WILTSHIRE POLICE

FORCE PROCEDURE

Control of Noise at Work Procedure

Effective from: 11.05.2015
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Identification

Procedure Title: Control of Noise at Work Procedure
Version: V3

Ownership

Department Responsible: Health and Safety, People Services
Procedure Owner: Sarah Somers, Head of Health and Safety

Revision History

Effective From: 11.05.15
Next Review Date: Every three years or when significant changes in work activity, process or procedure occur.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revision Date</th>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Summary of Changes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16.04.12</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>Standard review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.05.15</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Standard review – no significant changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.05.2018</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Data Protection section amended to reflect implementation of GDPR and new DPA.</td>
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Approvals

This document requires the following approvals:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name &amp; Title</th>
<th>Date of Approval</th>
<th>Version</th>
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<tr>
<td>Occupational Health and Safety Committee (DCC chair)</td>
<td>Not required</td>
<td>V3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief Officer Group</td>
<td>Not required</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Distribution

This document has been distributed via:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name &amp; Title</th>
<th>Date of Issue</th>
<th>Version</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E-Brief</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Email to relevant affected Staff/Officers</td>
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Equality Impact Assessment

Has an EIA been completed?  ☑ Yes  □ No
Informal assessment conducted – result low risk.
If no, please indicate the date by which it will be completed.  
If yes, please send a copy of the EIA with the procedure.  

**Date:** 10.05.15

**Consultation**

List below who you have consulted with on this policy (incl. committees, groups, etc):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name &amp; Title</th>
<th>Date Consulted</th>
<th>Version</th>
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<tr>
<td>Occupational Health and Safety Committee</td>
<td>Not required – no signature change</td>
<td>V3</td>
</tr>
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**Implications of the Procedure**

**Training Requirements**

Any perceived training requirements needed to implement this procedure should be identified here.

**IT Infrastructure**

State here whether implementation of this procedure requires any input from IT, adaption and/or addition to any IT systems or packages?
**PROCEDURE**

**PROCEDURE OVERVIEW**
The objective of this procedure is to clearly define Wiltshire Police’s procedures with regards to the control of noise at work.

**GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RIDDOR</td>
<td>Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dB</td>
<td>Decibels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPE</td>
<td>Personal Protective Equipment</td>
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</table>

**STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**
The Force Priorities linked to this document are set out below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Force Priorities Linked to this Policy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SP4 Developing Sustainable Policing</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES and OTHER DOCUMENTS**

Wiltshire Police Health and Safety Management System Procedure

**DATA PROTECTION**

Any information relating to an identified or identifiable living individual recorded as a consequence of this procedure will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, General Data Protection Regulations and the Force Data Protection Policy.

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000**

This document has been assessed as suitable for public release.

**MONITORING and REVIEW**

The Control of Noise at Work Procedure document will be monitored and reviewed every three years by the Force Head of Health and Safety. The procedure will also be reviewed in light of legislative change, change in technology or best practice. The Force Occupational Health and Safety Committee will be responsible for approval and monitoring the procedure document and its implementation on a regular basis.

**WHO TO CONTACT ABOUT THIS PROCEDURE**

Sarah Somers, Health and Safety Manager
David James, Health and Safety Advisor
1. Legal Requirements

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 requires every employer, so far as is reasonably practicable, to ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees and anyone else affected by their undertakings.

The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005 require employers to prevent or reduce risks to health and safety from exposure to noise at work. The regulations do not apply to low level noise which is a nuisance but causes no risk of hearing damage or to members of the public exposed to noise from their non work activities.

Employers Responsibilities:

- Assess the risks to employees from noise at work.
- Eliminate or, where this is not reasonably practicable, reduce to as low a level as is reasonably practicable, the noise exposure that produces those risks.
- Provide employees with hearing protection if the noise exposure can’t be reduced enough by other methods.
- Ensure the legal limits on noise exposure are not exceeded. Provide employees with information, instruction and training.
- Carry out health surveillance if there is a risk to health.

