

## **A Simple Guide for Managing Entertainment Noise & Noise Management Plan**

This advice information is intended to provide a simple, non-technical guide for the managers of pubs, clubs and other venues who provide entertainment, such as live music, DJs, karaoke etc., to help manage noise and avoid complaints from neighbours. If you intend to hold a large-scale event or are thinking of installing a sound system to provide regular entertainment you may need to obtain specialist advice, although the advice here will still be relevant.

### **Managing Noise from Events / Licensed premises**

There are three basic concepts to managing noise:

1. Reduce noise at source.
2. Prevent noise escaping.
3. Noise Management.

#### **1. Reduce noise at Source**

- Choose speakers that are right for the premises size, type of venue and the entertainment that you wish to provide. For smaller venues or outside areas it is often better to have more, lower-power speakers positioned and directed into the entertainment area to achieve the best result for the audience and noise control, rather than one or two powerful speakers at one end.
- Ensure the bass level are minimised and not excessively heard over main music. Bass sound will carry over distance and through walls easier and cause greater disturbance. Sound checks from inside and outside of premises boundary will be required to suitably assess bass levels.
- PA systems and Karaoke – Carryout sound checks to ensure vocals are not excessively louder than music levels. Clearly audible vocal / announcement noise can cause greater annoyance than just music noise and leads to complaints quicker.
- Turn general volume down to a reasonable level e.g. identify acceptable noise levels to set on your sound system, so music and bass is not clearly audible in neighbouring residential areas compared to the general noise in the area. (This may require changes over the evening and into the night).

#### **2. Prevent noise escaping from Premises**

- Choose suitably located entertainment areas e.g. inside premises or away from neighbouring premises or in walled / fenced enclosed areas.
- Position speakers so they are directed away from windows, doors and other openings and don't mount directly on walls or other parts of the structure – use proper mounting-stands wherever possible.
- Close doors and windows to the event area / premise after 23:00 or during amplified music events. This can significantly reduce noise breakout.
- Look for acoustically weak areas in the structure: usually windows, doors, vents, roof and other openings, especially ones that open on to residential properties. For regular entertainment sites you may need to improve the sound attenuation of these areas – specialist advice is recommended to ensure money is spent wisely.

### 3. Noise Management

- Ensure appropriate Bands, Acts and DJ's are hired / work for the venue. Some will try to insist on playing at their preferred volume rather than the appropriate volume for the venue. Larger bands and speakers (if Acts bring their own sound system) are likely to be loud. Consider restricting performances to only using venues sound system and could install noise limiter devices. Ensure a good line of communication with regards to expected volume level and finish times are established prior to event starting. Plan the playing of more gentle tracks at the end of the performance as this can help with reducing volume, calm the mood and mean patrons will be less noisy as they leave.
- Make appropriate performance content checks and provide clear guidelines to the performers at the time of booking. Please note if Acts have adult content or swearing this is very likely to cause offence and distress to locals in the area if it is audible outside the venue.
- Number and duration of noisy events have a significant impact on how the noise affects neighbours. Please keep both to a minimum if entertainment noise is audible outside in neighbouring residential properties. Sensitivity and noise impact becomes greater in late evenings, night-time and early mornings, so will cause increased disturbance and distress to neighbours the later it goes.
- During events regularly monitor outside premises in the general vicinity to assess noise levels (entertainment & people noise) and the impact on local residents. Monitor noise to ensure the levels aren't creeping up and excessively loud (including bass levels & vocals) in the neighbourhood and that levels are reducing suitably if going later into the night. Ensure the person monitoring hasn't been desensitised by internal event volume. The purpose of the assessment is to compare event noise against normal background noise levels and audibility/impact in the general area.
- Implement a clear complaints investigation, actions and response procedure.
- Occasional Marquee, outside events or Licensing TENs – Notify neighbours of planned one-off, or occasional events detailing start and finish times and contact details. It is recommended the music and people move inside the main premises or if in an outdoor / marquee area reduce the noise levels later in the evenings after 23:00 (both music and people noise).

#### **Further Noise control Advice**

- **Noise council Guide on Noise from Pop Concerts 1995** (for all types of outdoor events and festivals taking place up to 23:00hrs). This document has been identified as requiring outdating by the IOA. [Code of Practice on Environmental Noise \(lambeth.gov.uk\)](http://www.lambeth.gov.uk)

#### **Other noise guidance – H&S noise at work guidance:**

- HSE Sound advice: Control of noise at work in music and entertainment - [Sound advice \(hse.gov.uk\)](http://www.hse.gov.uk)
- **British Beer & Pub Association Guide: H&S Guidance for Pub and Bar Operators** : web link - [THE NOISE AT WORK REGULATIONS 2005 \(beerandpub.com\)](http://www.beerandpub.com)

