



Noise Action Plans

1. Why Noise Action Plans?

The EU Environmental Noise Directive 2002/49/EC (END) sets out to avoid, prevent or reduce on a prioritised basis the harmful effects, including annoyance, due to exposure to *environmental*¹ noise.

It *does not* cover domestic/neighbour noise, noise at work, noise inside means of transport or military noise.

A programme for action is set out², including determination of noise exposure by member states (noise mapping), informing the public about environmental noise and its effects and adopting action plans, based on noise mapping results, to prevent and reduce noise where necessary - prioritising the prevention of noise that is harmful to human health and preservation of areas where environmental noise quality is good.

2. What is a Noise Action Plan?

Under the END:

- A noise action plan sets out a procedure designed to manage the effects of noise from transport, road traffic, rail traffic, air traffic and from sites of industrial activity and to reduce it if necessary, which will avoid, prevent or reduce harmful effects of exposure on people.

3. Where are Noise Action Plans required?

Environmental noise levels are being mapped in large, densely populated urban areas and around major transport sources, so that areas where noise needs to be addressed can be identified.

- The first noise action plans, for identified urban areas and major transport sources³, must be in place by 18th July 2008. In England 23 agglomerations have been identified for the first round of mapping and in Scotland 2 for the first round, Wales 2 for the first round, Northern Ireland 1.
- Second round plans must be in place by 18 July 2013, and will cover wider areas, subsequently these must be reviewed every five years

Cities for first round noise action planning:

England:

Cities: Blackpool, Bournemouth, Brighton, Bristol, Coventry, Hull, Leicester, Liverpool Birkenhead, London, Manchester, Nottingham, Portsmouth, Preston, Reading, Sheffield, Southampton, Southend, Teeside, The Potteries, Tyneside, West Midlands, West Yorkshire

Airports: Birmingham International, Blackpool Squire's Gate, Bournemouth, Bristol Lulsgate, Coventry, Leeds Bradford, Liverpool John Lennon, London City, London Gatwick, London Heathrow, London Luton, London Stansted, Manchester International, Newcastle International, Nottingham East Midlands, Shoreham, Southampton Eastleigh, Southend

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Northern Ireland

City: Belfast

Airport: Belfast City Airport

Scotland

Cities: Edinburgh, Glasgow

Airport: Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Prestwick

Wales

Cities: Cardiff, Swansea

4. Towards Noise Action Plans in the UK

Under the Environmental Noise Regulations (England) 2006, (and equivalent regulations for Scotland, Wales and N Ireland⁵), which transpose the Environmental Noise Directive:

- The Secretary of State must publish guidance setting out criteria for the identification of priorities for action plans by 18th July 2007

Action plans must:

- Prevent and reduce noise where necessary, particularly where there may be effects on human health
- Identify quiet areas in first round urban areas by September 30th 2007 (this has not been undertaken due to a policy change)
- Protect quiet urban areas from an increase in noise
- The Secretary of State must draw up noise action plans for first round designated areas by 18 July 2008. For Airports in England, the Secretary of State is responsible for Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted. For all other major airports in England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland the airport operators are responsible for drawing up action plans for airports.

Environmental Protection UK View

To comply with the END, noise action planning needs to be prioritised by Government, with a clear statement of intention to vitalise the process across all the departments responsible for managing sources of environmental noise.

- The Secretary of State needs to produce a framework for Noise Action Planning, with achievable goals for noise management
- Noise action planning to be informed by expert groups
- Noise to be embedded in all strategic planning at national level
- Noise to be embedded into all strategic planning at regional level
- Resources for implementation to be confirmed by Government

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