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NEWS, VIEWS AND UPDATES...

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December 2020

Welcome

Welcome to the December edition of the UKHCA Newsletter.

In this edition we review our recent series of webinars hosted jointly with the British Occupational Hygiene Society (BOHS).

We also share with you a couple of articles and updates from our members related to headphone use in the workplace and new guidance from the UKHCA for the construction industry.

As always we hope you enjoy the content and if you have any comments or would like to make a future contribution please contact us at enquiries@hearingconservation.org.uk

To make sure you receive future copies of this newsletter please sign up here <http://hearingconservation.org.uk>

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Headsets and Earphone Use in the Workplace

How do the Regulations apply and how can we check noise exposure levels?



It may not be obvious, but employees who regularly use headsets and earphones in workplace environments like command and control rooms, call centres, trading floors, television broadcasting studios, and offices, may be at risk of developing hearing damage from these devices. This would also apply to employees working at home wearing headsets and earphones for online meeting purposes, which has drastically increased during the pandemic and may be more common practice going forward.

Employers are just as duty bound to offer such employees protection against hearing damage in accordance with the Control of Noise at Work Regulations (2005) as they are to other noise-exposed employees in industrial environments. So how should the noise exposure of these wearers be assessed against the legislative requirements?

You can find the full article [CLICK HERE](#)

Listen up! Let's make a noise about NOISE!!

A series of webinars in association with the British Occupational Hygiene Society

Over the past few months, we have teamed up with the British Occupational Hygiene Society - the Chartered Society for Worker Health Protection – to put on a series of webinars on important topics around noise exposure, health impact and noise management. We were privileged to be joined by numerous experts and authorities on their subject matter. Here we review the key messages from each and provide a link to the [original content](#).

Part 1: Management of Noise Control

For the first in the series we were treated to a special showing of two of the industry's icons regarding managing noise in the workplace and controlling noise through many options. This pair consisted of Chris Steel from the HSE and Peter Wilson from INVC. This partnership was a great way to kick off the series and we were not disappointed.

Chris kicked off the session providing a unique look at what he and the HSE have been seeing recently and the concerns they have around some gaps in managing noise in the workplace. The best way to do this was using 3 C's, Control, Competency and Credible data.

To watch the webinar [CLICK HERE](#)
Find a full report [CLICK HERE](#)

Guidance from the UKHCA on procuring consultancy service for noise can be found here: [Be a Smart Buyer when it comes to Noise Consultancy Services | Hearing Conservation](#)

Part 2: Hearing Health Surveillance, new ideas and fresh approaches

In this webinar, we heard from Alex Wilson who provided us with an introduction to the work of the UKHCA. Clare Forshaw discussed the goal of hearing health surveillance and what the pitfalls are and limitations to be aware of.

Tom Parker of WorkScreen shared information on a method for hearing screening tests to facilitate fast and convenient workplace testing.

Rob Shepherd a Consultant Audiologist discussed the role of Otoacoustic Emissions (OAEs) in hearing health surveillance.

To watch the webinar [CLICK HERE](#)
Find a full report [CLICK HERE](#)

Part 3: The impact of acoustic design on people's health & wellbeing

The third in the series was from Andrea Harman of Ecophon. The presentation explored how we can plan to improve internal sound environments by considering the needs of the people using it, the activity taking place within the environment and the space itself.

Andrea described the 5 factors shown to be essential for users to report a space as a 'good environment', and the same factors we are most likely to complain about if they are not right!

Lighting, Air Temperature, Acoustics, Air quality, Ergonomics.

We can see that Acoustics is one of the important issues we look for in a good work or living space. However, design can often only focus on purely the visual aesthetic or reflect the functional needs of the space – missing the opportunity to consider a user's comfort and experience within that space.

