

Livewell Southwest

Noise at Work Policy

Version No 1.3

Notice to staff using a paper copy of this guidance

The policies and procedures page of LSW intranet holds the most recent version of this document and staff must ensure that they are using the most recent guidance.

Author: Corporate Risk and Compliance Team

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Associated documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Management Strategy (including Risk Assessment Process) • Health and Safety Policy • Incident Reporting & Investigation Policy and Procedure • Sickness Policy
Supersedes document	Control of Noise at Work V1.2
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Document review history

Version no.	Type of change	Date	Originator of change	Description of change
V0.1	New policy	November 2010	Estates Compliance & Safety Manager	New policy.
V.1	Ratified	June 2011	Estates Compliance & Safety Manager	
V1.1	Extended	November 2013	Estates Manager	Extended no changes.
V1.2	Updated	August 2014	Estates Compliance & Safety Manager	Extended no changes.
V1.3	Reviewed	January 2016	Health & Safety Advisor	Updated to make it organisational wide rather than Estate specific.

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Noise at Work Policy

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Livewell Southwest has a duty to protect workers, contractors, service users and members of the public who might be exposed to noise associated within its work environments and working practices which may be a risk to health, and to ensure that any associated risks are assessed and reduced so far as is reasonably practicable.
- 1.2 This policy describes Livewell Southwest management organisation and arrangements for ensuring compliance with the Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005 (CNAWR) and should be read in conjunction with Livewell Southwest Health and Safety Policy.

Statement of Policy

- 1.3.1 Within the organisation there may be occasions where workers, service users and members of the public may be subjected to excessive noise. It is the responsibility of Livewell Southwest to reduce the risk of exposure to noise, in so far as is reasonably practicable. To ensure that the CNAWR is complied with and hearing is protected by a robust management policy that identifies the risk of noise at work and appropriately controls the exposure.
- 1.3.2 The CNAWR aim is to ensure that workers' hearing is protected from excessive noise at their workplace, which could cause them to lose their hearing and/or suffer from tinnitus (ringing in the ears). They require:
 - a) Hearing protection to be provided and managed designated hearing zones where there is a level of noise at 85 decibels (dB) (daily or weekly exposure).
 - b) Risk assessment of the workers health must be completed with provision of information and training where there is exposure of noise at 80 dB.
 - c) Exposure value limit (EVL) of 87 dB, above which workers must not be exposed (taking into account any reduction of exposure provided by hearing protection).
 - d) Health surveillance (hearing checks) required for workers regularly exposed to noise levels above 85 dB.
- 1.3.3 The Regulations set out a hierarchy of measures that employers and employees have to take. Failure to comply with CNAWR, in addition to exposing employees constitutes an offence and is subject to penalties under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.
- 1.3.4 The implementation of this policy requires the total co-operation of all members of management and staff.

2 Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to detail the arrangements for the implementation of the CNAWR within Livewell Southwest. As an employer Livewell Southwest has a general duty under Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act, 1974, to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable the health, safety and welfare at work of employees

and the aim of the policy is to:

- Meet the legal obligation to protect the health, safety and welfare of staff.
- Provide procedures to be implemented where a noise hazard has been identified and assess the risks.
- Implement measures to avoid or control the noise hazard in order to decrease the degree of risk to as low as is reasonably practicable.
- Provide information on how to monitor and review noise.

3 Definitions

3.1 **Noise** – any audible sound.

3.2 **Decibel (dB)** – dB is the unit of measurement for the loudness of a sound within the human range of hearing. The higher the dB, the louder the sound and the worse the possible hearing loss.

3.3 **Exposure Levels** - the Noise Regulations define exposure action values as the level of noise exposure which if exceeded, requires an organisation to take specific action. There are lower and upper action values. Noise is averaged over a working day or week or maximum noise to which an employee is exposed in a working day.

3.4 **Exposure Limit Value** - means the level of daily or weekly personal noise exposure or of peak sound pressure which must not be exceeded. Exposure limit values of 87 dB (daily exposure) and 140 dB (peak noise) which take into account the effect of wearing hearing protection must not be exceeded.

3.5 **Upper Exposure Action Value** - means the higher of the two levels of daily or weekly personal noise exposure or of peak sound pressure which, if reached or exceeded, require specified action to be taken to reduce risk.

3.6 **Lower Exposure Action Value** - means the lower of the two levels of daily or weekly personal noise exposure or of peak sound pressure which, if reached or exceeded, require specified action to be taken to reduce risk.

3.7 **Daily Personal Noise Exposure** - means the level of daily personal noise exposure of an employee, taking account of the level of noise and the duration of exposure and covering all noise.

3.8 **Weekly Personal Noise Exposure** - means the level of weekly personal noise exposure, taking account of the level of noise and the duration of exposure and covering all noise.

