



NEWS, VIEWS AND UPDATES...

Hearingconservation.org.uk



Welcome

Welcome to the Winter edition of the UKHCA Newsletter.

We would like to take the opportunity to thank you all for your support in 2022 and wish you a peaceful and restful Christmas period – ready to grow stronger in our cause in 2023!!



As always, we welcome your contributions and feedback on our work. Please contact us with any thoughts or feedback at enquiries@hearingconservation.org.uk



Listen Up!

The UKHCA successfully delivered their first conference on the 3rd November at the Pendulum Hotel in Manchester. With 83 delegates in total, and 14 excellent exhibitors the day went off with a great buzz and optimism for the future.

All attendees who responded to our survey rated the conference very good (62.5%) or good (33.5%) and 80% found the programme content 'excellent'.

We recognise we have a lot to learn as the afternoon sessions ran over which was unfortunate. Many said they would take the learning from the conference back to their organisation and we received great support for another event next year. So, watch this space for a save the date and get thinking about topics you can share with your peers – you may get some ideas from this newsletter. Thanks again for all your support – together we will make a difference in preserving and promoting the protection of our nation's hearing health!!



Conference Report by Leah Philpott, Health and Safety Officer, Engineering, Stalybridge, Tameside.

The much-anticipated UK Hearing Conservation Association (UKHCA) conference “Listen Up 2022” was introduced by Clare Forshaw, Founder and Director, and endorsed by the National Hearing Conservation Association (NHCA) as its US-based international equivalent which inspired this movement.

The day was an opportunity to learn about research and development for hearing health conservation across a range of multi-disciplinary industries, including the Special Interest Groups (SIGs) the UKHCA draws on for its members. Around 80 delegates attended from the UK and overseas, including regulatory bodies, health and safety generalists, occupational hygienists, operational management, clinical professionals, academics/scientists, designers and all-around hearing health gurus who descended to provide hot-off-the-press information to assist those with responsibility to control noise in the workplace. Read more [here](#)



Reflections on the Conference by Neal Hill One Plus one Consulting Ltd

My call to action was a vision to eradicate noise from military operations. How? Through the application of the hierarchy of controls meaning drones, UAVS and robots, wheeled electric vehicles rather than heavy diesel powered tracked, silenced weapons and of course PPE – all without compromising the military capabilities of lethality, sustainability, interoperability, C4I and survivability. PPE in the form of a communication headset is the current paradigm for vehicle crew and mechanised/dismounted infantry and they deserve the best that technology can offer. We don't want them having to make the choice of *better deaf than dead!* Read Neals full article [here](#)



International Hearing Protector Fit-Testing Symposium - Dallas, Texas, August 18-19, 2023

The National Hearing Conservation Association is inviting you to join us for the inaugural International Hearing Protector Fit-Testing Symposium in Dallas, Texas, August 18-19, 2023.

The goal of the symposium is to accelerate the implementation of hearing protector fit-testing into effective hearing conservation programs. Employers, policymakers, researchers, manufacturers, and others will share current science and uses for hearing protector fit testing.

Objectives include:

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

Space is limited so budget now! To learn more about available sponsorship & exhibiting opportunities and how you can be a part of this exciting program, please reach out to: nhcaoffice@hearingconservation.org.

The Sound of the Year Awards 2022



Submissions are now open for the Sound of the Year Awards 2022, which returns for its third year, presented by The Radiophonic Institute and The Museum of Sound. From the everyday sounds that encapsulate the events of the past twelve months, to the year's most innovative and creative sound technology, SOTYA celebrates sound in all its forms and from all corners of the world. Judged by a panel of leading lights from the international sound community, the winner of each category will receive a pair of basicUcho microphones - a set of phantom-powered, high-quality omni-directional electret microphones, courtesy of LOM.

The UKHCA is proud to support the category of 'Most Unpleasant Sound' We think many of you will have recognised or experienced some awful, invasive or annoying sound over the year so get recording and entering!! Other category partners include The British Library, Natural History Museum, Quiet Mark, Accidental, the Southbank Centre's National Poetry Library, and Sound On Sound.

