



Noise Policy

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1 Statement of Aims and Objectives

- 1.1 The objective of the Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005 (the Noise Regulations) is to ensure that workers' hearing is protected from excessive noise at their place of work, which could cause them to lose their hearing and/or to suffer from tinnitus (permanent ringing in the ears).

The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005 replace the Noise at Work Regulations 1989.

- 1.2 South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (the Trust) is committed to the health and safety of employees, service users, visitors and others. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the Trust takes all reasonably practicable measures to ensure that its workplaces and areas under their control at the material time are safe and without unnecessary risks from workplace noise by:

- Ensuring all potential workplace noise hazards are identified.
- Any risk to safety is adequately controlled, and reduced to the lowest reasonably practicable level; and
- Where necessary, appropriate risk assessments and method of reducing risk are in place.

- 1.3 This policy is applicable to all employees of the Trust, volunteers and others in the Trust, irrespective of whether premises are managed, owned or leased by the Trust or owned by third parties.

- 1.4 The aims and objectives of this policy are to protect staff, so far as is reasonably practicable, from excessive noise. In particular, this policy aims to:

- Ensure that tasks with a significant degree of risk, are assessed by competent persons, and safe systems of work are in place to reduce the risks to staff, patients, and others, so far as is reasonably practicable.
- Ensure that suitable and sufficient information and training is given to staff to ensure they understand their legal duties and are competent to apply the principles of working in an environment where noise is a factor when doing so.
- Ensure that appropriate training is provided for staff joining the Trust and throughout their employment, e.g. - via e-learning modules, and through annual key skills training and on the introduction of any new equipment or following significant incidents.
- Encourage full accurate reporting and recording of all accidents, incidents, near misses and ill-health related to noise, and taking action to reduce the risk of recurrence, giving feedback to staff.



- 1.5 Employees have general legal duties to take reasonable care of themselves and others who may be affected by their acts or omissions, and to co-operate with their employer to enable their health and safety duties and requirements to be complied with.

2 Principles

- 2.1 Hearing loss caused by exposure to noise at work continues to be a significant occupational disease. HSE figures cite some 17,000 people in the UK suffer deafness, tinnitus, or other ear conditions as a result of exposure to excessive noise at work.
- 2.2 The level at which employers must provide hearing protection and hearing protection zones is now 85 decibels (daily or weekly average exposure) and the level at which employers must assess the risk to workers' health and provide them with information and training is now 80 decibels. There is also an exposure limit value of 87 decibels, taking account of any reduction in exposure provided by hearing protection, above which workers must not be exposed.
- 2.3 Exemption certificates for emergency services - The HSE may, by a certificate in writing, exempt any person or class of persons from the provisions of regulation 6(4) and regulation 7(1) to (3) in respect of activities carried out by emergency services which conflict with the requirements of any of those provisions, and any such exemption may be granted subject to conditions and to a limit of time and may be revoked by a certificate in writing at any time.
- 2.4 The Executive shall not grant such an exemption unless it is satisfied that the health and safety of the employees concerned is ensured as far as possible in the light of the objectives of these Regulations.
- 2.5 This policy aim is to ensure that that the Trust operates within The Control of Noise Regulations, minimizing the risk of harm to employees as they conduct their work activities.
- 2.6 Managers must ensure that all persons who are required to work in environments where noise is a factor are provided with suitable and sufficient health and safety information.
- 2.7 Information and Risk assessments should be communicated in an appropriate language with those exposed to risk.

3 Noise in the Workplace – Procedures



The purpose of this document is to provide staff with clear guidance as to the procedures to be followed in respect of workplace noise.

- 3.2 The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005 requires the employer (The Trust) to ensure that risk from the exposure of his employees to noise is either eliminated at source or, where this is not reasonably practicable, reduced to as low a level as is reasonably practicable.
- 3.3 If any employee is likely to be exposed to noise at or above an upper exposure action value, the employer shall reduce exposure to as low a level as is reasonably practicable by establishing and implementing a programme of organisational and technical measures, excluding the provision of personal hearing protectors, which is appropriate to the activity.
- 3.4 The actions taken by the employer in compliance with these procedures shall be based on the general principles of prevention set out in Schedule 1 to the Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999(1) and shall include consideration of the following:
- Other working methods which reduce exposure to noise.
 - Choice of appropriate work equipment emitting the least possible noise, taking account of the work to be done.
 - The design and layout of workplaces, workstations, and rest facilities.
 - Suitable and sufficient information and training for employees, such that work equipment may be used correctly, in order to minimise their exposure to noise.
 - Reduction of noise by technical means.
 - Appropriate maintenance programmes for work equipment, the workplace and workplace systems.
 - Limitation of the duration and intensity of exposure to noise.
 - Appropriate work schedules with adequate rest periods.
- 3.5 The employer shall ensure that employees are not exposed to noise above an exposure limit value: or, if it is exceeded forthwith:
- Reduce exposure to noise to below the exposure limit value.
 - Identify the reason for that exposure limit value being exceeded.
 - Modify the organisational and technical measures to prevent it being exceeded again.
- 3.6 Where rest facilities are made available to employees, the employer shall ensure that exposure to noise in these facilities is reduced to a level suitable for their purpose and conditions of use.
- 3.7 The employer shall adapt any measure taken in compliance with the requirements of this regulation to take account of any employee or group of employees whose health is likely to be particularly at risk from exposure to noise.
- 3.8 The employees concerned, or their representatives shall be consulted on the measures to be taken to meet the requirements of this regulation.

4 Hearing Protection

- 4.1 An employer who carries out work which is likely to expose any employees to noise at or above a lower exposure action value shall make personal hearing protectors available upon request to any employee who is so exposed.



