



hearingconservation.org.uk



September 2021

Welcome

Welcome to the September edition of the UKHCA Newsletter.

We are pleased to say that our Special Interest Groups (SIGs) are now in full swing and already making great progress – with sincere thanks to all the volunteer members and Chairs for their efforts and inspiration here.



In this edition we will update you on the key areas for action and outputs from the SIGs. We also have an update from HSE and the WHO as well as recent research and new initiatives to support.

As ever we welcome support for our SIGs from current members and those looking to join our Association. We also welcome feedback on our work and are always appreciative of articles or news stories for future editions. Please contact us with any thoughts or feedback at enquiries@hearingconservation.org.uk

Turning our Ambitions into Action!



Our Special Interest Groups are now in full swing with many of our members being actively involved in progressing ambitions and ideas in the field of Hearing Conservation. A summary of the current priorities for each group is provided below.

GET INVOLVED. Any questions on the work of the groups or getting involved contact; clare.forshaw@hearingconservation.org.uk.

'At Work' SIG

Chaired by Leah Philpott of Tameside Council.

This group are already making great progress developing guidance and a position statement on Fit Testing for hearing protection. Although the UKHCA priority is to prevent exposure and shift dutyholders away from reliance on hearing protection – the UKHCA believe that there should be parity in expectations and subsequent guidance to regulations for health risks. Where there is reliance on respiratory protective devices, the regulatory position is that these should be fit tested to ensure reported protection factors can actually be achieved in practice; based on a comprehensive and competent fit testing programme. The UKHCA strongly believe that standards for implementing a hearing protection (HP) programme should also be subject to equivalent and relevant standards, particularly as there is a predominant reliance on HP for protection across many workplaces and sectors.

Other priorities for this group include;

- Reporting and data collection for hearing health impact – in order to truly reflect the scale of the problem and subsequently raise the profile and engagement on improved action on hearing conservation
- Competency of noise consultants – to improve accessibility to competent support in hearing conservation and transparency of what competency looks like.
- Improving information on Ototoxicity (chemicals or agents which either act alone or synergistically to affect hearing health in the workplace)

'At Leisure' SIG

Chaired by Stephen Wheatley of LimitEar/HearAngel

This group are focussed on supporting implementation and piloting of the WHO Make Safe Listening campaign (WHO). With the popularization of technology, devices such as music players are often listened to at unsafe volumes and for prolonged periods of time. This can be a particular health concern for young people. The campaign is looking to promote its messages primarily to 10 to 40 year olds and instigate motivation for change through a global marketing campaign which will be piloted in the UK in 2022.

The group are also advocating support for a Safe Listening Alliance 'kite mark' standard to be displayed on the packaging of products which comply with ITU and WHO standard H.870, 'Guidelines for safe listening devices/systems' (2018). The standard requires Personal Audio Systems to have hearing safeguarding features which inform the user of their sound dose exposure levels from headphones compared to the WHO safe listening recommendations and automatic protection for vulnerable people (children). The features include a monitoring and warning function that sets the Weekly Sound Dose at the equivalent of 80dBA for 40 hours/week or 1.6 Pa²h as a standard safety level. For those companies that implement these monitoring features the group feel this should be highlighted so that consumers are able to make informed choices related to their hearing health.

dB(A) SPL	Weekly (1,6 Pa ² h)
107	4.5 minutes
104	9.5 minutes
101	18,8 minutes
98	37,5 minutes
95	75 minutes
92	2,5 hours
89	5 hours
86	10 hours
83	20 hours
80	40 hours

Tabel 1 - ITU-WHO Weekly safe listening time - energy equivalence principle

***In Music & Entertainment
Chaired by Rob Shephard Consultant Audiologist***

This group are primarily focussed on delivering the upcoming 'Hear For Tomorrow' Event to be held on the 30th March 2022 at the Royal Academy of Engineering, Carlton House, London. This promises to be a ground breaking event for the music and entertainment sector looking at current evidence of hearing health harm, new standards for prevention and intervention and facilitating discussions for next steps and collaborations. The event will close with musical performances and technical demonstrations – an event not to be missed for those involved in creating and managing music and entertainment venues and performances. You can find the agenda and register for the event [here](#).

The group will also be collating good control practice examples and case studies to populate the website and add to the original 'Sound Advice' guidance from 2008.

***Hearing checks and health surveillance SIG
Chaired by Michelle Twigg of Aggregate Industries***

The group will be looking at the research and evidence base for hearing checks to explore the opportunity to improve the quality and relevance of any occupational or public hearing health testing programme.

An ambition is to make a suggested improvement to the current approach to health surveillance through a tiered approach of initial screening, followed by more in depth testing and diagnosis as required. This would be more in line with other occupational health risk surveillance programmes.

The group also want to raise awareness on the importance and relevance of regular hearing health checks. This includes promoting improved access to such checks, like we do for our eyesight, and better feedback of results.

The Military SIG are yet to meet but could possibly look at exposure levels and prioritising efforts of noise exposure management. The military are also a potential source of data for exploring and evidencing the hearing health of young people, before occupational exposure, through recruitment health checks. There is evidence from other countries of the impact of increased listening levels and habits for young persons but little UK based science on this.



The next US NHCA Annual Conference will be a Virtual Conference program 10-12 Feb, 2022!

Our decision to “go virtual” is advantageous to our international colleagues in UKHCA – no travel or lodging costs and no passports of any kind required!

