

CIEH Noise Survey 2018/19

Report on findings – England



About the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH)

CIEH is the professional voice for environmental health representing over 7,000 members, working in the public, private and third sectors, in 52 countries around the world. It ensures the highest standards of professional competence in its members, in the belief that through environmental health action people's health can be improved.

Environmental health has an important, and unique, contribution to make to improving public health and reducing health inequalities. CIEH campaigns to ensure that government policy addresses the needs of communities and business in achieving and maintaining improvements to health and health protection.

Overview

Local authorities are responsible for receiving and resolving noise complaints, the single largest issue of complaint made to local authorities in England.¹ The process of receiving, recording, investigating and, as far as possible, resolving noise complaints is carried out largely by Environmental Health Practitioners (EHPs).

Local authorities must investigate noise complaints that could be a statutory nuisance, covered by the Environmental Protection Act 1990. For noise to be considered statutory nuisance, it must '*unreasonably and substantially interfere with the use or enjoyment of a home or other premises*' or '*injure health or be likely to injure health*'.²

Statutory nuisance laws apply to noise from premises such as, residential homes, gardens and certain vessels, vehicles, machinery or equipment in the street. Noise from traffic or planes, political demonstrations and premises occupied by the armed forces or visiting forces cannot be resolved using statutory noise nuisance laws.

There are also other potential tools which can be used to resolve noise complaints such as The Licensing Act 2003, The Noise and Statutory Nuisance Act 1993, The Noise Act 1996, Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 and The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005. Local authorities also take preventative measures to restrict noise complaints, for example, through planning and licensing controls.

Many noise complaints are resolved informally, without the need for formal enforcement action by the local authority. A local authority will only be able to take formal action in response to a complaint if it finds that a statutory nuisance is occurring or will occur in the future. In this case, they must serve an abatement notice, which requires whoever is responsible to stop or restrict the noise. If the party in question fails to comply with the abatement notice, they may be prosecuted and fined an unlimited amount, with further fines for each day that they fail to comply.

Health effects of noise

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), environmental noise comes second in burden of disease to air pollution and is arguably responsible for more disturbance to quality of life.³

Sufficient undisturbed sleep is necessary for daytime alertness and performance, quality of life, and health. Sleep disturbance is one of the most harmful effects of environmental noise exposure. The short term effects of noise-induced sleep disturbance include impaired mood, increased daytime sleepiness and impaired cognitive performance.⁴

Aircraft noise is linked to an increased risk of cardiovascular disease, including stroke and diabetes mellitus, and to an increased risk of hospital admission and mortality.⁵ There is also evidence that road traffic noise is linked to an increased risk of hypertension and a small but consistent risk of coronary heart disease.⁶ However, it should be noted that EHPs do not have powers to deal with complaints about aircraft or road traffic noise and would refer these complaints to the appropriate authorities.

While over 80% of people in UK report being exposed to noise in their homes, some groups are more sensitive and vulnerable to noise, including chronically ill and elderly people, children and nightshift workers. Low income households are also more vulnerable as inadequate housing conditions are associated with increased risk factors for noise.⁷

Health issues associated with noise not only affect individuals' quality of life, but also generate significant social costs. The Department for Food, Agriculture and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) estimates that the annual social cost of urban road noise in England is £7 to 10 billion, placing it at a similar magnitude to road accidents (£9 billion).⁸

About the survey

The CIEH Noise survey provides the only source of data on the vital contribution made by EHPs working to resolve noise complaints in England and Wales. CIEH has been running its noise survey since 2000.*

Data collected from local authorities includes:

- The total number of noise complaints received
- The total number of notices served
- Staffing levels for noise related work
- The total number of prosecutions
- Breakdowns of noise complaints by sector

The 2018/19 CIEH Noise Survey collected data from local authorities in England and Wales. Northern Ireland and Scotland have separate arrangements in place to quantify the demand for local authority noise services.



