

# CIEH Noise Survey 2020/21

## 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

---

2020 has been a year unlike any other: in March, much of the world went into lockdown and large numbers of people were suddenly working, studying from home or on furlough. Restaurants, pubs, museums, and leisure premises were closed, and people had to find new ways to occupy themselves at home. The summer of 2020 saw the Government lifting the national lockdown, but local lockdowns came into force. September saw a return of restrictions including working from home and a 10pm curfew for the hospitality sector, later in November a second national lockdown came into place. As a result, CIEH's noise survey captured data from three national lockdowns and constantly changing restrictions.<sup>1</sup> At the time, many local authorities reported that they have received more domestic complaints during the initial lockdown period, as some people started DIY projects, whilst others juggled virtual meetings and home schooling.

Local authorities are responsible for receiving and resolving noise complaints.<sup>2</sup> 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*'.<sup>3</sup>

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.

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

## Supporters of the survey

---

This year, the CIEH Noise Survey was supported by Cirrus Research and the Noise Abatement Society.



Established in 1970, Cirrus Research is a globally recognised name in scientific noise measurement equipment, serving health and safety and environmental health professionals in all parts of the world.

Noise changes lives, and Cirrus Research's priority is to make monitoring, measuring, and controlling excessive noise levels as straightforward as possible, whilst ensuring that the most effective decisions are taken to protect people and the environment from the risks noise presents. Cirrus Research has a long-standing relationship with local government environmental health officers, housing associations and independent acoustic consultants, and actively contributes to the successful resolution of noise nuisance complaints by supporting EHOs with market-leading instrumentation that provides in-depth data and analysis.



Noise Abatement Society is a dynamic UK charity whose aim is to share a better understanding of what sound is, how it affects us and how we can solve noise problems in a pragmatic and sustainable way. Its internationally respected work helps to relieve the physical and mental distress caused by excessive noise which profoundly affects health and wellbeing, learning, productivity and social cohesion.

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

## 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.<sup>4</sup>

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.<sup>5</sup>

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. 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.<sup>6</sup> 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 the 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.<sup>7</sup>

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).<sup>8</sup>

## 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 under Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Formal actions taken using other powers and legislation
- Staffing levels for noise related work
- The total number of prosecutions
- Other formal actions taken after complaints
- Break downs of noise complaints by sector

As well as formal action under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, the survey recorded formal actions using other powers, including:

- Part 1, Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 - Community Protection Warning
- Part 1, Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 - Community Protection Notice
- Section 60 Control of Pollution Act Notice - Construction Noise
- Section 77 Clean Neighbourhoods & Environment Act 2005 - silencing of Intruder Alarms
- Section 3 or 3A Warning Notice under the Noise Act 1996
- Review of Licence Condition under Licensing Act 2003
- Notices under The Fireworks Regulations 2004

The 2020/21 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.

## Key findings

---

**Between 2019/20 and 2020/21 the data shows a 54% increase in the number of noise complaints in 89 local authorities, which participated in both years.**

**The average number of noise complaints per officer increased in all but two regions between 2019/20 and 2020/21: East Midlands and East of England. The average number of complaints received per FTE officer in England increased from 299 to 633 complaints.**

These figures represent data from 144 local authorities (45% of all local authorities in England) for the year 2020/21.

- In total, 356,367 noise complaints were recorded by these local authorities in 2020/21, 149 complaints for every 10,000 people
- The number of noise complaints ranged from 32 per 10,000 population in the South West to 508 complaints per 10,000 population in Greater London
- 1,680 Environmental Protection Act 1990 notices were served by local authorities, on average 12 per authority
- 88 noise-related prosecutions were reported
- Nearly three times as many formal actions were taken using legislation other than the Environmental Protection Act 1990 – 9,531, on average 66 per authority
- The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 was the most commonly used legislation to take formal action on noise with 6,329 actions, including 5,083 warnings, and 1,246 notices served
- 2,987 notices served to control construction noise, under Section 60 of the Control of Pollution Act - the second most common type of formal action taken by local authorities
- In total, there were 11,211 formal actions taken by local authorities
- Some noise-related legislation was not being used at all, such as Fireworks Regulations 2004 and Noise Act 1996. Authorities stated that they believed other legislation was sufficient, the Noise Act was too complicated whilst the Fireworks Regulations were the responsibility of Trading Standards and the Police
- Overall, there are approximately 563 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Professionals working at 144 local authorities in England to investigate and resolve noise complaints, 3.9 FTEs on average per local authority
- Each one FTE officer at an authority had to deal with an average of 633 complaints per year, regionally this ranged from 190 to 1,715