If an employer is unable by other means to reduce the levels of noise to which an employee is likely to be exposed to, below an upper exposure action value, he shall provide personal hearing protectors to any employee who is exposed. If, in any area of the workplace under the control of the employer an employee is likely to be exposed to noise at, or above an upper exposure action value for any reason the employer shall ensure that:

- The area is designated a Hearing Protection Zone.
- The area is demarcated and identified by means of the sign specified for the purpose of indicating that ear protection must be worn in paragraph 3.3 of Part II of Schedule 1 to the Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996(1)
- Access to the area is restricted where this is practicable and the risk from exposure justifies it and shall ensure so far as is reasonably practicable that no employee enters that area unless that employee is wearing personal hearing protectors.

- 4.3 Any personal hearing protectors made available or provided shall be selected by the employer:
- So as to eliminate the risk to hearing or to reduce the risk to as low a level as is reasonably practicable.
 - After consultation with the employees concerned or their representatives.

5 Health Surveillance

- 5.1 If the risk assessment indicates that there is a risk to the health of his employees who are, or are liable to be, exposed to noise, the employer shall ensure that such employees are placed under suitable health surveillance, which shall include testing of their hearing.
- 5.2 The employer shall ensure that a health record in respect of each of their employees who undergo health surveillance is made, maintained and that the record or a copy is kept available in a suitable form.
- 5.3 The employer shall:
- On reasonable notice being given, allow an employee access to his personal health record.
 - Provide the enforcing authority with copies of such health records as it may require.
- 5.4 Where, as a result of health surveillance, an employee is found to have identifiable hearing damage, the employer shall ensure that the employee is examined by a doctor and, if the doctor or any specialist to whom the doctor considers it necessary to refer the employee considers that the damage is likely to be the result of exposure to noise, the employer shall:
- Ensure that a suitably qualified person informs the employee accordingly.
 - Review the risk assessment.
 - Review any measure taken to comply with regulations 6, 7 and 8, taking into account any advice given by a doctor or occupational health professional, or by the enforcing authority.



- Consider assigning the employee to alternative work where there is no risk from further exposure to noise, considering any advice given by a doctor or occupational health professional.
- Ensure continued health surveillance and provide for a review of the health of any other employee who has been similarly exposed.

5.5 An employee to whom this regulation applies shall, when required by their employer and at the cost of their employer, present themselves during his working hours for such health surveillance procedures as may be required.

6 Definitions

Noise	"Noise means any audible sound".
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7 Responsibilities

- 7.1 The **Chief Executive Officer** has overall accountability for health and safety within the Trust, and for the successful implementation of this policy.
- 7.2 The **Executive Director of Quality and Nursing** is the director with delegated responsibility for ensuring that the Trust is compliant with health and safety legislation, and for managing the strategic development and implementation of this procedure as part of the risk, health, and safety process.
- 7.3 **All Managers** have been delegated the responsibility for implementing this policy within their areas of control. All managers are responsible for undertaking written risk assessments and for reviewing these with their staff. Following any accident or near miss, managers must undertake an investigation and record this on the Datix system. All managers are responsible for ensuring their staff are regularly trained in manual handling. Managers are responsible for ensuring that the principles of this policy are applied by the staff under their management in their workplace locations and that their staff understand their role in reducing risks.
- 7.4 **Health and Safety Lead will:**
- Act as the focus for advice and guidance
 - Develop Trust Policy
 - Follow up any related incidents and make appropriate recommendations.
 - Ensure that any Working at heights issues arising from health and safety audits and inspections are highlighted to the relevant manager.
- 7.5 **Employees, contractors and volunteers** are responsible for understanding and carrying out their responsibilities under this policy and having an awareness of the responsibilities of others.

8 Education and Training

- 8.1 Where employees are exposed to noise which is likely to be at or above a lower exposure action value, the employer shall provide those employees and



their representatives with suitable and sufficient information, instruction and training.

9 Monitoring Compliance

9.1 Health and Safety

9.2 The Health and Safety department will follow up any related incidents and make appropriate recommendations; carry out audits of PPM records for both regulatory and Trust compliance as well as auditing equipment risk assessments.

9.3 Any Noise issues arising from health and safety audits and inspections will be highlighted to the relevant manager.

9.4 Non-compliance

9.5 Instances of non-compliance will be escalated to CHSWG.

10 Audit and Review

10.1 This document will be subject to audit by the CHSWG 6 months after approval and thereafter no later than three yearly.

10.2 Effectiveness will be reviewed using the tools set out in the Trust's Policy and Procedure for the Development and Management of Trust Policies and Procedures (also known as the Policy on Policies).

10.3 This document will be reviewed in its entirety every three years or sooner if new legislation, codes of practice or national standards are introduced, or if feedback from employees indicates that the policy is not working effectively.

10.4 All changes made to this policy will go through the governance route for development and approval as set out in the Policy on Policies.

11 References

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992
- The Construction (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1996
- The Provision and Safe Use of Work Equipment Regulations - 1998
- The Provision and Safe Use of Work Equipment Approved Code of Practice (HSE) 2014
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations - 1999
- The Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations – 1992
- HSE Webpages providing practical advice and Guidance on the Control of Noise at Work regulations 2005



12 Equality Analysis

- 13.1 The Trust believes in fairness and equality, and values diversity in its role as both a provider of services and as an employer. The Trust aims to provide accessible services that respect the needs of each individual and exclude no-one. It is committed to comply with the Human Rights Act and to meeting the Equality Act 2010, which identifies the following nine characteristics: Age, Disability, Race, Religion and Belief, Gender Reassignment, Sexual Orientation, Sex, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity.
- 13.2 Compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty: If a contractor carries out functions of a public nature, then for the duration of the contract, the contractor or supplier would itself be considered a public authority and have the duty to comply with equality duties when carrying out those functions.