

# Council guidance on Pubs, Beer Gardens and Open Space to avoid noise nuisance

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The Coronavirus epidemic has had a major impact in many areas of commercial activity but none more so than restrictions on the entertainment industry including public houses.

This guidance document is issued by the Environmental Protection Team to assist licensed premises in thinking about noise issues as they prepare to re-open.

The councils Environmental Protection Team is keen to support licensed premises and to give advice on methods to minimise noise impact on residents. However they also have a duty to protect neighbouring residents from unacceptable noise. Operators of licensed premises need to be mindful that they have residents living near to them who will be getting up early for work or who have been shielded. This is particularly important in the use of outside premises and where doors and windows that are normally closed are being left open to help ventilation.

Licensed premises should develop a Noise Management Plan (NMP) in addition to the Risk Assessment for protecting residents and staff using the facilities. The noise management plan should look at issues such as,

- Times of operation of outdoor space. The time of operation of beer gardens and outside areas should be considerate of potential for nuisance.
- Each premises is different and may suit different operation but in a closely residential area 23:00 hours is likely to be the latest outside space should be used by large numbers without causing complaints.
- Staff training and procedures for dealing with noise issues.
- Supervision and management of customers outside to prevent excessive noise,
- Use of signage in outdoor spaces
- Communication with residents – leaflet dropping and provision of an emergency contact number should issues arise.
- Restrictions on outdoor entertainment such as music.

- Lighting issues – Lights not causing issues of excessive illumination or glare to residents. Lights should be mains operated as generators could cause noise issues.
- Flexibility – issues may arise that could cause disturbances so it is imperative that NMP's are flexible enough to incorporate rapid change and develop with experience and the practicalities that become apparent in operation.

If complaints are received to the Environmental Protection Team about noise from a licensed premises, they will contact you to discuss the complaint and what could be done to reduce noise levels. While every effort will be made to find an agreeable solution this may include needing to reduce the use of the outside space. Ultimately if it is necessary the Environmental Protection will take formal action in the form of a license review or service of an abatement notice.

If you own or manage a licensed premises and are considering using the open space differently from how you operated prior to the lockdown please use the guidance above to consider the potential impact on neighbours. If you have done this and would like further help, please contact the Environmental Protection Team

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