## Summary of formal enforcement actions taken by local authorities in England

| Type of formal action                                                                     | Number of formal actions in 2020/2021 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Part 1, Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 – Community Protection Warning | 5,083                                 |
| Section 60 Control of Pollution Act Notice – Construction Noise                           | 2,987                                 |
| Environmental Protection Act 1990, Notices Served                                         | 1,680                                 |
| Part 1, Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 – Community Protection Notice  | 1,246                                 |
| Section 77 Clean Neighbourhoods & Environment Act 2005 – Silencing of Intruder Alarms     | 150                                   |
| Section 62 Control of Pollution Act Notice - Loudspeakers in streets                      | 38                                    |
| Review of Licence Condition under Licensing Act 2003                                      | 27                                    |
| Section 3 or 3A Warning Notice under the Noise Act 1996                                   | 0                                     |
| Notices under The Fireworks Regulations 2004                                              | 0                                     |

\*Not all local authorities submitted data for all formal actions

## Regional results

### Key findings

- The number of noise complaints ranged from 32 complaints per 10,000 population in the South West to 508 complaints per 10,000 population in Greater London
- The rate of noise complaints in Greater London was nearly three times as many as the national average
- Greater London served 644 abatement notices - the highest number per local authority
- East Midlands had the highest number (3,684) of Community Protection Warnings under the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. This well above the national average of 35 Community Protection Warnings
- Greater London had most recorded Section 60 Control of Pollution Act Notices: 2,912
- One FTE officer working in the East of England had the lowest average number of complaints to deal with per year (190), whilst one FTE working in Greater London had the highest average number of complaints to resolve (1,715)
- The number of FTEs per region varied from 9 to 143 FTEs dealing with noise issues per local authority