Program and registration information will be available in early Oct. Stay tuned at www.hearingconservation.org

Find Your Quiet Place Challenge – October 2021



The UKHCA are excited to partner with SoundPrint, in their ambition to raise awareness of hearing health and share information on quieter social spaces and venues. To do this the FYQP challenge want people to download the [SoundPrint App](#) and use the decibel meter to take sound measurements wherever you go and submit to the apps database.

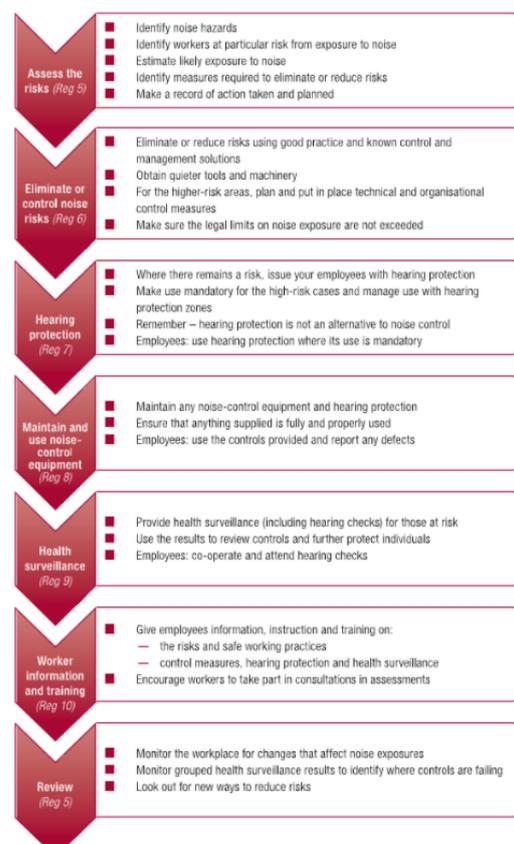
Contributions from the Challenge will enable SoundPrint to advocate for safe noise levels, help local communities to find quieter places, and protect the public’s hearing health. It’s fun, easy, and prizes will be awarded! You can find more details on their [website](#) or email SoundPrint at challenge@soundprint.co

Hearing Screening Handbook from WHO



This WHO has produced a new handbook; [HEARING screening: considerations for implementation](#). This document provides technical guidance for establishing evidence-based programs for hearing screening in different target age-groups and aims to facilitate early interventions for ear diseases and hearing loss in newborns and infants, schoolchildren, and adults. The WHO continue to look for feedback on the types of ear and hearing screening programs that exist in different regions and want to understand how accessible these are. You can access their survey on this [here](#)

Update to the HSE Guidance on the Control of Noise at Work Regulations (L108)



The HSE have now published the update to their [guidance](#) on the Control of Noise at work Regulations 2015. The key changes and updates include;

- An update of references to ISO standards, other guidance and regulations that may have changed since the original version
- A re-arranged structure so that it flows better, including the above chart which explains the regulations and the key elements of the guide related to each
- Some new images on control methods, to reflect up to date workplaces and controls
- improved explanation on how the noise ready reckoner works and the how to use the new noise calculators
- additional information on electronic hearing protection to reflect increasing interest and uptake of these devices
- a new figure outlining how health surveillance should work for those with hearing loss and comments clarifying what HSE expect when employers put health surveillance in place

The BTA Virtual Conference 4-8th October 2021

The British Tinnitus Association are pleased to announce this year's virtual conference. Each day of the conference presents a different theme including the psychology of tinnitus, practical skills, and the latest in tinnitus research. You can view the agenda & book your place [here](#)

The Economic Burden of Occupational Hearing Loss

A recent study from Australia explored the economic burden of Occupational NIHL in the Australian working population. Occupational noise-induced hearing loss (ONIH) is one of the most common yet preventable occupational diseases. The study estimated that over 80,000 male workers and over 31,000 female workers would develop ONIH over 10 years of exposure. The estimated projected loss related to quality of life and productivity equated to AUD 5.5 billion and AUD 21.3 billion (equivalent to nearly £3 billion and £11.3 billion).

[Productivity Burden of Occupational Noise-Induced Hearing Loss in Australia: A Life Table Modelling Study](#)

Has Social Distancing for COVID 19 Affected Personal Noise Exposure?

The COVID-19 pandemic created substantial disruptions in society, the economy and personal behaviour. A US study looked to explore changes in personal sound exposures resulting from COVID-19-related social distancing. Volunteer participants opted to share environmental sound data from their Apple Watch and headphone sound data from their iPhone. The study reported that COVID-19 social distancing measures in 4 US states were associated with an approximately 3 dBA reduction in personal environmental sound exposures. This represents a substantial and health-relevant reduction in exposure. A 3 dBA reduction in average sound levels over 70 dBA LEX8h is associated with a lower risk of noise-induced hearing loss. Given that the negative impacts of sound on ischemic heart disease, hypertension, and cognitive performance appear to occur at levels well below 70 dBA LEX8h [3], the COVID-related reduction in sound exposures among study participants

likely represents a meaningful reduction in overall risk of sound-related health effects.

[Impacts of COVID-19-related social distancing measures on personal environmental sound exposures](#)

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 Special Interest Groups.

The UK Hearing Conservation Association

Email: enquiries@hearingconservation.org.uk | Website: <http://hearingconservation.org.uk>