

Noise Management Plans – Guidance Notes

Licensed premises, sites and events should operate in harmony with their neighbours. By their very nature, they often cause disturbance to people living and working nearby and the aim of a Noise Management Plan or Policy (NMP) is to put in place reasonable measures to reduce the noise impact of sources associated with the premises/site/event. Particular attention should be paid to eliminating ‘avoidable’ noise. This guidance identifies some of the issues which should be considered when preparing a NMP although each plan will be premises/site/event specific. The examples given are not exhaustive and do not apply in all circumstances. Although preparation and compliance with a NMP may be a requirement of a premises licence this guidance also applies to events permitted under Temporary Event Notices and for unregulated entertainment. Please note that for large events such as open-air music festivals a comprehensive noise assessment by a qualified noise consultant in accordance with the Noise Council’s Code of Practice ‘Environmental Noise Control at Concerts 1995’ is likely to be required. In these cases, a NMP often forms part of a wider Event Management Plan.

| Guidance of what to include in a Noise Management Plan with examples/comments | |
|---|--|
| Summary of Premises/Site/Event | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dates, times and size of event(s). ▪ What music, where (inside or outside), when and times. ▪ Other activities which could generate noise. For example, gardens, smoking and play areas; people arriving and leaving; traffic routes; campers; mobile catering vehicles; generators; erection and dismantling activities etc. |
| Statement of intent/key objectives (purpose of NMP) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Minimise impact on local residents/prevent public nuisance. ▪ Satisfy Local Authority following a licence agreement/hearing. ▪ Identify noise sources and acceptable noise levels. ▪ Identify steps to manage and control noise. ▪ Define a program to monitor noise. ▪ Respond to complaints and unacceptable noise. |
| Location Plan and Site Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Site boundary and surrounding noise sensitive properties. ▪ Location of different events/activities. ▪ Location of stages and speakers (including orientation). ▪ Location of other noise generating plant/activities. ▪ Noise monitoring points on and off site. |
| Inventory of Noise Sources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gardens, smoking and play areas – note when they will be used. ▪ Stages – note orientation and shut down times. ▪ All sound systems/speakers – note details of equipment. ▪ Marquees – note when they will be used. ▪ Tents and campers – note arrival/departure times. ▪ Fairground rides – note when they will be used. |

| | |
|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sound checks – note times. ▪ Generators – note locations and when they will be used. ▪ Fireworks – note times. ▪ Impromptu parties (staff and guests) ▪ People arriving and leaving including traffic routes. ▪ Erection and dismantling activities – note dates and times. ▪ Delivery, waste disposal and collections. |
| <p>Noise Controls including noise limits (usually agreed with the Council)</p> | <p>Assess the impact of noise sources and what controls are needed. Pay attention to low frequency/bass noise – it can travel considerable distances causing problems.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evaluate any history and learning points. ▪ Specification and selection of equipment that emit low noise levels. ▪ Keeping doors and windows shut. ▪ Limit times and volume of music/amplified sound. ▪ Use a sound limiter, contact Council to agree levels. ▪ Structural works to buildings to improve sound insulation. ▪ Restrict times gardens, smoking areas and play areas can be used and if they need to be served by external speakers. ▪ Is there a need for music in a marquee which has little sound insulation. ▪ Location, orientation and design of temporary structures and speakers. ▪ Noise limits at side boundary/noise sensitive properties, e.g., ‘residents must be able to use and enjoy their property/garden without being disturbed by excessive noise’ or (for bigger events) a noise level to be achieved, contact Council to agree limits. ▪ Sound checks before an event to comply with noise limits. ▪ Design and location of public address system. ▪ Acoustic enclosures/insulation for generators, chiller units, extract ventilation, waste disposal etc. ▪ Other barriers or screening to control or reduce noise. ▪ Limit times for deliveries, waste disposal and collection. ▪ Limit times for the erection and dismantling of structures such as stages, marquees, tower mixers etc. ▪ Use an external noise management consultant to help plan/monitor event (provide evidence to make sure they are competent to fulfil this role). ▪ Management of impromptu parties (e.g. for guests staying overnight, which are often in the middle of the night). ▪ Use traffic routes with least impact on neighbours. ▪ Management of noisy customers/people leaving an event/venue. |
| <p>Noise monitoring</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proposed monitoring (on and off site) to check compliance with noise limits. ▪ How noise will be monitored and by whom. ▪ What equipment will be used and by whom. ▪ Where and when will monitoring take place. ▪ How and where monitoring results will be logged/recorded. |