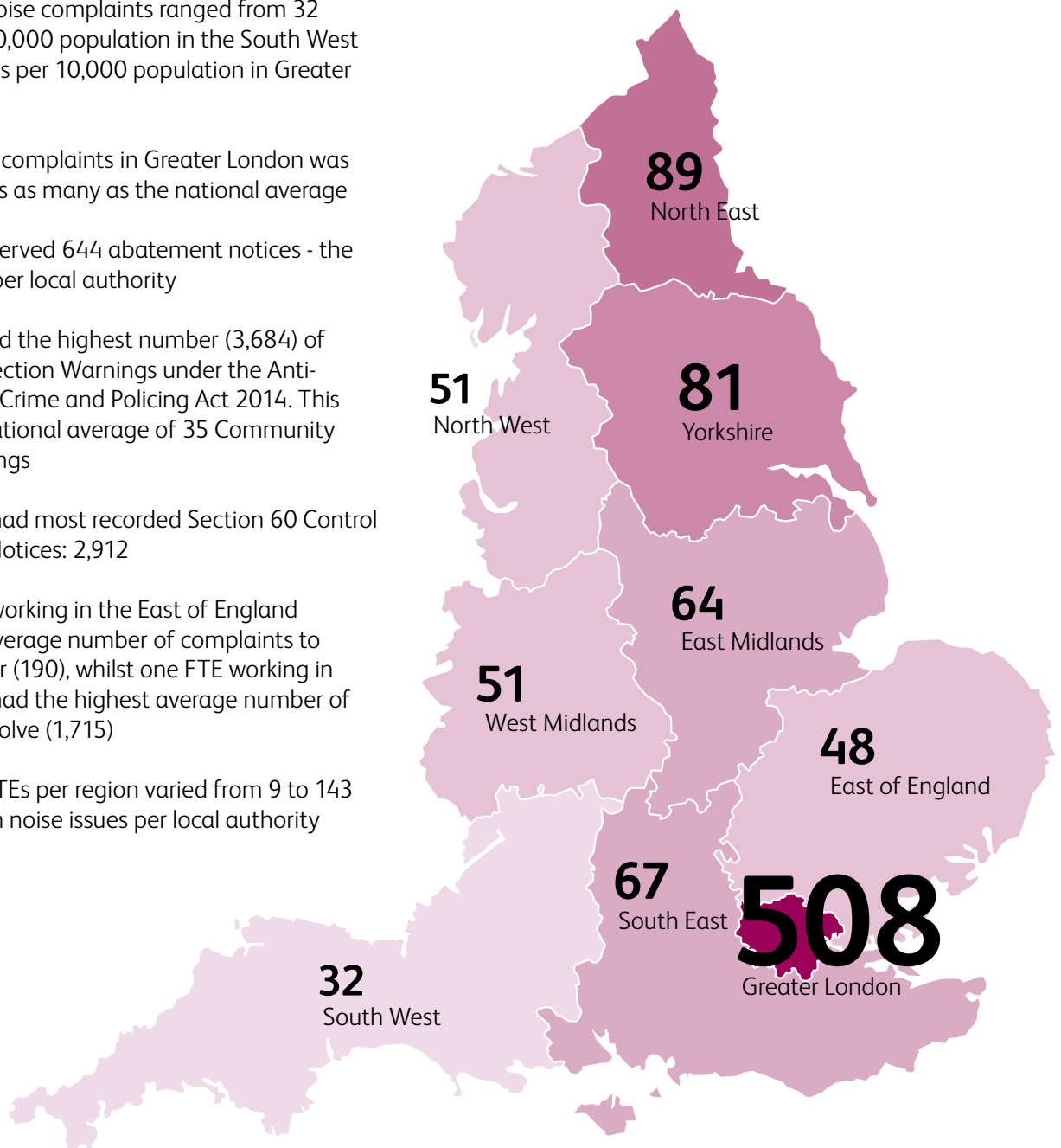


Fig. 1: **Average number of noise complaints per 10,000 people by region.** Headline noise stats for England. (Regions in darker colours represent more noise complaints, lighter colours represent fewer noise complaints.)

## South East

The data represents 31 local authorities in the South East of England (48.4% of local authorities in the region).

- 27,295 noise complaints were recorded, 67 for every 10,000 people. This is below the regional average
- Noise complaints varied from 286 to 6,144 between different local authorities
- 93 notices were served by local authorities, 0.2 notices for every 10,000 people, which is below the national average
- 2 noise-related prosecutions were reported
- 100 Community Protection Warnings were given under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Local authorities allocated nearly 0.2 FTE professionals to deal with noise complaints per 10,000 population
- On average, 1 FTE in the South East dealt with 359 noise complaints
- The number of noise complaints per 1 FTE in LAs varied from 95 to 1,536 between different local authorities

| Type of formal action                                                                                      | Number of formal actions in 2020/2021 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Environmental Protection Act 1990, Notices Served                                                          | 93                                    |
| Part 1, Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 - Community Protection Warning (excluding 1 LA) | 100                                   |
| Part 1, Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 - Community Protection Notice (excluding 1 LA)  | 9                                     |
| Section 60 Control of Pollution Act Notice - Construction Noise                                            | 17                                    |
| Section 62 Control of Pollution Act Notice - Loudspeakers in streets                                       | 0                                     |
| Section 77 Clean Neighbourhoods & Environment Act 2005 - silencing of Intruder Alarms (excluding 2 LA)     | 1                                     |
| Review of Licence Condition under Licensing Act 2003 (excluding 2 LA)                                      | 3                                     |
| Section 3 or 3A Warning Notice under the Noise Act 1996                                                    | 0                                     |
| Notices under The Fireworks Regulations 2004                                                               | 0                                     |



## South West

The data represents 12 local authorities in the South West of England (40% of local authorities in the region).

- 8,283 noise complaints were recorded, nearly 32 for every 10,000 people. This is the lowest number of complaints recorded compared to all the regions
- Noise complaints varied from 112 to 1,467 between different local authorities
- 71 notices were served by local authorities, nearly 0.3 notices for every 10,000 people, which is below the national average
- 7 noise-related prosecutions were reported
- 36 Community Protection Warnings were given under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Local authorities allocated 0.14 FTE professionals to deal with noise complaints per 10,000 population
- On average, 1 FTE in the South West dealt with 214 noise complaints
- The number of noise complaints per 1 FTE in LAs varied from 56 to 367 between different local authorities

| Type of formal action                                                                                      | Number of formal actions in 2020/2021 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Environmental Protection Act 1990, Notices Served                                                          | 71                                    |
| Part 1, Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 – Community Protection Warning (excluding 1 LA) | 36                                    |
| Part 1, Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 – Community Protection Notice                   | 13                                    |
| Section 60 Control of Pollution Act Notice – Construction Noise                                            | 7                                     |
| Section 62 Control of Pollution Act Notice - Loudspeakers in streets                                       | 0                                     |
| Section 77 Clean Neighbourhoods & Environment Act 2005 – Silencing of Intruder Alarms (excluding 1 LA)     | 2                                     |
| Review of Licence Condition under Licensing Act 2003 (excluding 1 LA)                                      | 2                                     |
| Section 3 or 3A Warning Notice under the Noise Act 1996                                                    | 0                                     |
| Notices under The Fireworks Regulations 2004                                                               | 0                                     |

## Greater London

The data represents 18 local authorities in Greater London (nearly 55% of local authorities in the region).