3.9 **Health surveillance** - means assessment of the state of health of an employee, as related to exposure to noise.

3.10 **Risk Assessment** - means the assessment of risk.

3.11 **Peak Sound Pressure** - means the maximum sound pressure to which an employee is exposed.

3.12 **Working Day** - means a daily working period, irrespective of the time of day when it

begins or ends, and of whether it begins or ends on the same calendar day.

3.13 **Hearing Protection Zone** – a clearly signed zone in which hearing protection must be worn by all who enter that zone.

3.14 **CNAWR** – Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005.

4 Duties & Responsibilities

4.1 The general responsibilities of the **Board and Chief Executive** are described in Livewell Southwest Health and Safety Policy.

4.2 The **Director of Professional Practice, Safety and Quality** has corporate responsibility for Health and Safety Management and, therefore, takes specific responsibility for:

4.2.1 Advising the Board on the review of existing policy arrangements.

4.2.2 Advising the Board on the allocation of resources to implement health and safety procedures.

4.2.3 Referring matters of a critical nature to the Board for resolution via the Corporate Risk Register.

4.2.4 Ensuring adequate safety arrangements exist within Livewell Southwest.

4.3 **Locality Managers / Service Managers** are responsible for ensuring that noise risk assessments are undertaken within their area of responsibility (process depicted in flow chart in Appendix A). The undertaking of noise risk assessments may be delegated to a local Health and Safety Risk Assessor, however the responsibility remains with the Service Manager as explained in Livewell Southwest Health & Safety Policy and Risk Management Strategy.

4.3.1 Locality Managers/Service Managers, with assistance from local Health and Safety Risk Assessors, are to:

- a) Identify any processes that may be considered a noise hazard.
- b) Ensure risk assessments are undertaken, reviewed regularly and updated following any changes.
- c) Ensure all new systems of work or procedures that involve or expose staff, patients, service users or others to excessive noise (above 80db) are assessed.
- d) Identify and implement any action or control measure required following a noise risk assessment. Further advice may be sought from the Occupational Health & Wellbeing Service or the Corporate Risk and Compliance Department.
- e) Ensure control measures are used and maintained properly and that safety procedures are followed, i.e. the correct use of personal protective equipment such as hearing protection.
- f) Ensure all accidents, incidents and near misses are fully reported and investigated to identify root cause and suitable action to prevent reoccurrence.
- g) For those areas with workplace exposure limits ensure that the monitoring of exposure levels is carried out – contact the Corporate Risk and Compliance Department for assistance.

- h) Ensure that employees are given the necessary information, instruction, training and supervision to enable them to manage noise.
- i) Refer employees to Occupational Health & Wellbeing on commencement of employment if known risk of noise within workplace, or as soon as symptoms thought to be associated with noise manifest themselves, or where health surveillance may be required.

4.4 **Local Health and Safety Risk Assessors** will be responsible for:

4.4.1 Attending risk assessment training, including update and refresher sessions.

4.4.2 Conducting suitable and sufficient assessments of the risks to health arising from exposure to noise.

4.4.3 Review assessments annually or more frequently if any problem with hearing is detected, or where the risk of hearing damage is high or whenever there have been any significant changes in the matters to which they relate or there is a reason to suspect that they are no longer valid.

4.4.4 Assisting their senior managers in the development of safe systems of working.

4.4.5 Liaise with the Corporate Risk and Compliance Department, Occupational Health & Wellbeing, and others as required.

4.5 All **Employees** are responsible for:

4.5.1 Complying with this policy, to raise any issues or concerns regarding noise and the wearing of PPE with their relevant line manager/supervisor.

4.5.2 Following the local procedures and safe systems of work, instruction and training.

4.5.3 Reporting all incidents of significant exposure to noise, in accordance with Livewell Southwest Incident Reporting & Investigation Policy and Procedure.

4.5.4 Co-operating with their Service Manager and Occupational Health & Wellbeing in complying with any health surveillance requirements identified by a noise risk assessment.

4.6 **Occupational Health & Wellbeing** will be responsible for undertaking the health surveillance required by the Noise at Work Regulations 2005. The following functions are provided:

4.6.1 Pre-placement audiometric assessment and screening.

4.6.2 Advise Service Managers and employees of any necessary adjustment or restrictions to their work activities.

4.6.3 Provide health surveillance (including follow-up) if required, i.e. legal requirements, good practice or as identified following risk assessment.