All submissions must have been recorded, heard, created, or released between 1st Jan - 31st Dec 2022 and you can make as many submissions as you like. An awards ceremony will be held at The British Library in Spring 2023. Find out more and make your submission here; [Sound of the Year Awards](#)

Link Between Falls and Hearing Loss:
Michele DiStefano, Audiologist



Research now clearly shows that untreated hearing loss in adults is associated with an increased risk of falls. The data, in fact, suggests a 3-times greater risk of falling if you have an untreated hearing loss, as compared to your counterparts.

A major reason for this is that your balance system is within your inner ear. So, if there is any loss or damage to the inner ear, it's going to affect your balance. Your balance and hearing also share a common nerve pathway to the brain. You might feel slightly unsteady, or you might experience vertigo or dizziness. Any of these issues can contribute to falls.

Here are other factors that can play a role:

- Spatial Awareness - We need input from our vision and hearing to help us know where we are in a given space and setting. If you're not getting good input auditorily and you're not able to really judge where you are in space, your risk of falling can increase.
- Navigating Safely - We also need input from surrounding sounds to navigate whatever setting we're in safely. If you can't hear that someone's walking up behind you, or you're not aware of a bicycle coming alongside you, you're at a greater risk of falling. Your brain uses those auditory cues to navigate the world around you.
- Working Harder to Hear - Untreated hearing loss requires our brains to work harder at trying to hear. That means much of the mental energy that would otherwise go towards helping us understand where we are in space is instead working in overdrive to help us hear. That increases our risk of falling, much like when we are tired or fatigued.

Hearing loss is associated with other health issues and medical conditions in adults, such as Diabetes, Heart Disease or Circulation Issues, Cognitive Decline and Dementia and Social Isolation and Depression. More reasons to look after your hearing and get your hearing checked. Read the full article here; [Audiologist Michele DiStefano on Link Between Falls & Hearing Loss \(chchearing.org\)](#)

Health and Safety Executive



Health Surveillance

The UKHCA are working closely with the Society of Occupational Medicine to provide clarity and further guidance to the HSE guidance on health surveillance for noise exposed workers.

The HSE recently changed the guidance to the Regulations to include another column in the categorisation scheme to require practitioners to *look for NIHL on the audiogram*. Also qualifying that if NIHL is or may be present on the audiogram then the worker cannot be category 1. If newly identified or progressive NIHL is found the individual will be moved to category 3 and this requires 'referral for medical assessment by an appropriately trained doctor, eg occupational physician.'

RIDDOR

The UKHCA have previously asked a question in parliament regarding the RIDDOR regulations and the possible inclusion of NIHL. More recently we asked HSE about the review of RIDDOR and we received this response; 'in relation to the current Post Implementation Review (PIR) of RIDDOR 2013 and Noise Induced Hearing Loss (NIHL). HSE is currently undertaking the review and part of that process includes the current list of occupational diseases. The review in particular will consider both the diseases which are currently reportable and those which may be of interest to HSE but are not on the current list. Noise Induced Hearing Loss has been included in this process and the final PIR report will be published by the 1st October 2023. It should be noted that recommendations made by the review could be limited and not all the topics considered would be included in the final report.'

We will keep members updated.

Useful Links / Articles



Musician's Podcast

Music Audiologist Frank Wartinger, Au.D., speaks with music creators about their ears, sound, and hearing. [Talking Ears on Apple Podcasts](#)

Listening Habits in adolescents and young adults

A new systematic review highlights the prevalence and global estimates of unsafe listening practices in adolescents and young adults [bmjgh010501.pdf \(psprings.co.uk\)](#)

Workscreen have published a recent blog on hearing health surveillance; [Albert Einstein's Approach to Hearing Care - WorkScreen \(workscreenuk.co.uk\)](#)

If you have anything you wish to include in future newsletters please contact enquiries@hearingconservation.org.uk

The UK Hearing Conservation Association

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