- 244,838 noise complaints were recorded, nearly 508 for every 10,000 people. This is a highest rate compared to all other regions
- Noise complaints varied from 1,020 to 114,721 between different local authorities
- 644 notices were served by local authorities, 1.3 notices for every 10,000 people, the highest number and rate of notices served than any other region
- 5 noise-related prosecutions were reported
- 90 Community Protection Warnings were given under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Local authorities allocated 0.3 FTE professionals to deal with noise complaints per 10,000 population
- The average number of complaints dealt with by 1 FTE in Greater London was nearly 1,715 - the highest number per officer than any other English region
- The number of noise complaints per 1 FTE in LAs varied from 420 to 6,235 between different local authorities

| Type of formal action                                                                     | Number of formal actions in 2020/2021 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Environmental Protection Act 1990, Notices Served                                         | 644                                   |
| Part 1, Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 – Community Protection Warning | 90                                    |
| Part 1, Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 – Community Protection Notice  | 74                                    |
| Section 60 Control of Pollution Act Notice – Construction Noise                           | 2,912                                 |
| Section 62 Control of Pollution Act Notice - Loudspeakers in streets                      | 38                                    |
| Section 77 Clean Neighbourhoods & Environment Act 2005 – Silencing of Intruder Alarms     | 73                                    |
| Review of Licence Condition under Licensing Act 2003 (excluding 1 LA)                     | 8                                     |
| Section 3 or 3A Warning Notice under the Noise Act 1996                                   | 0                                     |
| Notices under The Fireworks Regulations 2004                                              | 0                                     |

## East of England

The data represents 18 local authorities in the East of England (40% of local authorities in the region).

- 11,609 noise complaints were recorded, nearly 48 for every 10,000 people. This is below the national average
- Noise complaints varied from 264 to 1,468 between different local authorities
- 91 notices were served by local authorities, nearly 0.4 notices for every 10,000 people, which is below the national average
- 8 noise-related prosecutions were reported
- 616 Community Protection Warnings were given under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Local authorities allocated nearly 0.3 FTE professionals to deal with noise complaints per 10,000 population
- On average, 1 FTE in the East of England dealt with 190 noise complaints
- The number of noise complaints per 1 FTE in LAs varied from 88 to 433 between different local authorities

| Type of formal action                                                                     | Number of formal actions in 2020/2021 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Environmental Protection Act 1990, Notices Served                                         | 91                                    |
| Part 1, Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 – Community Protection Warning | 616                                   |
| Part 1, Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 – Community Protection Notice  | 361                                   |
| Section 60 Control of Pollution Act Notice – Construction Noise                           | 33                                    |
| Section 62 Control of Pollution Act Notice - Loudspeakers in streets                      | 0                                     |
| Section 77 Clean Neighbourhoods & Environment Act 2005 – Silencing of Intruder Alarms     | 1                                     |
| Review of Licence Condition under Licensing Act 2003                                      | 0                                     |
| Section 3 or 3A Warning Notice under the Noise Act 1996                                   | 0                                     |
| Notices under The Fireworks Regulations 2004                                              | 0                                     |

## East Midlands

The data represents 23 local authorities in the East Midlands (nearly 66% of local authorities in the region).

- 19,922 noise complaints were recorded, 64 for every 10,000 people. This is below the national average
- Noise complaints varied from 78 to 5,546 between different local authorities
- 111 notices were served by local authorities, nearly 0.4 notices for every 10,000 people, below the national average
- 5 noise-related prosecutions were reported
- 3,684 Community Protection Warnings were given under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Local authorities allocated 0.3 FTE professionals to deal with noise complaints per 10,000 population
- On average, 1 FTE in the East Midlands dealt with 193 noise complaints
- The number of noise complaints per 1 FTE in LAs varied from 52 to 460 between different local authorities

| Type of formal action                                                                                      | Number of formal actions in 2020/2021 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Environmental Protection Act 1990, Notices Served                                                          | 111                                   |
| Part 1, Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 – Community Protection Warning (excluding 1 LA) | 3,684                                 |
| Part 1, Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 – Community Protection Notice                   | 755                                   |
| Section 60 Control of Pollution Act Notice – Construction Noise                                            | 5                                     |
| Section 62 Control of Pollution Act Notice - Loudspeakers in streets                                       | 0                                     |
| Section 77 Clean Neighbourhoods & Environment Act 2005 – Silencing of Intruder Alarms                      | 1                                     |
| Review of Licence Condition under Licensing Act 2003                                                       | 11                                    |
| Section 3 or 3A Warning Notice under the Noise Act 1996                                                    | 0                                     |
| Notices under The Fireworks Regulations 2004                                                               | 0                                     |

## West Midlands

The data represents 14 local authorities in the West Midlands (40% of local authorities in the region).