* We did not collect data for the years 2016/17 and 2017/18 as we worked to improve the method of data collection

Key findings

These figures represent data from 143 local authorities (45% of all local authorities in England) for the year 2018/19.

- In total, 143,054 noise complaints were recorded by these local authorities, 61 complaints for every 10,000 people
- 2,543 notices were served by local authorities, 1 notice for every 10,000 people
- There were 101 noise-related prosecutions
- Overall, local authorities allocated 0.2 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) professionals to deal with noise complaints per 10,000 population

Compared with the last time CIEH collected noise data in 2015/16, the 2018/19 data shows a 9% increase in the number of noise complaints in the 65 local authorities which participated in the survey in both years.

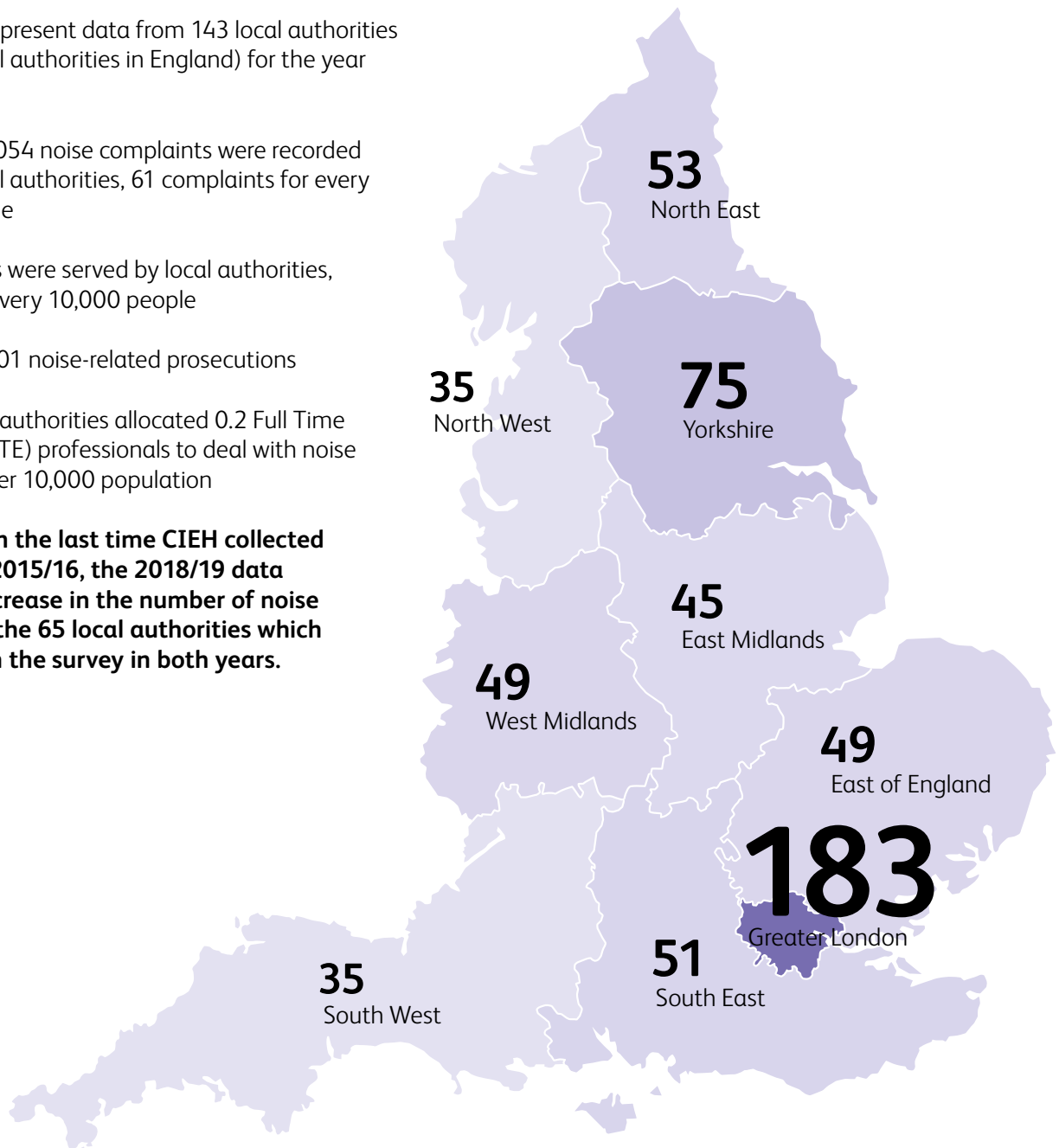


Fig. 1: **Average number of noise complaints per 10,000 people by region.** Headline noise stats for England. (Regions in darker colours represent more noise complaints, lighter colours represent fewer noise complaints.)

Regional results

Key findings

- Greater London had the highest number of noise complaints, 183 for every 10,000 people, more than double the national average
- South West England had the lowest number of noise complaints, 35 for every 10,000 people, approximately half of the national average
- Greater London served the most notices, 4 for every 10,000 people

South East

This data represents 33 local authorities in the South East of England (49% of local authorities in the region).

- 20,832 noise complaints were recorded, 51 for every 10,000 people, below the national average
- 418 notices were served by local authorities, 1 notice for every 10,000 people, the same as the national average
- There were 5 noise-related prosecutions
- Local authorities allocated 0.3 FTE professionals to deal with noise complaints per 10,000 population

South West

This data represents 16 local authorities in the South West of England (53% of local authorities in the region).

- 11,161 noise complaints were recorded, 35 for every 10,000 people, approximately half of the national average
- 262 notices were served by local authorities, 1 notice for every 10,000 people, the same as the national average
- There were 7 noise-related prosecutions
- Local authorities allocated 0.1 FTE professionals to deal with noise complaints per 10,000 population

Greater London