#### **Professional Services:**

Association of Noise Consultants: <http://www.association-of-noise-consultants.co.uk/>  
Institute of Acoustics: <http://www.ioa.org.uk/home/default.asp>

### **Example of Key Elements of a Noise Management Plan (NMP)**

**The NMP needs to be site specific and event specific and should include (but not exclusively) the following areas:**

- **Event Details** - Overview of Location, Venue and Event (including times and duration)
- **Premises Details** – Type of premises / structures the event will be taking place in – e.g. open outdoor event, Marquee, enclosed building and its structure in relation to noise breakout.
- **Location** - Identify noise sensitive receptors in the area and understand background noise levels of area - local residents, other noise sources in area and any changes to noise environment over proposed event duration, after 23:00 classed as night-time therefore increasing sensitivity to noise later into the night the event runs.
- **Noise Management Responsibilities** – Detail lines of responsibility for noise management for the event / entertainment activity.
  - Detail person who has overall noise management control – who has the ultimate responsibility to ensure music is turned down when required or stopped at the end of the event time as specified in plan.
  - Details of noise consultants/ appointed suitably qualified and experienced person in noise control.
  - Detail Stage and Environmental noise control hierarchy.
- **Event Noise Sources** - The identification of the range of potential noise sources relating to the premises (including peripheral activities e.g. generators, bottling out, customers leaving event) and the acceptable levels of noise arising from all specified events.
- **Noise Controls** - A detailed list of steps taken to manage noise pollution:-
  - layout, speaker systems, and orientation of speakers,
  - Vetting of artist/ DJ should including consideration of the music genre and the premises structure. For example heavy bass travels further.
  - event programme design; louder music earlier in evening with set time to reduced volume & base later in the evening and specified stop time.
  - Pre-start sound checks to establish acceptable levels - noisy activity controls and maximum noise levels set, inside event and at the external monitoring points etc.
- **Noise Monitoring Procedure** - Detail the noise monitoring procedure to assess noise levels throughout the event, including sound tests.
  - Detail noise monitoring equipment specifications.
  - The identification of environmental noise monitoring locations to effectively monitor environmental noise impact of even on the area.
  - Defined programme of noise measurement to check that compliance has been achieved through monitoring and testing.
  - Detail subjective noise assessment checks to be made by competent person during monitoring and testing.
  - Design and include noise monitoring record form to be completed throughout the event and made available to LA officer if requested.
  - Detail lines of communication and follow-up actions.
  - Documentation to be kept and made available to Local Authority staff on request.

- **Noise Complaints Procedure:** Detail the noise Complaints Procedure, to include
  - Informative letter / notice to local residents and parish councils etc., which should detail event telephone number for complaints, start time and end time of music.
  - Detail actions required to investigate noise complaint.
  - Record of complaints and actions taken; including corrective action and follow-up assessment.
  - Documentation to be kept and made available to Local Authority staff on request.
  
- **Customer noise awareness information:** Procedure to make customers aware of the consequences of late night noise and to be proactive in dealing with the problem. E.g.
  - Notices displayed on exits and verbal announcements prior to dispersal asking customers to leave the premises in a quiet and orderly fashion to show respect to local neighbours

It is recommended the event Noise management plans be made available to the Environmental Health Protection Team at the event management stage / prior to start of entertainment activity to detail how the event organisers intend to promote the 'Prevention of Public Nuisance' objective. Through the licensing process a time for submission of this finalised document are usually detailed in the condition.

**Example Noise monitoring form:-**

<b>Event :</b> e.g <i>Hereford Summer event – venue details</i>		
<b>Date:</b> _____ <b>Event Start Time</b> _____ <b>End times:</b> _____		
<b>Nominated Noise manager</b>		<b>Noise Assessor(s)</b>
<b>General weather conditions and area observations for the evening:</b> <i>e.g Warm evening 10°C, partial cloud cover 30%, slight SW breeze, dry. Road traffic from the A499 quite busy and audible in area. Built up city centre location with residential premises within 20m of the venue.</i>		
<b>Date / time &amp; Sound levels</b>	<b>Location details, observations &amp; monitoring Information – change in weather.</b>	<b>Assessor comments &amp; Follow-up action</b>
Date /Time:- <i>01/7/22 18:30 to 18:40</i>  Noise level <i>(if relevant)</i>	Location:- <i>Pavement outside gate of 1 Town Square.</i>  Observations:- <i>Music from event audible, muffled words of song '.....'. No dominant bass detected. Traffic noise more dominant from passing vehicles. Intermittent traffic, so music dominant sound in the area for most of the time. Gulls also heard in area and people talking and walking past.</i>	Actions <i>Sound levels acceptable and although music is audible this is deemed acceptable for this event and time. No concerns identified.</i>  Sign xxxxxxxx
Date /Time:-	Location:-  Observations:-	Actions  Sign
Date /Time:-	Location:-  Observations:-	Actions  Sign