4.7 The **Health and Safety Advisor** will ensure that the following functions are provided:

- 4.7.1 Be the Responsible Person for the monitoring of noise across Livewell.
- 4.7.2 Advice to managers regarding noise and noise assessment in accordance with all regulations, guidance and directives.
- 4.7.3 Advice on monitoring services to ensure effectiveness of control measures and compliance with workplace exposure limits.
- 4.7.4 Noise training will be provided for local Health and Safety Risk Assessors, Service Managers and employees who may be exposed to noise. In addition, they will provide advice on risk assessments and, where required, conduct the assessment with a suitable noise meter in compliance with this policy by following the Noise Assessment Form in Appendix B and record findings in Appendix C.

5 Management of Noise

5.1 Livewell Southwest have identified services where work processes, equipment or workplaces, have the potential to expose staff to noise as depicted below and will be subject to a formal assessment carried out by a competent person. The list provided is not exhaustive and may change:

- Estates
- Hotel Services – Laundry/kitchen areas
- Music Therapy
- Podiatry
- Orthotics
- Prosthetics
- Dental
- Any other area identified not listed above

5.2 Livewell Southwest has a duty to reduce any exposure of noise to below the lower exposure value so far as is reasonably practicable by applying the hierarchy of controls below:

- Eliminate noise at the source
- Substitute plant or equipment
- Increase distance
- Modify plant
- Damping – acoustic curtains
- PPE
- Instruction, information, training and supervision
- Planned preventative maintenance

Where Service/Locality managers have identified any work, which as a result of a risk assessment and noise survey indicates levels above the first action level of 80db(a) or a peak pressure level of 135db(c) they will ensure that employees are notified and advised of the risk from noise and of the availability of hearing protection.

In any area where noise levels exceed the second action level of 85db (a) or a peak pressure level of 137db(c) these areas will be designated as noise protection zones. Only authorised staff equipped with the appropriate hearing protection may work in

those areas and employees shall be informed of the risk and provided with appropriate hearing protection by local management.

Where it is necessary to wear hearing protection, depending on type, this may reduce the audibility of fire alarms and when necessary a visual beacon or strobes should be employed in these areas.

- 5.3 Any work area in which staff report that noise distracts or represents a nuisance shall be subject to an assessment to confirm noise exposure and whether noise levels can be reduced if this presents a risk.
- 5.4 All new equipment and machinery purchased shall require a check on noise emissions (information from the supplier) and be considered within the procurement decision.

5.5 Health Surveillance

- 5.5.1 Where there is a risk of exposure to noise within the organisation pre-placement audiometric assessment and screening for new starters or those changing jobs will be undertaken by Occupational Health & Wellbeing to provide a baseline.
- 5.5.2 Audiometric screening can be introduced at any time for employees already exposed to noise. Regular periodic 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) will be undertaken to monitor exposure and a health surveillance programme implemented where required. All audiometric assessments, health surveillance and screening checks will be carried out by Occupational Health & Wellbeing as they have the appropriate training, experience and competencies.
- 5.5.3 As part of the screening process the effects of Ototoxic drugs and substances at work e.g. antibiotics (e.g., streptomycin), salicylates, such as aspirin, taken in large quantities, loop diuretics (e.g., lasix, ethacrynic acid), drugs used in chemotherapy treatment (e.g., cisplatin, carboplatin) and quinine and workplace ototoxic chemical agents such as; solvents (e.g. benzene, toluene, butanol and trichloroethylene) and certain metals, including lead, cobalt, mercury, arsenic, and lithium, will be considered and be assessed to whether noise will have any adverse effect on the member of staff.

6 Training implications

- 6.1 Only a competent person who has been trained to assess this risk can carry out noise assessments; this may be provided internally or by external contractors.
- 6.2 Where staff have to use hearing protection they should receive information, instruction and training from management on the measures and correct use of equipment provided to safeguard their hearing. This will be appropriate to the health surveillance they receive.

7 Monitoring compliance

- 7.1 This policy will be monitored for effectiveness on an annual basis through:
- Reported hazards that are noise related on incident system

- Reporting noise risk assessments completed by the Health and Safety Advisor within a specified period (annually) if not requested sooner.
- As a result of any Occupational Health and Wellbeing referral and health screening programmes.
- Monitoring will be undertaken by the Corporate Risk and Compliance Team who report to the Board annually.

All policies are required to be electronically signed by the Lead Director. Proof of the electronic signature is stored in the policies database.

The Lead Director approves this document and any attached appendices. For operational policies this will be the Locality Manager.