Employees Responsibilities:

- Use noise control measures in accordance with their instructions.
- Wearing hearing protection in accordance with instructions provided when exposed at or above the upper exposure action level and at all times in areas marked as hearing protection zones.
- Take care of hearing protectors and noise control equipment they are required to use.
- Report any defects in hearing protection or equipment or any difficulties in using them.
- Co-operate with the employers health surveillance programme and attend their health surveillance appointments.

HSE Exemption Notice

The Police service has a from exemption notice from the HSE in relation to firearms officers and armed deployments (certificate of exemption number CNWR/1 2012). This certificate exempts the police service from the requirement in Regulation 11 and 12(2) of the Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005 to provide suitable ear protection for those employees likely to be exposed to the second action level or above or to the peak action level or above. This exemption does not apply to any training activities involving the use of firearms or to the use of firearms in the planned destruction of animals. Further details can be obtained from the Force Health and Safety Manager.
2. Roles and Responsibilities

Deputy Chief Constable

Wiltshire Police has appointed the Deputy Chief Constable (DCC) to hold primary responsibility for health and safety on behalf of the Chief Constable. The DCC is responsible for ensuring there is adequate and arrangements of the control and management of work related noise.

Managers & Supervisors

All Wiltshire Police managers and supervisors as health and safety planners and implementers are responsible for ensuring appropriate management of noise as per the findings of risk assessment in their area of responsibility.

All Employees

All employees are responsible for working safety in accordance with the information, training and instructions they have received. All employees are responsible for wearing any mandatory hearing protection provided and carrying out a visual inspection prior to every occasion it is used. If any faults or defects are identified, the user must inform their line manager/appointed responsible person.

3. Noise Impact Assessment

An initial noise exposure impact assessment has been completed in 2005 to identify all potential noisy environments within Wiltshire Police. The findings of these assessments have enabled Wiltshire Police to carry out suitable and sufficient assessments of the risk from noise to the health and safety of its employees. The details of which are portrayed in the Generic Risk Assessment GRA 048 found on the Health and Safety firstpoint site. As part of the risk assessment, the level of noise employees are exposed will be assessed by the following means:

- Observation of specific work practices
- Reference to relevant information on the probable levels of noise corresponding to equipment in specialist areas e.g. garage workshop.
- Measurement of the level of noise to which employees are likely to be exposed.

Identified Risk Groups

As a result of the original impact assessment and generic risk assessment, the following potential risk groups have been identified. Specific and detailed noise assessments for each of these activities are required and have been undertaken, which can be found on the Health and Safety firstpoint site

- Police Dog Section duties.
- Firearms Training.
- Firearms Operations.
- Force Armourer duties
- Personal Police Officer / Operational Police Staff Communications.
- Emergency Control Centre /Force Contact Centre.
- Garage Workshops.
- Force Print Room.
- Caretakers Duties
- Generator Rooms
- Specialist Operations Officers (RPU)
- Protestor Removal Duties (use of hand help equipment)

Noise Assessments/Surveys

Suitable and sufficient noise assessments/surveys will be carried for all risk areas, processes and equipment as identified by the risk and impact assessments. Wiltshire Police utilise a combination of in house and external consultant surveys depending on the level of expertise and specialist equipment required for the assessment. The noise assessments/survey’s will identify the likely daily, or where appropriate, weekly dose of all persons likely to be exposed. Where the noise survey identifies that current noise controls are inadequate, the survey will identify and recommend additional controls.

All noise survey’s/assessment’s will be recorded and reviewed regularly, particularly when changes in work practice cause changes in noise exposure levels of employees. The assessments will also receive a full review at an interval of every three years. Further noise measurements and review should also be made following the implementation of any changes in process, production layout or noise control measures in order to assess the new conditions. The full and detailed reports can be obtained from the health and safety section as required.

