



Noise Complaint Data Briefing 2026







Introduction

This briefing is a summary of data gathered from local authorities within England and Wales during the period October 2025-February 2026. It seeks to inform the UK Government, Welsh Government and local authorities in England and Wales about the noise complaints received during the period 1 October 2024 to 30 September 2025.

This is the first dataset published by CIEH since 2020/2021. With a 92% response rate, the data is believed to be representative. Appendix 1 sets out the methodology under which the data was gathered.

Comparison against previous datasets indicates a sharp fall in the number of noise complaints received. The reasons for this, and the policy and practice implications, will be explored by CIEH during the spring of 2026.

For the first time, complaints about air source heat pumps and other emerging noise sources have been recorded. This is a relatively new area and CIEH will set out recommendations for the way that this issue is recorded in future.

Suggested citation: CIEH (2026) Noise Complaint Data Briefing. London: CIEH



Complaints received

Table 1 and Figure 1 present a breakdown by region of the complaints received by local authorities within the reporting period. This data informs the rate of complaints presented further on. London Boroughs, in total, received a greater volume of complaints. The three local authorities that received the most complaints were all London Boroughs.

Region	No. of councils within response data	Total complaints
Wales	22	17,913
South East	65	39,607
South West	21	13,757
London	27	93,632
East of England	42	22,320
West Midlands	28	23,941
East Midlands	32	19,989
Yorkshire & The Humber	14	29,450
North East	10	13,522
North West	34	32,825
Totals	294	306,956

Table 1

Source: [Local government facts and figures: England - LGiU](#)

