* Arrange to periodically monitor/review this policy and its associated procedures etc via the Occupational Health/health and Safety functions.
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| Health and Safety Team | * Assist and provide advice in the creation of the risk assessment and noise assessment.
* Assist in developing a programme of education to help managers/ employees understand that exposure to excessive noise can cause irreversibly damage to hearing
* Provide guidance on the appropriate use of hearing protection.
* Arrange for specialist contractors to carry out noise assessment where appropriate.
* Provide advice on reasonable adjustments.
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| Occupational Health Team | * Carrying out health surveillance on identified workers and recording results confidentially.
* Notifying line managers of health surveillance results and any recommendations that come from the health surveillance testing.
* Develop, manage and implement a hearing conservation programme.
* Develop a programme of education to help managers/ employees understand that exposure to excessive noise can cause irreversible damage to hearing.
* Have input into induction and training courses.
* Provide health surveillance in compliance with the Noise at Work Regulations.
* Provide advice on reasonable adjustments.
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| **EXPOSURE ACTION VALUES** |
| The CNWR sets out noise action values. Once an estimate or a recorded noise value has been found for a task it should be compared to the exposure action values set out in the regulations and if necessary, control measures put in place.Daily or weekly personal exposure limits can be used to assess the exposure to noise. Daily exposure (LEPD) is a measure of the noise energy a person receives over a working day (8 hours). Assessments should consider and reflect the workers working day.Weekly exposure (LEPW) is a measure of the noise exposure level over several days during the working week. This can be used where the workers work differs between days.Peak pressure level Cpeak is the peak level o sound pressure wave with no time constant applied. Peak sounds can cause immediate hearing damage.

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|  | **Lower Exposure action values** **(decibels)** | **Upper exposure action value (decibels)** | **Exposure limit values** **(decibels)** |
| **Daily or weekly personal noise exposure (LEPD OR LEPW)** | 80 db(A) | 85 db(A) | 87 db(A) |
| **Peak sound pressure (LCPEAK)** | 135 db (C) | 137 db (C) | 140 db (C) |

If the daily or weekly personal noise exposure is **80dB (A)** or the peak sound pressure is **135dB(C)** the employer must assess the risk to the workers’ health and make available to them suitable hearing protection, information, and training. If the daily or weekly personal noise exposure is **85dB (A)** or the peak sound pressure is **137dB(C)** the employer must provide all control measures for the lower exposure levels and other control measures that are reasonably practicable to place the noise in the safe zone. If daily or weekly personal noise exposure must not exceed 87db(A) or a peak 140db(C). |

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| **RISK ASSESSMENT** |
| **5 Steps to Risk Assessment** The following outlines the five steps to complete an assessment of the risk to health created by noise: **Step 1- Identify the hazards** In order to identify whether there is a significant risk from noise the following should be considered: • Ask employees which if any tools, machines, processes involve regular exposure to noise. This will lead to a list of tools and jobs. • Consult equipment handbooks which should declare noise values. This may be provided by the manufacturer: however, manufacturers’ data will often come from testing under specific controlled conditions which are very different from normal working practices and therefore may significantly underestimate exposures in practice. Additional information may be sought from equipment suppliers.• Refer to risk assessments for activities being undertaken and identify any activities where noise has been included as a risk.• Ask members of staff if they have any symptoms associated with exposure to noise. • Observe specific working practices. • noise measurements can be taken for specific tools or equipment, if specific measurements are required, ensure that these are carried out by a competent person using specialised equipment. **Step 2 - Identify all persons who may be at risk** If there is likely to be a risk the next stage is to identify who may be at risk. This can be achieved by making a list of employees who undertake activities or use equipment that has a noise risk and which jobs they do. Some members of staff may be at particular risk. These would include employees with existing hearing conditions or employees with hearing impairments.**Step 3 - Assess noise exposure** In order to decide whether on whether individuals are exposed to noise that is reaching or exceeding action or limit values and whether existing control measures are adequate an assessment is required. This can be achieved by using manufactures stated noise emissions levels and the calculator provide by the HSE. Following the assessment, action should be taken to eliminate or reduce risks from noise to as low as reasonably practicable. These controls should include the following:• Consider whether the work can be done another way which then eliminates or reduces exposure to noise. • Replacing tools/equipment/vehicles with alternatives which produce lower noise levels. • Ensuring all equipment / vehicles are properly maintained. • Reducing time exposed to noise e.g., regular breaks, job rotation etc.• Providing suitable personal protective equipment (PPE). • Providing suitable training and information on noise exposure and the correct use, storage and maintenance of PPE. Advice should be sought from the Health and Safety Team to assist with risk assessment and reduction of noise exposure. **Step 4- Record the findings** The risk assessment should include an action plan which documents the measures already in place to reduce the risk from noise exposure and any further measures planned. The noise assessment can be a stand-alone document or can be incorporated into the overall risk assessment document for a school or service. **Step 5 - Monitor and review the risk assessment** It is the responsibility of the Line Manager to regularly check that controls introduced are effective. This will involve talking to employees and monitoring health surveillance results are necessary. It is strongly recommended that the risk assessment should be reviewed if there is any change in activity and on a periodic basis. |