To watch the webinar [CLICK HERE](#)
Find a full report [CLICK HERE](#)

Part 4: Is your hearing protection protecting

In the fourth of the series we heard from Emma Shanks, Senior Noise & Vibration Scientist at HSE and Mark Ashmore Director at Audiology Online

The session provided information on the following key themes;

- Hearing health – the impact it has, ignoring the impact or its effects
- Hearing Protection & Regulations – Control of Noise at Work, BS EN 352 – product safety standard and PPE regulations
- Hearing protection and the numbers on the packaging – how the HML, SNR and APV numbers are calculated from data. The fact that these are lab-based information and subsequently HSE and other governing bodies provide a derating figure for employers in order to better reflect real life use
- HP real life performance – Can use at ear measurements to give a personal attenuation rating (PAR) as can't apply SNR to individuals as this is a group-based number. PAR can also help educate with fit. No UK or European standards or legal requirement for this as of yet.
- Factors for consideration – noise exposure is noise level AND time exposed, the implications of the logarithmic scale of noise and also a person's own hearing ability

- Selecting Hearing Protection – need to consider over protection, under protection and comfort issues. But the HSE noise calculator can be a good place to start [HSE - Noise: Exposure Calculator](#)

Find the webinar [CLICK HERE](#)

Part 5: Reproduced Sound in Industrial and Office Environments

In the last of this series we heard from Stephen Wheatley, of the UKHCA and LimitEar/HearAngel Ltd who provided an initial update on the activities of the World Health Organisation Make Listening Safe Campaign and provided a look at the possible risks to hearing for those who use headphones for work or at work.

Reproduced Sound refers to sound which is 'reproduced' by the speakers of a headphone or headset as distinct from acoustic sound which is the un-processed sound reaching the users ears.

In exploring the difference between using headphones for work versus using headphones at work; Stephen explained that due to the nature of their occupation some employees are unable to do their job without wearing headphones so have to use headphones for work.

In numerous work settings, in open plan offices for example, the use of headphones is permitted by the employer. The employee does not require the headphones for their work but are permitted to use them at work.

In both cases the Noise at Work Regulations 2005 are applicable, and the employees sound dose exposure must not exceed the limits specified.

To watch the webinar [CLICK HERE](#)
Find a full report [CLICK HERE](#)

New Guidance from the UKHCA for the Construction Industry

Construction is one of the highest risk industries for noise exposure. It can seem too difficult a problem to tackle – with a changing landscape of noise sources, combinations of impact and continuous noises and a changing environment in which the noise is transmitted. However, there are things that can be done and those working in construction should also beware of some 'pitfalls' in noise management which can distract from good control and waste time and money.

To help support those in construction to tackle noise the UKHCA have produced a series of frequently asked questions. This guidance covers; How to tackle noise in construction, measuring noise, controlling noise and the use of hearing protection.

Access the UKHCA Construction Noise FAQs [CLICK HERE](#)

Hearing Conservation for Performers

Following our announcement regarding new sector guidance on developing an effective hearing conservation strategy for performers, the authors have now launched a couple of

films to support the documents.

These films provide useful motivational/educational material to promote best practice hearing conservation for musicians, performers and all others who work in the performance:

- [Video Hearing Conservation Guidance for the Performing Arts](#)
- [Video Specialist Support for Performers | Audiologist](#)

The guidelines themselves provide recommendations on best practice, cost effective health conservation strategies to educational institutions, students, performers, teachers, managers and venues on appropriate hearing conservation in a music-rich environment.

These guidelines are intended to assist managers develop and implement health conservation strategies in educational institutions but is expected to be of interest to the wider industry

To read the guidelines [CLICK HERE](#)

If you feel you have a news story, innovative ideas or a challenge for others around hearing conservation and preventable causes of hearing health harm please contact us. We are driving forward work through our 4 Special Interest Groups - Hearing Conservation; At Work, At Leisure, Through Education of Young People and in Music and Entertainment.

The UK Hearing Conservation Association

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Sent by Fitwise Management Ltd on behalf of the UKHCA.

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