- 11,026 noise complaints were recorded, 51 for every 10,000 people. This is below the national average
- Noise complaints varied from 257 to 3,223 between different local authorities
- 392 notices were served by local authorities, nearly 1.8 notices for every 10,000 people, above the national average
- 43 noise-related prosecutions were reported
- 8 Community Protection Warnings were given under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Local authorities allocated nearly 0.2 FTE professionals to deal with noise complaints per 10,000 population
- On average, 1 FTE in the West Midlands dealt with 259 noise complaints
- The number of noise complaints per 1 FTE in LAs varied from 127 to 598 between different local authorities

| Type of formal action                                                                     | Number of formal actions in 2020/2021 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Environmental Protection Act 1990, Notices Served                                         | 392                                   |
| Part 1, Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 – Community Protection Warning | 8                                     |
| Part 1, Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 – Community Protection Notice  | 1                                     |
| Section 60 Control of Pollution Act Notice – Construction Noise                           | 10                                    |
| Section 62 Control of Pollution Act Notice - Loudspeakers in streets                      | 0                                     |
| Section 77 Clean Neighbourhoods & Environment Act 2005 – Silencing of Intruder Alarms     | 2                                     |
| Review of Licence Condition under Licensing Act 2003                                      | 1                                     |
| Section 3 or 3A Warning Notice under the Noise Act 1996                                   | 0                                     |
| Notices under The Fireworks Regulations 2004                                              | 0                                     |

## Yorkshire

---

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

- 20,816 noise complaints were recorded, 81 for every 10,000 people. This is below the national average
- Noise complaints varied from 182 to 3,980 between different local authorities
- 214 notices were served by local authorities, 0.8 notices for every 10,000 people, above the national average
- 16 noise-related prosecutions were reported
- 460 Community Protection Warnings were given under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Local authorities allocated 0.2 FTE professionals to deal with noise complaints per 10,000 population
- On average, 1 FTE in Yorkshire dealt with 333 noise complaints
- The number of noise complaints per 1 FTE in LAs varied from 115 to 601 between different local authorities

| Type of formal action                                                                     | Number of formal actions in 2020/2021 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Environmental Protection Act 1990, Notices Served                                         | 214                                   |
| Part 1, Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 – Community Protection Warning | 460                                   |
| Part 1, Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 – Community Protection Notice  | 18                                    |
| Section 60 Control of Pollution Act Notice – Construction Noise                           | 2                                     |
| Section 62 Control of Pollution Act Notice - Loudspeakers in streets                      | 0                                     |
| Section 77 Clean Neighbourhoods & Environment Act 2005 – Silencing of Intruder Alarms     | 68                                    |
| Review of Licence Condition under Licensing Act 2003                                      | 0                                     |
| Section 3 or 3A Warning Notice under the Noise Act 1996                                   | 0                                     |
| Notices under The Fireworks Regulations 2004                                              | 0                                     |

## North East

---

The data represents 3 local authorities in the North East (25% of local authorities in the region).

- 3,930 noise complaints were recorded, nearly 89 for every 10,000 people. This is below the national average
- Noise complaints varied from 630 to 2,494 between different local authorities
- 2 notices were served by local authorities, nearly 0.1 notices for every 10,000 people, below the national average
- 0 noise-related prosecutions were reported
- 9 Community Protection Warnings were given under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Local authorities allocated nearly 0.2 FTE professionals to deal with noise complaints per 10,000 population
- On average, 1 FTE in the North East dealt with 462 noise complaints
- The number of noise complaints per 1 FTE in LA varied from 252 to 624 between different local authorities

| Type of formal action                                                                     | Number of formal actions in 2020/2021 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Environmental Protection Act 1990, Notices Served                                         | 2                                     |
| Part 1, Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 – Community Protection Warning | 9                                     |
| Part 1, Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 – Community Protection Notice  | 1                                     |
| Section 60 Control of Pollution Act Notice – Construction Noise                           | 0                                     |
| Section 62 Control of Pollution Act Notice - Loudspeakers in streets                      | 0                                     |
| Section 77 Clean Neighbourhoods & Environment Act 2005 – Silencing of Intruder Alarms     | 0                                     |
| Review of Licence Condition under Licensing Act 2003                                      | 1                                     |
| Section 3 or 3A Warning Notice under the Noise Act 1996                                   | 0                                     |
| Notices under The Fireworks Regulations 2004                                              | 0                                     |

## North West

---

The data represents 13 local authorities in the North West (nearly 33% of local authorities in the region).