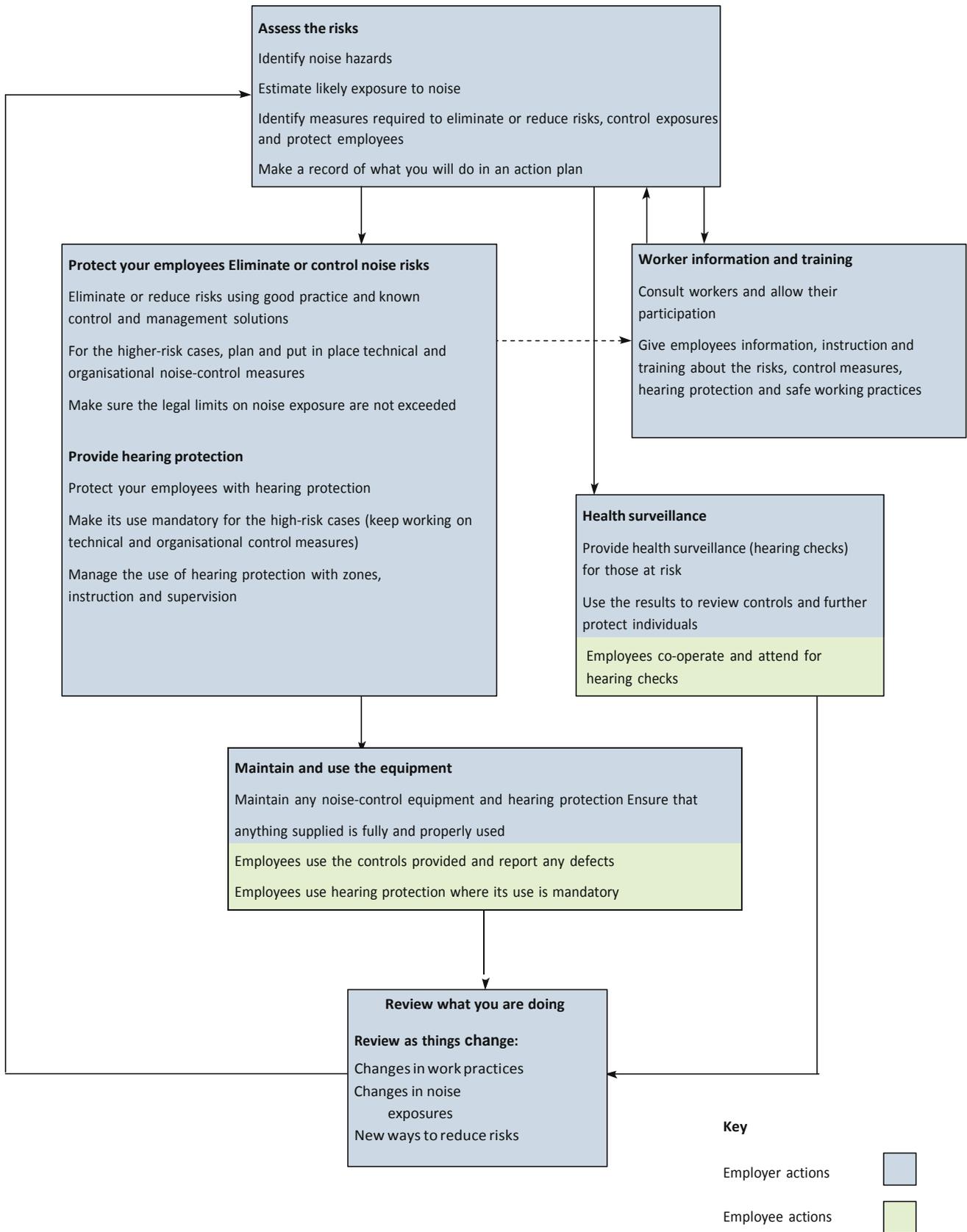
The Executive signature is subject to the understanding that the policy owner has followed the organisation process for policy Ratification.

Signed: Director of Professional Practice, Safety & Quality

Date: 1st March 2016

Appendix A

Noise Risk Assessment Flow Chart (Source: Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005)



Appendix B Noise Assessment Record

Assessment details	
ID No	

Date of assessment		Date of Previous Assessment and ID number
Name of assessor		
Title		

Location of assessment and type of noise environment

Measurement Details

Sound Level Meter		Serial No.		Date of Calibration	
Microphone		Serial No.		Date of Calibration	
Calibrator Model		Serial No.		Date of Calibration	

Details of operations/remarks (inc. details of existing hearing conversation measurements e.g. enclosures, silencers, PPE)

Sketch of workplace

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Reduction of noise exposure by means other than the provision of hearing protection (essential if exposed Second Action Level or Peak Action Level)

Instruction, Information and Training of Employees

Hearing Protect Zones (essential if exposed above First Action level or the Peak Action level)

Provision of Person Hearing Protection (inc. Type and Stock Number if applicable)

Additional Recommendations

Health Surveillance

Record of Review

Date of Review	Name of Reviewer	Post Held	Signature	Reassess ✓ if applicable

Is new assessment required? (circle as appropriate)	YES	NO	Date of new assessment	
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Any additional comments

Actions taken by Manager

Name of Manager		Signature		Date:	
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