

Entertainment Noise from Pubs and Clubs

Advice on Noise Control and Making an Application under the Licensing Act 2003



Entertainment in pubs and clubs is traditional and is an important part of community life. It brings in business for the Licensee and boosts the local economy. However, musical entertainment can also lead to a noise nuisance affecting local residents.

Where a premises licence is required and includes a request for permission for an activity or entertainment on site which will give rise to noise, then the following items must be considered:

- the existing noise climate;
- the effect of such noise source/event noise on background noise levels;
- the impact of amplified and non-amplified music inside and outside the premises;
- noise from singing and speech from inside and outside the premises;
- noise from rowdy behaviour;
- consideration of the frequency component of the activity/event noise; (bass sound etc)
- locality of noise sensitive receptors eg residential dwellings.

Assessing the implications of the activity in terms of the above criteria and implementing suitable controls to reduce the effects of noise sources/events on existing background levels will be a necessary part of your application.

All proposed controls must be submitted in Section Q of your licence application.

Additional Opening Hours and Entertainment Noise

If you wish to apply for extended opening hours which would also include extended hours for entertainments which give rise to noise then existing noise controls on site will need to be reviewed. This is because background noise environment is likely to be significantly quieter during any extended opening hours. It should also be borne in mind that mid-evening to late/early morning is the time when more residents are asleep and noisy activities are therefore likely to have greater effect.

To support your application for extended hours you should consider:

- the adequacy of current control measures which will be implemented over the extended time period. (The existing controls which will be applied should be stated in your variation application);
- the need to restrict the time of events to ensure they finish early enough to reduce the impact of noise on local amenity.
- the need for structural alteration to reduce the passage of sound.

If you think that you will only want to have noisy events for a fixed number of days per year then specify this in your application, otherwise the Council will assume that you plan to hold such events every night.

Assessment of Noise

It is recommended that the services of a competent noise consultant are employed. This individual will be able to advise you of the background noise levels and determine the measures that should be implemented to prevent noise nuisance.

In the first instance, however, you should consider the layout and design of your premises and ensure suitable measures are implemented by yourself to prevent noise, examples of which are detailed below:

- lower the volume of music and reduce the bass noise;
- fit a noise limiting device set at a defined level which has been determined as the level unlikely to give rise to complaints - this device should be interlocked with emergency exit;
- with the exception of access and exit points, keep windows and doors shut, including emergency doors;
- keep speakers away from party walls with neighbours;

- place speakers on acoustic mats or absorbent material which will absorb some of the sound;
- design the music system so smaller speakers are used around the premises rather than one large speaker;
- keep regular checks on the noise levels from your premises regularly by going outside to check noise levels;
- the use of structural alterations should also be considered to reduce the passage of sound transfer by:
 - the fitting of secondary glazing or interlocking certain windows, where they are adjacent to neighbouring properties;
 - provide mechanical ventilation to avoid the need to open windows or doors (this could include an appropriate silencer);
 - lobbied entrance (double doors).

Noise Management Policies

As well as physical controls, policies should be implemented which address noise. These can be included as part of your risk assessments. The following general issues should be covered in all policies.

The establishment of regular noise assessment procedures which should include:

- monitoring systems to demonstrate compliance with noise policies;
- the establishment of internal communication procedure for dealing with noise issues;
- the establishment of methods for logging and responding to noise complaints;
- provision of general advice and training on noise control to employees.

Noise and the Law

Where complaints are received by the Police, the Council or other consultee concerning noise, your licence application can be reviewed, revoked or conditions attached to restrict activities or limit premises opening hours.

Under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 anyone in the UK has a legal right to be protected against noise nuisance. Action can be taken under statutory nuisance where the noise emitted from premises is prejudicial to health or a nuisance.