In House Noise Assessments

All in house noise assessments will be carried out by a member of the force health and safety department, who is trained in the use of the noise monitoring equipment and competent in conducting a noise survey. The assessments will be used as the basis for formulating action plans for remedial measures when necessary. All assessments are undertaken using appropriate asset registered noise monitoring devices, which are formally calibrated at regular intervals and before each use for validation.

Consultancy Noise Testing

In addition to the above in house noise assessments, further more detailed noise assessments will be carried out by competent external providers as required. All consultancy noise assessments will be carried out by a competent external contractor, who is trained in the use of the noise monitoring equipment and competent in conducting a noise survey. The assessments will be used as the basis for formulating action plans for remedial measures when necessary.

Hearing Protection Zones
Where noise levels are likely to exceed the lower and upper exposure values (85dB A weighted) Wiltshire Police will establish and clearly define Hearing Protection Zones. Each location must be adequately signed, appropriate hearing protection provided and all staff are instructed to wear hearing protection at all times in these areas. Current hearing protection zones in operation include the Force indoor and outdoor firearms ranges and the helicopter landing site.

4. Noise Management and Control

Purchasing New Machinery/Equipment

Wiltshire Police ensure that noise levels are taken into consideration when purchasing any new or replacement machinery. This is effectively and centrally managed through the Force buying Co-ordinators who oversee and validate all requests and purchases of all equipment throughout the Force.

Hearing Protection

Wiltshire Police will, as far as is reasonably practicable, take all steps to reduce noise exposure levels of employees by means other than the use of personal protection. Wiltshire Police accepts that the use of ear protectors 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. Wiltshire Police will provide suitable and effective ear protection to employees working in high noise levels, as indicated as necessary by the results of noise exposure assessments. It will also provide for the maintenance and repair or renewal of the protective equipment, and provide training in the selection and fitting of protectors and details of the circumstances in which they should be used.

- Hearing protection is made available to all staff who are exposed to noise between the lower and upper exposure values. Wearing of this hearing protection is not compulsory.
- Hearing protection is provided to all staff who are likely to be exposed at or above the upper exposure value (85 dB A). The wearing of hearing protection in these areas is mandatory and all staff are made aware of the risks and requirement. Line management are also responsible for ensuring the required hearing protection is worn.

Selection and Purchase of Hearing Protection

All types of hearing protection (ear defenders, earmuffs, helmets, headsets) selected and purchased must be fit for purpose and provide suitable attenuation levels. A hearing protection suitability assessment must be completed by a competent person before the purchase of any new or replacement hearing protection. Advice on these assessments can be sought from the Health and Safety department.

Storage and Use of Noise Equipment and Hearing Protection

All hearing protection and noise control equipment must be stored in a clean, dry and accessible environment. All staff must ensure they use all hearing protection and noise control equipment as per their information, instruction and training.

Inspection of Noise Equipment and Hearing Protection
For all types of hearing protection, a visual check and inspection must be carried out by the user prior to every occasion it is used. If any faults or defects are identified, the user must inform their line manager/appointed responsible person. The item must be taken out of use until repaired or replaced. Suitable defect reporting and replacement systems are in place.

Use and Maintenance of Noise Control Equipment and Procedures
Wiltshire Police will maintain and monitor the effectiveness all equipment, procedures and control measures introduced for the purpose of reducing noise exposure of employees, such as enclosures, silencers, machine covers. Appropriate maintenance procedures must also be established, monitored and implemented to ensure the continued effectiveness of noise control measures. All employees will be required to use these procedures and equipment correctly and promptly report any defects or deficiencies through the appropriate channels.

Procedures for dealing with a noise issue
Whenever an employee raises a matter related to noise in the workplace as a health and safety issue, Wiltshire Police will take all necessary steps to investigate the circumstances, take corrective measures where appropriate and advise the employee of actions taken. Where a problem arises as a result of noise in the workplace, the employee must inform a responsible person/line manager immediately.