This data represents 8 local authorities in Greater London (24% of local authorities in the region).

- 39,200 noise complaints were recorded, 183 for every 10,000 people, more than twice the national average
- 779 notices were served by local authorities, 4 notices for every 10,000 people, four times the national average
- There were 18 noise-related prosecutions
- Local authorities allocated 0.2 FTE professionals to deal with noise complaints per 10,000 population

East of England

This data represents 17 local authorities in the East of England (22% of local authorities in the region).

- 10,785 noise complaints were recorded, 49 for every 10,000 people, below the national average
- 131 notices were served by local authorities, 1 notice for every 10,000 people, the same as the national average There were 13 noise-related prosecutions
- Local authorities allocated 0.3 FTE professionals to deal with noise complaints per 10,000 population

West Midlands

This data represents 20 local authorities in the West Midlands (67% of local authorities in the region).

- 20,102 noise complaints were recorded, 49 for every 10,000 people, below the national average
- 398 notices were served by local authorities, 1 notice for every 10,000 people, the same as the national average
- There were 26 noise-related prosecutions
- Local authorities allocated 0.2 FTE professionals to deal with noise complaints per 10,000 population

East Midlands

This data represents 24 local authorities in the East Midlands (60% of local authorities in the region).

- 12,647 noise complaints were recorded, 45 for every 10,000 people, below the national average
- 141 notices were served by local authorities, 1 notice for every 10,000 people, the same as the national average
- There was 1 noise-related prosecution
- Local authorities allocated 0.3 FTE professionals to deal with noise complaints per 10,000 population

Yorkshire

This data represents 10 local authorities in Yorkshire (48% of local authorities in the region).

- 19,759 noise complaints were recorded, 75 for every 10,000 people, above the national average
- 276 notices were served by local authorities, 1 notice for every 10,000 people, the same as the national average
- There were 23 noise-related prosecutions
- Local authorities allocated 0.1 FTE professionals to deal with noise complaints per 10,000 population

North East

This data represents 4 local authorities in the North East of England (33% of local authorities in the region).