- 8,648 noise complaints were recorded, 51 for every 10,000 people. This is below the national average
- Noise complaints varied from 104 to 1,448 between different local authorities
- 62 notices were served by local authorities, nearly 0.4 notices for every 10,000 people, below the national average
- 2 noise-related prosecutions were reported
- 80 Community Protection Warnings were given under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Local authorities allocated nearly 0.2 FTE professionals to deal with noise complaints per 10,000 population
- On average, 1 FTE in the North West dealt with 321 noise complaints
- The number of noise complaints per 1 FTE in LA varied from 115 to 596 giving a range of 481

| Type of formal action                                                                     | Number of formal actions in 2020/2021 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Environmental Protection Act 1990, Notices Served                                         | 62                                    |
| Part 1, Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 – Community Protection Warning | 80                                    |
| Part 1, Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 – Community Protection Notice  | 14                                    |
| Section 60 Control of Pollution Act Notice – Construction Noise                           | 1                                     |
| Section 62 Control of Pollution Act Notice - Loudspeakers in streets                      | 0                                     |
| Section 77 Clean Neighbourhoods & Environment Act 2005 – Silencing of Intruder Alarms     | 1                                     |
| Review of Licence Condition under Licensing Act 2003                                      | 2                                     |
| Section 3 or 3A Warning Notice under the Noise Act 1996                                   | 0                                     |
| Notices under The Fireworks Regulations 2004                                              | 0                                     |



# Workloads across England

## Key Finds

There was variation between the number of complaints dealt with by practitioners working across different regions.

- The average number of noise complaints per 1 FTE in England was nearly 633, this is more than all other regions due to Greater London's higher results.
- The average number of noise complaints per officer increased in all but two regions between 2019/20 and 2020/21: East Midlands and East of England. The average number of complaints received per FTE officer in England increased from 299 to 633 complaints.
- Greater London had the highest average number of noise complaints dealt with by 1 FTE practitioner, which is more than triple the average.
- As shown in the regional ranges for noise complaints per 1 FTE, there is a wide variety within regions but Greater London and the South East were outliers, with a range of 1,525.
- Provision of resource relative to the population served did not vary very much between the regions. The South West had the lowest number of staff dealing with noise complaints per 10,000 population, less than 0.2 FTEs. This is similar to that of the North East, South East, North West and the West Midlands. Whilst East Midlands had the highest number of staff dealing with noise complaints per 10,000, just over 0.3 FTEs.

