



hearingconservation.org.uk



June 2022

Welcome

Welcome to the Summer edition of the UKHCA Newsletter.

We hope you enjoy this edition of the newsletter and as always, we 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

Hidden Noise: Not everyone hears it (but the duty of care remains!)

Most hazardous noise scenarios are obvious to the observer/listener, as you enter a workplace and you can hear what the employees are exposed to from particular processes or activities.

But what if you entered a building where employees were at sometimes even greater risk, but you couldn't hear it or obviously identify this?

“Hidden Noise is potentially damaging noise that cannot be easily detected, monitored or controlled because the noise exposure - or the workers themselves - are not evident to a responsible third party.”

Hidden Noise is also unlikely to stop when you leave work, challenging the 8hr model of daily exposure.

Increasingly there are hidden noise scenarios in the workplace. Consider all the people employed in the creative industries; broadcast TV, radio, music podcasts, film, advertising etc. They would generally not be considered as working in noisy work environments, but without supervision they could, and often are, experiencing significant sound doses, well above those specified in the Control of Noise at Work Regulations. Compared to the 1.1 million estimated to be exposed to harmful noise at work there are 29.9 million Britons that work in sectors not traditionally classed as 'noisy' industries.

In addition to work related tasks many employees in open plan offices tend to use headphones to aid their concentration or drown out background noise, who knows what their exposure levels might be. The HR Director estimated in 2014 that around a quarter of the UK workforce use headphones at work for work related and sometimes non work-related tasks. It would be interesting to see how this has changed post COVID with more

people working from home and taking part in video calls and webinars.

The challenge with 'hidden noise' is that it is difficult – by definition – to currently quantify how many people are exposed.

Read more about thoughts on hidden noise in the article [here](#)

Do you want a picture of your brain?

Nottingham University are looking for volunteers to help in their study; trying to work out if we can see the consequences of a person's past exposure to noise in MRI scans of their brain and nerves. If you participate in the study, you will be paid an inconvenience allowance of £10 per hour, and you will also be reimbursed up to £15 per appointment for your travel costs.

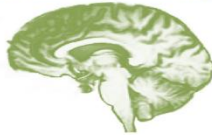
You need to be between 30 and 50 years of age and have had noise exposure and/or suspected noise-induced hearing loss. If you can help or volunteer please contact Rebecca Dewey (email below)



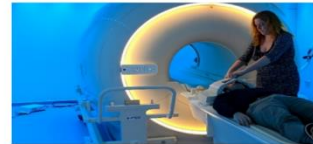
University of Nottingham
Sir Peter Mansfield Imaging Centre

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**DO YOU
WANT A PICTURE
OF YOUR BRAIN?**



We are looking for healthy individuals (30 – 50 years) who have had noise exposure or who have hearing loss or difficulty hearing in noisy environments to take part in a research project on the effects of noise exposure on the brain

We will ask you to attend two sessions in Nottingham (one 3 hours, one 1.5 hours)

Please contact rebecca.dewey@nottingham.ac.uk for more info

Hear for Tomorrow!



On the 30th March 2022 the Royal Academy of Engineering hosted the 103 week delayed Hear for Tomorrow event! The event was jointly organised between the Institute of Acoustics and the UK Hearing Conservation Association with support from the UK Acoustics Network (UKAN).

Feedback has been very positive, and we hope the issues discussed and ideas shared will feed into our Music and Entertainment SIG to really make progress in this area. You can find out more about the event and the talks and contributions [here](#).

If you are interested in our Music and Entertainment Special Interest Group please contact us at; enquiries@hearingconservation.org.uk

Membership & A Members Directory



It was the UKHCA's 3rd anniversary in March – which has seen our second year of growth in membership! There are so many fantastic, passionate advocates for hearing health protection out there and we are proud to welcome your knowledge, expertise and support! 3 new members this month include;

- [Lam ear](#) who offer tailor made audiology solutions to individuals and medical professionals.
- [Eargym](#) a digital hearing fitness platform offering fun and immersive hearing training games designed to improve hearing skills.
- And [Lios](#) who provide a sound therapy app to alleviate tinnitus. The app combines sound therapy and tinnitus tracking features to help you treat and manage your tinnitus from the comfort of your own home. You can see there announcement on joining us here; [Lios Joins the UKHCA — SoundRelief by Lios \(sound-relief.com\)](#)

In order to support our members and to serve those looking to the UKHCA for solutions and progress in their hearing conservation journey **the UKHCA is considering developing a member's directory**. If you have any questions or comments on this – or views on how this could be progressed please contact clare.forshaw@parkhs.co.uk

Listen Up Conference 2022 – exhibition space is filling up!!



Our exciting conference programme is now taking shape as we continue to confirm both UK and international speakers and experts. The event promises to be a game changer in the UK for hearing conservation as we collaborate and learn from our counterparts in the US and look to make some special announcements on the day!

We are extremely grateful and proud to welcome our sponsors and exhibitor so far! RVT group have secured one of our main sponsorship opportunities and to date we are pleased to welcome Amplivox Ltd, Casella, Mineundo, Shawcity Limited, RVT Group, Saint-Gobain

Ecophon, and Honeywell Safety Products UK Ltd as confirmed exhibitors. We have registered interest from 8 others – so if you think you should be there to share your knowledge, services and products with attendees looking for support in their hearing conservation journey then please contact Catriona.Rice@fitwise.co.uk to make sure you don't miss out!