| | |
|--|--|
| Communication with the public including a hotline to receive complaints | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How local residents, parish/town councils will be informed about an event. ▪ Which resident will be informed. ▪ Provision of a hot line to receive/respond to complaints of noise during an event. ▪ The need to be sympathetic and listen to complainant's concerns. ▪ How/where complaints/action taken in response will be logged. |
| Action to be taken in the event of complaints or if noise limits are exceeded | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What actions will be taken and by whom. ▪ Timescales to respond to complaints. ▪ Immediate response if noise limits are exceeded. ▪ How/where will actions be logged. |
| Management command and communication structure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Who is responsible for what sources of noise. ▪ How entertainment contractors, facility hirers, mobile caterers etc will be made aware of the NMP and noise limits set/agreed. ▪ What is the chain of command during the event. ▪ Designation of person will full control over sound levels and with authority to require others to comply with the NMP including finish times. |
| Schedule of contact details including person with overall control for sound levels | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Details for people responsible for sound systems. ▪ Details for person with full control over sound levels and authority re NMP. ▪ On site contact details of someone the Council can contact during the event if problems arise. |
| Follow up report/review | <p>Evaluation report within 21 days of the event</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Detail complaints received, results of noise monitoring, any problems that arose and remedial actions taken. ▪ Include: logs completed at the time of the event and noise monitoring results. ▪ Make recommendations for further events/review of the NMP. |
| <p>Note on Timescales – Draft NMP should be submitted to the Council for approval in good time with a final NMP circulated nearer to the event</p> | |

1. Inside Music Noise

Often the bass elements are noticeable outside, close to the premises and inside nearby premises especially if they are attached. Good management control to keep doors and windows closed and control hours and volumes with a cooling-down period (reduced volume) for the last 15 minutes is achievable by the supervisor. Consideration of location of loudspeakers, limiting juke boxes and structural works may require someone with specialist experience bearing in mind that structural works may not be fully effective in reducing bass.

Live music is very difficult to manage, since many musicians bring their own equipment, and it cannot be effectively controlled by the supervisor unless there is a good working relationship. It may be prudent to favour events which minimise impact. Warn neighbours in advance of special events which might have a greater potential for disturbance.

Carry out regular checks at the boundary of the nearest noise sensitive properties, but remember if you have been subject to loud music for an hour or so your hearing will not be as sensitive, and the music level outside can easily be underestimated when you carry out your check. This effect is known as temporary threshold shift.

2. Outside Music Noise

Outside music can very easily cause a nuisance to nearby neighbours. The nuisance potential is closely linked to volume, hours of use and number of times a year. For example, a beer garden with a regular piped music for long periods at weekends or during the week is likely to be a nuisance if it can be heard in a neighbour's garden. On the other hand, an occasional jazz band (for example) for a couple of hours at lunchtime a few times a year (eg Bank Holidays) is much less likely to be a nuisance. Special events such as wedding receptions may need careful planning and thought, including liaison with nearby occupiers.

3. Deliveries, recycling, refuse collection

Deliveries and collections are noisy, e.g., the refrigeration units on delivery vehicles and the changing of barrels, the rattle of bottles, and the noise from refuse collection vehicles. The most effective way of minimising impact is to ensure that they take place at reasonable times on a weekday. Wherever possible locate stores, refrigerators, generators and noise creating equipment away from noise sensitive premises and consider the use of purpose built or soundproofed stores.

4. Smoking shelters

Smoking shelters and the use of external parts for customers to smoke may give rise to disturbance to occupiers of neighbouring premises especially later at night. Carefully consider their location. A smoking shelter may also need planning permission. Similarly external seating and eating areas, either on the premises or on the adjacent street, can cause problems as can the use of metal tables and chairs, particularly if the legs do not have rubber protectors on the feet. Remember that the evening/late night removal of tables and chairs can also give rise to disturbance.

5. Gardens and play areas

Gardens are an important feature of many premises and their use may be difficult to control. Sensible precautions like location, signs and restrictions on the hours of use of play areas may help, as can supervision.

6. Customer and car parks

Customer noise is a difficult matter, people leaving a noisy venue often carry on talking outside at the same volume, and this can be disturbing. A “No drinks outside” policy can reduce the length of time customers stay outside. Customers congregating outside to smoke, use mobiles or try to hold a conversation across the window façade with friends in the venue can cause problems.

Car parks are another area where occasional supervision and checks, especially late at night, may help to prevent loitering, chatting or inconsiderate and noisy driving. Signs that emphasise the need to refrain from shouting, slamming car doors, sounding horns and loud use of vehicle stereos and anti-social behaviour should be considered. A good relationship should be fostered with responsible taxi operators and customers encouraged to contact these operators from inside via app where possible.

7. Complaints

The importance of a sympathetic and polite response to complaints cannot be over emphasised. Many problems can be defused by the right attitude and response. Letting neighbours know that you are willing to meet with them to discuss issues can help maintain relations and assists with neighbour tolerance. Record complaints, contact residents and deal with reasonable issues swiftly where possible, consider liaising with neighbours giving out contact name and number of responsible staff if noise is a problem.

8. Staff training and NMP updates

Increase and maintain staff awareness relating to noise management issues by inclusion in their regular training. When you update the noise management plan, please forward the amended version to the Council’s Licensing Team.

Further information

Employers have a duty under health and safety law to protect their employees from hearing damage caused by excessive noise. DJ’s, bar staff and others working in areas where loud amplified music is played are particularly at risk. If you employ staff who work in a noisy environment, you should assess their level of noise exposure and control excessive noise. This requirement is not related to the Licensing Act and need not form part of your application or operating schedule. Further information concerning this can be found here:

www.hse.gov.uk/noise/

Further advice on Noise Management Plans can be obtained from Torbay Council’s Public Protection Officer by emailing licensing@torbay.gov.uk