- 2,865 noise complaints were recorded, 53 for every 10,000 people, below the national average
- 58 notices were served by local authorities, 1 notice for every 10,000 people, the same as the national average
- There were 5 noise-related prosecutions
- Local authorities allocated 0.2 FTE professionals to deal with noise complaints per 10,000 population

North West

This data represents 11 local authorities in the North West of England (28% of local authorities in the region).

- 5,703 noise complaints were recorded, 35 for every 10,000 people, just over half the national average
- 80 notices were served by local authorities, 0.5 notices for every 10,000 people, less than the national average
- There were 3 noise-related prosecutions
- Local authorities allocated 0.3 FTE professionals to deal with noise complaints per 10,000 population

Sector breakdown

We asked local authorities to provide a breakdown of noise complaints received by sector.

The number of the local authorities represented in each figure is included in the table below as not all local authorities record or use the same sector categories.

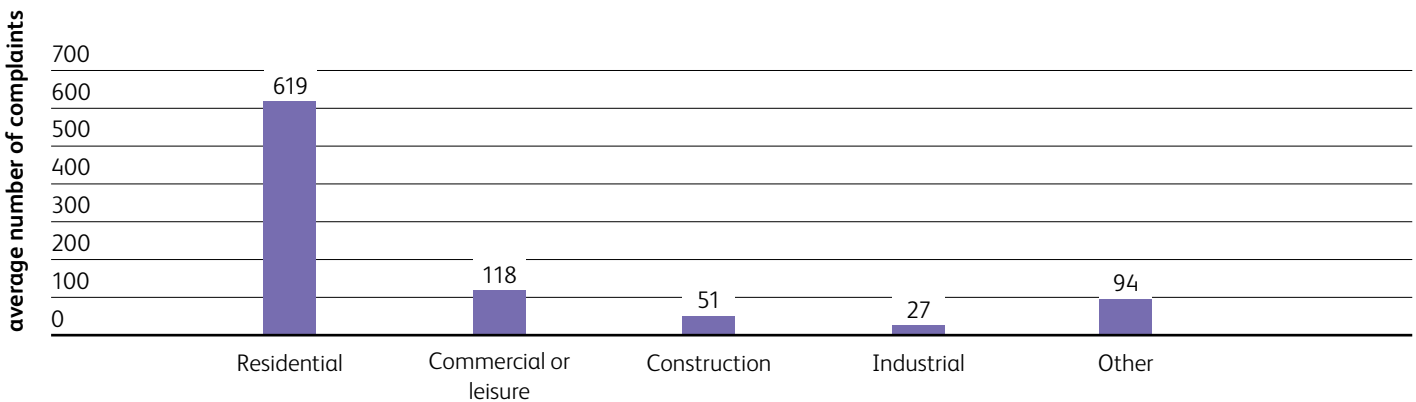
Residential noise accounts for the largest proportion of noise complaints. This is the case across all regions in England, except the South East, where Residential noise accounted for a smaller proportion of complaints

than noise from Commercial or Leisure premises and Construction.

Industrial noise accounted for a lowest proportion of noise complaints compared to other sectors.

Other sources of noise complaints recorded by local authorities include noise in the street, vehicles, machinery and equipment; dogs, agriculture, alarms, military, traffic, aircrafts and railways.

Fig.2: **Average number of noise complaints by sector by local authority**



Sector	Noise complaints	Average number of complaints by local authority	Number of local authorities
Residential	69,369	619	112 LAs
Commercial or leisure	12,907	118	109 LAs
Construction	5,027	51	99 LAs
Industrial	2,854	27	106 LAs
Other	9,259	94	98 LAs

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- 1 [Health Impacts of All Pollution – what do we know?](#), Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer, 2017.
 - 2 [Guidance. Noise nuisances: how councils deal with complaints](#), DEFRA, 2017.
 - 3 [Burden of disease from environmental noise. Quantification of healthy life years lost in Europe](#), World Health Organisation, 2011.
 - 4 [Auditory and non-auditory effects of noise on health](#), Basner, Mathias et al., The Lancet, Volume 383, Issue 9925, 1325 – 1332, 2014.
 - 5 [Health Impacts of All Pollution – what do we know?](#), Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer, 2017.
 - 6 [Ibid.](#)
 - 7 [Environment and health risks: a review of the influence and effects of social inequalities](#), WHO/Europe, 2010.
 - 8 [Guidance. Noise pollution: economic analysis](#), DEFRA, 2014.