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| **PROCUREMENT OF TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT** |
| Carmarthenshire County Council will wherever possible, avoid unnecessary high levels of noise by carefully selecting and procuring power tools and equipment. This will be achieved by:* Specifying a maximum level of noise emissions as part of the purchase and procurement process.
* Requiring suppliers, as part of the tendering process, to demonstrate the intended use of equipment and the projected noise levels when tools and equipment are used correctly.
* Selecting the most efficient tool for the task intended that minimises so far as is reasonably practicable the time required to use the tool (some tools may have higher noise levels but will reduce the time undertaking the task significantly).
* Ensure that tools and equipment purchased are for professional use and meet the required standards.
* At the procurement stage, consider the recommended proactive maintenance requirements for tools outlined by manufacturers.
* Consult with employees or their representatives throughout the purchasing / procurement of tools and equipment.
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| **SERVICING AND MAINTENANCE OF TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT** |
| As part of controlling the risk of noise, it is essential to ensure that tools and equipment are serviced and maintained in line with manufacturers recommendations as a minimum. Servicing and maintenance requirements may increase for tools that are used frequently to ensure that any deterioration is identified and repaired to prevent an increase in noise emissions. Each service will develop, implement, and monitor a planned preventative maintenance programme to ensure all tools and equipment remain in a suitable condition that prevents noise emissions increasing over time. Additionally, each service will implement a suitable method of defect reporting and arrange for repair or replacement of tools and equipment, as necessary. Managers must monitor reported defects to ensure that relevant actions are taken to prevent injury or ill health and meet compliance with relevant legal standards. |

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| **INFORMATION, INSTRUCTION AND TRAINING** |
| There is a legal duty for employers to provide adequate information, instruction and training to all employees. In relation to noise, training will be provided by the Operational Training team that sit within Place & Infrastructure. The training will include as a minimum:* The nature of risks from exposure to noise.
* The exposure limit values and upper and lower exposure action values.
* The significant findings of the risk assessment, including any measurements taken, with an explanation of those findings.
* The availability and provision of personal hearing protectors, how to use and care for the equipment.
* Why and how to detect and report signs of hearing damage.
* Safe working practices to minimise exposure to noise and their responsibilities to report any concerns or defects to equipment to their line manager.
* Health surveillance and how it can assist in remaining fit for work.
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| **HEALTH SURVEILLANCE** |
| It is the responsibility of Line Managers to identify staff requiring health surveillance for noise risks through risk assessment and ensure that they are referred to the Occupational Health Service. Health surveillance is required if there is a risk to an employee’s health or employees are likely to be exposed to noise at or above an exposure action value.The Occupational Health Service will provide a tiered approach to health surveillance. Line managers will need to ensure that they refer any member of staff when they start in a role that will expose them to noise or those changing jobs so that a baseline can be taken. This will be followed by a programme of regular checks (usually initially annually, leading to 3 yearly checks) these may be more frequent if any problems are detected or where the risk of hearing damage is high.All individual records will be held in confidence. Where appropriate summary results for groups of employees may be reported back to a manager, this will provide information on the effectiveness of any noise controls which are in place. |