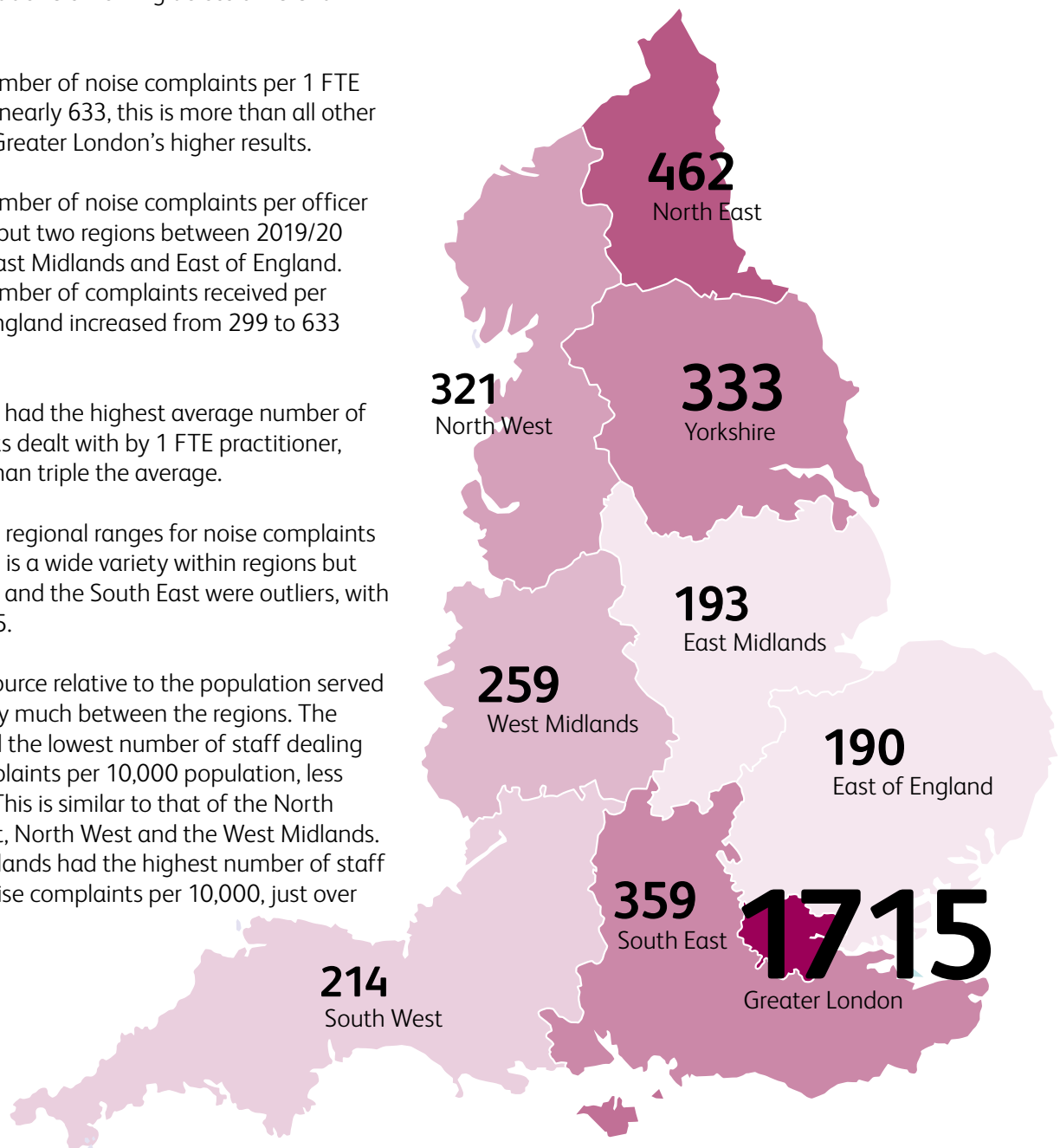


Fig. 2: **Average number of noise complaints per officer by region.** Headline noise stats for England. (Regions in darker colours represent more noise complaints, lighter colours represent fewer noise complaints.)

## Sector breakdown

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

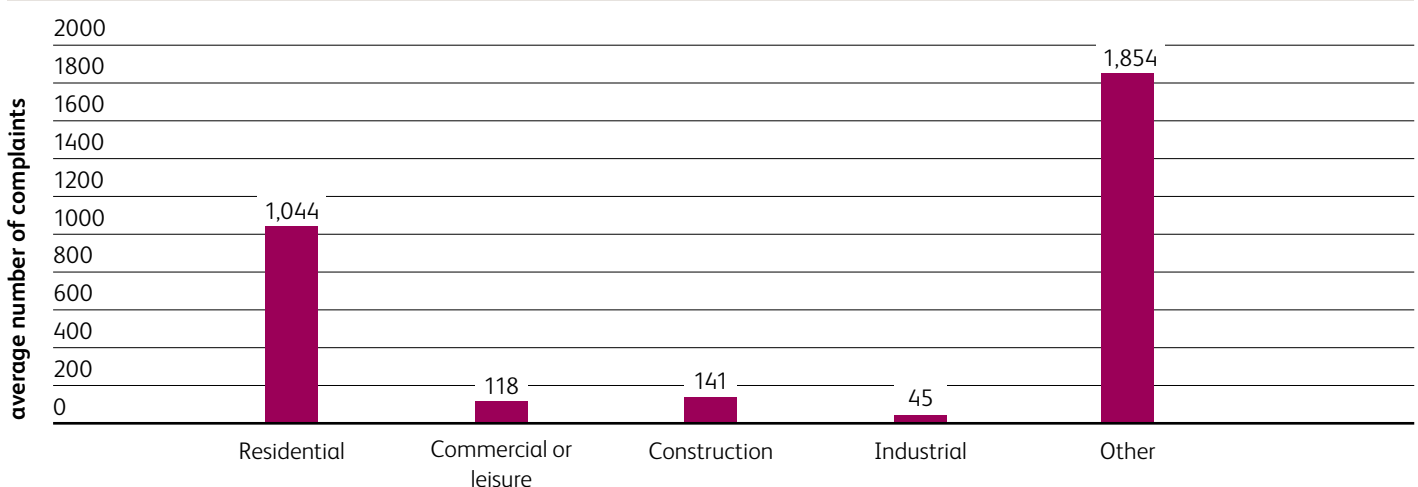
The number of the local authorities represented in each figure is included in the table below as not all local authorities record or use the same sector categories.

Residential noise accounts for the largest proportion of noise complaints. This is the case across all regions in England.

Industrial noise accounted for a lowest proportion of noise complaints in over half of the regions, with Construction noise accounting for the lowest in the South West, West Midlands, Yorkshire, and the North East.

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

Fig. 3: **Average number of noise complaints by sector by local authority**



| Sector                | Total Noise complaints | Average number of complaints by local authority | Number of local authorities |
|-----------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Residential           | 115,857                | 1,044                                           | 111 LAs                     |
| Commercial or leisure | 12,788                 | 118                                             | 108 LAs                     |
| Construction          | 14,052                 | 141                                             | 100 LAs                     |
| Industrial            | 4,808                  | 45                                              | 107 LAs                     |
| Other                 | 194,472                | 1,854                                           | 65 LAs                      |

1. Institute for Government, [Timeline of UK coronavirus lockdowns, March 2020 to March 2021](#)
2. Health Impacts of All Pollution – what do we know?, Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer, 2017
3. Guidance. Noise nuisances: how councils deal with complaints, DEFRA, 2017
4. Burden of disease from environmental noise. Quantification of healthy life years lost in Europe, World Health Organisation, 2011.
5. Auditory and non-auditory effects of noise on health, Basner, Mathias et al., The Lancet, Volume 383, Issue 9925, 1325 – 1332, 2014.
6. Ibid.
7. Environment and health risks: a review of the influence and effects of social inequalities, WHO/ Europe, 2010.
8. Guidance. Noise nuisances: how councils deal with complaints, DEFRA, 2017.