Appendix

List of participating authorities:

Adur District Council	Coventry City Council
Allerdale Borough Council	Crawley Borough Council
Amber Valley Borough Council	Darlington Borough Council
Ashford Borough Council	Dartford Borough Council
Aylesbury Vale District Council	Daventry District Council
Barnet Council	Derbyshire Dales District Council
Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council	Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council
Basildon Borough Council	Dover District Council
Bassetlaw District Council	East Cambridgeshire District Council
Birmingham City Council	East Devon District Council
Blaby District Council	East Lindsey District Council
Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council	East Northamptonshire Council
Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk	Eastleigh Borough Council
Borough Council of Wellingborough	Eden District Council
Borough of Broxbourne Council	Elmbridge Borough Council
Bournemouth Borough Council	Enfield Council
Bradford Metropolitan District Council	Erewash Borough Council
Braintree District Council	Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council
Breckland Council	Great Yarmouth Borough Council
Bristol City Council	Hambleton District Council
Broadland District Council	Hammersmith and Fulham Council
Bromley Council	Harborough District Council
Bromsgrove District Council	Harrogate Borough Council
Broxtowe Borough Council	Hart District Council
Cambridge City Council	Hartlepool Borough Council
Cannock Chase District Council	Hastings Borough Council
Canterbury City Council	Herefordshire Council
Carlisle City Council	Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council
Castle Point Borough Council	Horsham District Council
Charnwood Borough Council	Huntingdonshire District Council
Cherwell District Council	Ipswich Borough Council
Chesterfield Borough Council	Kingston upon Hull City Council
Chichester District Council	Kirklees Council
City of London Corporation	Leicester City Council
Stoke-on-Trent City Council	Lichfield District Council
City of Wolverhampton Council	London Borough of Havering
City of York Council	Maidstone Borough Council
Colchester Borough Council	Maldon District Council
Corby Borough Council	Malvern Hills District Council
Cornwall Council	Mansfield District Council
	Mid Sussex District Council
	Mole Valley District Council
	Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council

North Dorset District Council
North Hertfordshire District Council
North Kesteven District Council
Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council
Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council
Oxford City Council
Peterborough City Council
Purbeck District Council
Reading Borough Council
Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council
Redditch Borough Council
Ribble Valley Borough Council
Richmondshire District Council
Rochford District Council
Rossendale Borough Council
Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
Rugby Borough Council
Runnymede Borough Council
Rushcliffe Borough Council
Rushmoor Borough Council
Sedgemoor District Council
Sevenoaks District Council
Shropshire Council
South Derbyshire District Council
South Gloucestershire Council
South Holland District Council
South Lakeland District Council
South Northamptonshire Council
South Oxfordshire District Council

South Somerset District Council
Southwark London Borough Council
St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council
Stafford Borough Council
Stevenage Borough Council
Stroud District Council
Tandridge District Council
Teignbridge District Council
Thanet District Council
Thurrock Council
Torbay Council
Torridge District Council
Tower Hamlets London Borough Council
Trafford Council
Vale of White Horse District Council
Wakefield Metropolitan District Council
Warrington Borough Council
Warwick District Council
West Dorset District Council
West Lindsey District Council
West Suffolk Council
Weymouth and Portland Borough Council
Wiltshire Council
Woking Borough Council
Worcester City Council
Worthing Borough Council
Wychavon District Council
Wycombe District Council
Wyre Forest District Council