

NOISE POLICY STATEMENT

What do the aims of the Noise Policy Statement for England mean?

2.19 There are several key phrases within the NPSE aims and these are discussed below. ***“Significant adverse” and “adverse”***

2.20 There are two established concepts from toxicology that are currently being applied to noise impacts, for example, by the World Health Organisation. They are:

NOEL – No Observed Effect Level

This is the level below which no effect can be detected. In simple terms, below this level, there is no detectable effect on health and quality of life due to the noise.

LOAEL – Lowest Observed Adverse Effect Level

This is the level above which adverse effects on health and quality of life can be detected.

2.21 Extending these concepts for the purpose of this NPSE leads to the concept of a significant observed adverse effect level.

SOAEL – Significant Observed Adverse Effect Level

This is the level above which significant adverse effects on health and quality of life occur.

2.22 It is not possible to have a single objective noise-based measure that defines SOAEL that is applicable to all sources of noise in all situations. Consequently, the SOAEL is likely to be different for different noise sources, for different receptors and at different times. It is acknowledged that further research is required to increase our understanding of what may constitute a significant adverse impact on health and quality of life from noise. However, not having specific SOAEL values in the NPSE provides the necessary policy flexibility until further evidence and suitable guidance is available.

The first aim of the Noise Policy Statement for England

Avoid significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life from environmental, neighbour and neighbourhood noise within the context of Government policy on sustainable development.

2.23 The first aim of the NPSE states that significant adverse effects on health and quality of life should be avoided while also taking into account the guiding principles of sustainable development (paragraph 1.8).

The second aim of the Noise Policy Statement for England

Mitigate and minimise adverse impacts on health and quality of life from environmental, neighbour and neighbourhood noise within the context of Government policy on sustainable development.

2.24 The second aim of the NPSE refers to the situation where the impact lies somewhere between LOAEL and SOAEL. It requires that all reasonable steps should be taken to mitigate and minimise adverse effects on health and quality of life while also taking

into account the guiding principles of sustainable development (paragraph 1.8). This does not mean that such adverse effects cannot occur.

The third aim of the Noise Policy Statement for England

Where possible, contribute to the improvement of health and quality of life through the effective management and control of environmental, neighbour and neighbourhood noise within the context of Government policy on sustainable development.

- 2.25 This aim seeks, where possible, positively to improve health and quality of life through the pro-active management of noise while also taking into account the guiding principles of sustainable development (paragraph 1.8), recognising that there will be opportunities for such measures to be taken and that they will deliver potential benefits to society. The protection of quiet places and quiet times as well as the enhancement of the acoustic environment will assist with delivering this aim.