## Appendix

---

We would like to thank the following local authorities who have participated in this year's data collection:

|                                               |                                        |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Adur District Council                         | East Hampshire District Council        |
| Allerdale Borough Council                     | East Hertfordshire District Council    |
| Amber Valley Borough Council                  | East Lindsey District Council          |
| Arun District Council                         | Eastleigh Borough Council              |
| Ashford Borough Council                       | Eden District Council                  |
| Barnet London Borough Council                 | Elmbridge Borough Council              |
| Bassetlaw District Council                    | Epsom & Ewell Borough Council          |
| Blaby District Council                        | Erewash Borough Council                |
| Blackpool Council                             | Fareham Borough Council                |
| Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk | Fenland District Council               |
| Borough of Broxbourne Council                 | Fylde Borough Council                  |
| Boston Borough Council                        | Gosport Borough Council                |
| Bradford Metropolitan District Council        | Gravesham Borough Council              |
| Breckland District Council                    | Great Yarmouth Borough Council         |
| Bristol City Council                          | Hambleton District Council             |
| Bromsgrove District Council                   | Harborough District Council            |
| Broadland District Council                    | Harrogate Borough Council              |
| Broxtowe Borough Council                      | Havant Borough Council                 |
| Burnley Borough Council                       | Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council  |
| Cambridge City Council                        | Hull City Council                      |
| Cannock Chase District Council                | Ipswich Borough Council                |
| Canterbury City Council                       | Kettering Borough Council              |
| Carlisle City Council                         | Kirklees Council                       |
| Castle Point Borough Council                  | Lancaster City Council                 |
| Charnwood Borough Council                     | Leicester City Council                 |
| Cheltenham Borough Council                    | London Borough of Bromley              |
| Cherwell District Council                     | London Borough of Camden               |
| Chichester District Council                   | London Borough of Enfield              |
| City of York Council                          | London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham |
| Colchester Borough Council                    | London Borough of Islington            |
| Corby Borough Council                         | London Borough of Lewisham             |
| Coventry City Council                         | London Borough of Merton               |
| Dacorum Borough Council                       | London Borough of Redbridge            |
| Darlington Borough Council                    | London Borough of Richmond upon Thames |
| Derbyshire Dales District Council             | London Borough of Southwark            |
| Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council        | London Borough of Sutton               |
| Dorset Council                                | London Borough of Waltham Forest       |
| Dover District Council                        | London Borough of Wandsworth           |
| East Cambridgeshire District Council          | Maidstone Borough Council              |
| East Devon District Council                   | Maldon District Council                |

Malvern Hills District Council  
Mendip District Council  
Mid Sussex District Council  
New Forest District Council  
Newark and Sherwood District Council  
North Devon District Council  
North East Lincolnshire Council  
North Kesteven District Council  
North West Leicestershire District Council  
Nottingham City Council  
Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council  
Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council  
Oxford City Council  
Peterborough City Council  
Preston City Council  
Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council  
Redditch Borough Council  
Reigate & Banstead Borough Council  
Richmondshire District Council  
Rochdale Borough Council  
Rossendale Borough Council  
Rother District Council  
Royal Borough of Greenwich  
Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea  
Royal Borough of Kingston Upon Thames  
Rugby Borough Council  
Runnymede Borough Council  
Rushcliffe Borough Council  
Rushmoor Borough Council  
Rutland County Council  
Sedgemoor District Council  
Shropshire Council  
South Derbyshire District Council  
South Gloucestershire Council  
South Holland District Council

South Lakeland District Council  
South Norfolk District Council  
South Northamptonshire Council  
South Oxfordshire District Council  
South Somerset District Council  
Southampton City Council  
Spelthorne Borough Council  
Stafford Borough Council  
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council  
Stoke-on-Trent City Council  
Tandridge District Council  
Thanet District Council  
Thurrock Council  
Torbay Council  
Torrington District Council  
Vale of White Horse District Council  
Wakefield Metropolitan District Council  
Warrington Borough Council  
Warwick District Council  
Wealden District Council  
Wellingborough Borough Council  
West Northamptonshire Council (Daventry Area)  
West Suffolk Council  
Westminster City Council  
Wiltshire Council  
Worcester City Council  
Worthing Borough Council  
Wychavon District Council  
Wyre Forest District Council