You can catch up on the event announcements, see our supporters and register to attend here; [UKHCA Conference \(eventsair.com\)](https://www.ukhca.org.uk/conference)

The Rise of Hearables!!

We are all familiar with wearable technology as part of our daily lives - those devices that track biometric data from heart rate to sleep patterns. We also know these devices are becoming popular in occupational health & safety such as those that track fatigue through eye movements or vibration exposure through hand or wrist mounted products.

However, a new area of interest and possible concern for our association is the rise of 'hearables' as a new development of in-ear wearable devices. A 'hearable' is a **wireless in-ear computational earpiece**. Essentially it is a microcomputer that fits in your ear canal and uses wireless technology to supplement and enhance your listening experience but can often also feature additional biometric data collection such as heart rate monitoring.

Many companies are exploring the opportunities in the space of hearable technology with the more traditional headphone companies looking at the biometric offer, whilst hearing aid companies are looking to ensure their already functioning technology syncs perfectly with your smartphone for even more user control.

So what could be the future of in ear technology and what kind of tech could our ears be subjected to.....

- **Monitoring** of vital signs. Instant measures of things like: heart rate, body temperature, blood pressure, [pulse oximetry](#), ECG and more.
- **Activity tracking**. This could range from a pedometer to improved calorific output based on movements.
- **Biometric personal identification**. [NEC recently announced](#) a technology that utilises sound waves to acoustically recognize and identify a person based on the size and shape of their ear.
- **Invisibility**. While the stigma of wearing hearing aids is decreasing (which is a really good thing) manufacturers are still striving to create technology that is as unobtrusive as possible.
- **Improved sound quality**. A large part of sound quality has very little to do with the sound output from your device, and more to do with sound filtering. Combined [headphone and hearing aid technologies](#) may allow for this.
- **Augmented hearing**. Companies like Doppler Labs are working on technology that will not only aid hearing, but also improve it above normal levels
- **Seamless syncing**. Sync your hearables to your iPhone, or smart home devices.
- **Translation**. Can a hearable perform live translation of a foreign language to your native language? This [Pilot](#) is looking at the potential.
- **Layered listening**. Think of this as augmented reality for the ears. This technology would allow users to filter out or enhance specific sounds.

Hearable technology obviously has great potential for those with hearing loss and I'm sure will aid in reducing stigma as we become comfortable across society in wearing in ear devices that add benefit to our lives.

However, increased use of in ear sound producing or enhancing technology must also carry with it a risk of hearing health damage, aggravation of tinnitus or hyperacusis, stress or distraction?? How can we work with this technology to raise awareness of health whilst utilising innovation for our messaging? How can we prevent sleep walking into a generation

of tech that undermines our cause?

Any thoughts or contacts for the association to collaborate with please get in touch at enquiries@hearingconservation.org.uk

NHCA International Symposium on Hearing Protector Fit testing

NHCA is planning an International Symposium on Hearing Protector Fit Testing in Dallas, Texas, August of 2023.

The goal is to accelerate implementation of hearing protection fit testing into effective hearing conservation programs.



Employers, policy makers, researchers, manufacturers, and others will share current science and uses for hearing protector fit testing. Objectives include:

1. Increase knowledge regarding the evidence-based use of hearing protector fit testing.
2. Identify supports and barriers to fit testing implementation in occupational settings and develop solutions for overcoming barriers.
3. Advance hearing protector fit testing as the rule in hearing loss prevention programs.

To make a difference in the future of protecting hearing in the workplace and beyond, contact Pam Graydon at 513-533-8582 or nhcaoffice@hearingconservation.org.

The NHCA are now also accepting abstract submissions for the 2023 Annual Conference, in Jacksonville, FL, Feb 9-11, 2023. It would be great to see lots of our UKHCA represented out there! [Call for Papers for National Hearing Conservation Association - 2023 NHCA Annual Conference \(eventpower.com\)](#)

Action on Site Health Summit 2022



Senior construction industry professionals gathered in person, to attend the Action on Site Health Summit on the 12th of April at BMA House in London. Hosted by RVT Group, the event was supported by the UKHCA. Speakers and attendees all arrived with a common goal; to discuss the steps the industry can – and must - take to better protect the health of those who work on construction sites.

As part of the session on noise exposure attendees were asked to wear earplugs whilst discussing what they thought was the noisiest site activities; an interactive activity designed to help people understand what it might be like to suffer from hearing loss. The host went on to explain the hierarchy of control, work exposure limits and explained how noise can be effectively controlled to prevent hearing loss.

You can find out more about the event here; [Action on Site Health Summit at BMA House | RVT Group](#)

The UKHCA have also produced a series of frequently asked questions around construction noise and hearing conservation here; [UKHCA-Construction-Noise-FAQs.pdf \(hearingconservation.org.uk\)](#)

Make sure you follow us on LinkedIn!!

The UKHCA LinkedIn page now has over 100 followers.

Make sure you keep up to date with us and show us your support!!

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/uk-hearing-conservation-association>

THANK YOU
100
FOLLOWERS



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>

Sent by Fitwise Management Ltd on behalf of the UKHCA. Fitwise Management Ltd. Blackburn House, Redhouse Road, Seafield, West Lothian, EH47 7AQ. Co. registration number SC247380