5. **Information, Instruction and Training**
All staff who are exposed to noise which is likely to be at or above the lower exposure action value are informed of the following information;

- Nature of the risk of noise and the significant findings of the relevant risk assessment.
- Control measures taken to comply with the Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005.
- Exposure limit values and the upper and lower exposure action values.
- Availability and provision of suitable hearing protection.
- Why and how to detect and report signs of hearing damage.
- Action to take if they become aware of symptoms of hearing loss.
- Where applicable, the entitlement of health surveillance and their responsibility to attend appointments.
- Safe working practices to minimise exposure to noise.
- Collective results of health surveillance.

All officers / police staff who require the use of the Police Tetra radio are provided with suitable training as part of their tetra radio training, in relation to noise and volume control, the importance of keeping the radio turned down to the lowest level etc. All staff are also advised that there are only allowed to wear the Force approved earpieces.
Information and instruction is provided in many forms including, briefings, instruction booklets, emails, aide memoirs and procedures.

6. **Health Surveillance**

Where risk assessment has identified noise levels are likely to exceed the upper exposure action value (85 Db(A), health surveillance in the form of audiometric tests, are carried out by the force Occupational Health Unit. Employees are identified through the risk assessment process and/or defined by the Home Office Medical standards guidance. The audiometric tests are carried out prior to placement in post, periodically (the frequency of which is defined by the level of risk) and post placement. Full details of the noise health surveillance programme can be found in the [Force’s Hearing Conservation Policy](#) found on the Occupational Health Firstpoint site.

7. **Operational Policing**

All pre planned police operations and operational training must be risk assessed by trained risk assessors at the planning stage, to identify and assess the risks from the particular hazards of the work activity; this assessment should include exposure to noise. If a potential noise risk is identified, appropriate arrangements should be made to eliminate, control and reduce the risk by the introduction of appropriate control measures. Examples of such operations/activities are carnivals, raves, festivals, air shows and operational training. Examples of suitable control measures include rotation of staff and their role, where possible elimination of noise at source, provision of hearing protection. Hearing protection should only used as a last resort and once all other measures are exhausted. If operational officers / police staff are deployed to areas or buildings with hearing protection zones these must be adhered to at all times.

Operational Policing – Dynamic situations

During the course of their duties police officers and in some cases operational police staff, may be required to attend and work at spontaneous operational incidents where there is a risk of exposure to noise. A suitable and sufficient dynamic risk assessment must be carried out by the individual officer at the time as per their instruction and training. All staff must ensure that suitable control measures and dynamic risk assessment principles are adhered to minimise the risk.

8. **Contractor Management**

All contractors employed by the Force / Management Agents and Partners are responsible for the regular maintenance, service and visual inspection of their control of noise at work procedures and equipment. Wiltshire Police will ensure evidence of this is provided at the tender stage through the contractor’s method statements and risk assessments. Wiltshire Police will reserve the right to review or inspect these records at any time. Regular spot checks of the use of required hearing protection will also be carried out as part of the regular contractor sampling/audit regime.
Appendix A

Understanding and Managing Noise Risks

Assess the Risks
Identify noise hazards
Estimate the likely exposure to noise.
Identify measures required to eliminate or reduce risk and control exposure.
Record actions and devise action plan.

Eliminate and control risk using good practice and management solutions.
Do not exceed legal noise limits.
Provide hearing protection where required.
Ensure mandatory use for high risk areas.
Define hearing protection zones as required.

Consult with employees.
Provide employees information, instruction and training.

Provide health surveillance where required.
Use the results to review control measures.
Employees to co operate and attend hearing checks.

Maintain noise equipment and hearing protection.
Employees to use controls and hearing protection provided and report any defects.

Monitor and Review
When:
- There are changes in work practices or noise exposures.
- There are new ways to reduce risks.
- At regular intervals.