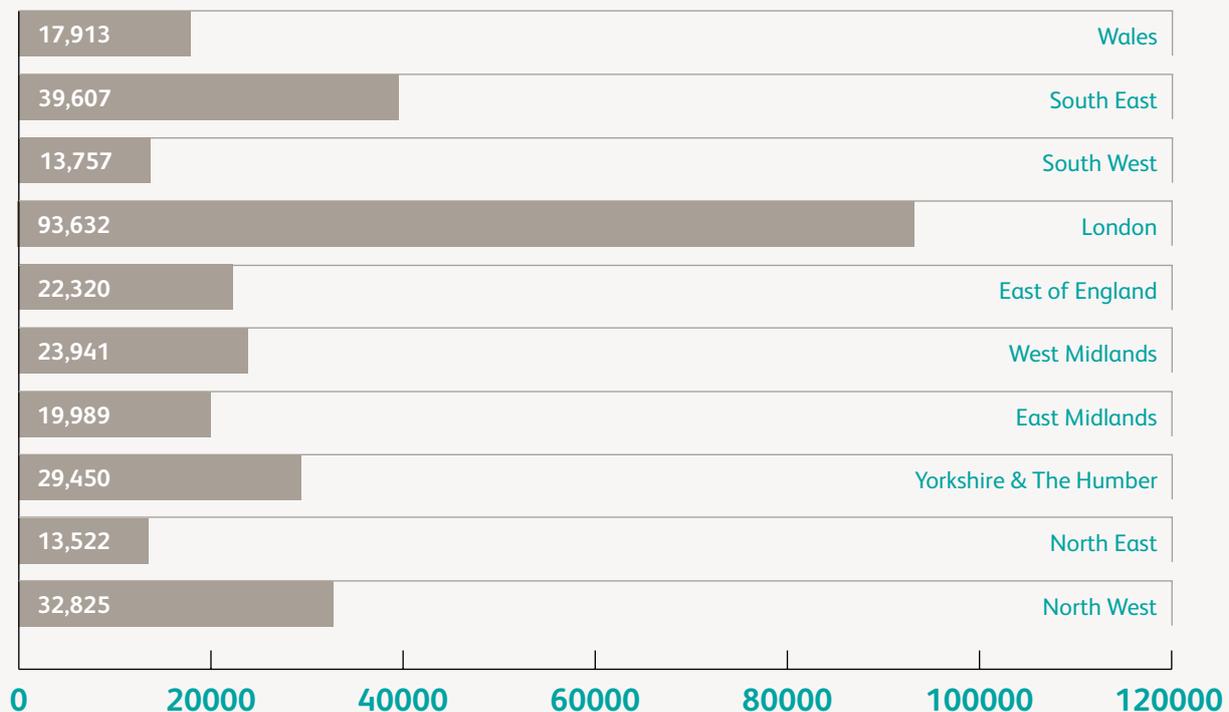


Figure 1: Bar chart displaying volume of noise complaints received by local authorities within Wales and England 2024/2025.

When compared with older figures, the most recent complaint data suggests a downward trend in noise complaint volumes, with a clear increase coinciding with the onset of Covid-19 restrictions (see Figure 2).

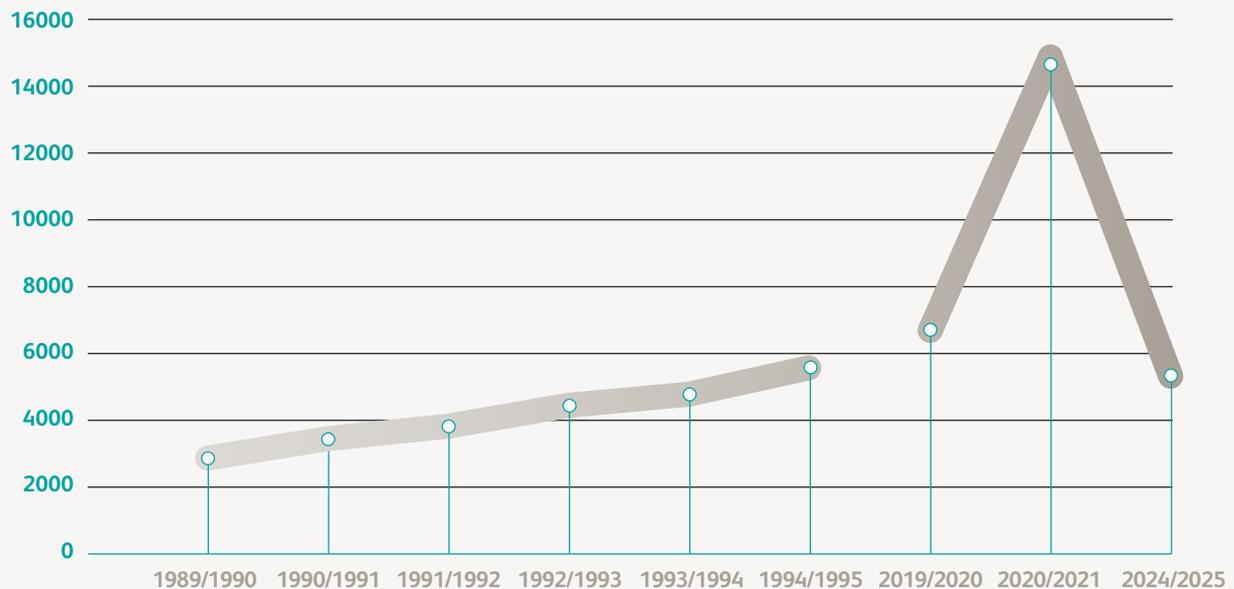


Figure 2: Rate of noise complaints per million population

A particularly accurate comparison can be made utilising data from local authorities in Wales because of the 100% response rate achieved in both 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 (see Table 2 below). This shows not only a decrease in the volume of complaints, but also a decrease in certain types of enforcement activity, as shown in Table 2 and Figure 3 below.

Year	Volume	Rate (per 10,000 population)	No. of abatement notices	No. of prosecutions
2018/2019	18,567	59	446	23
2019/2020	20,445	65	323	34
2024/2025	16,281	52	182	11

Table 2

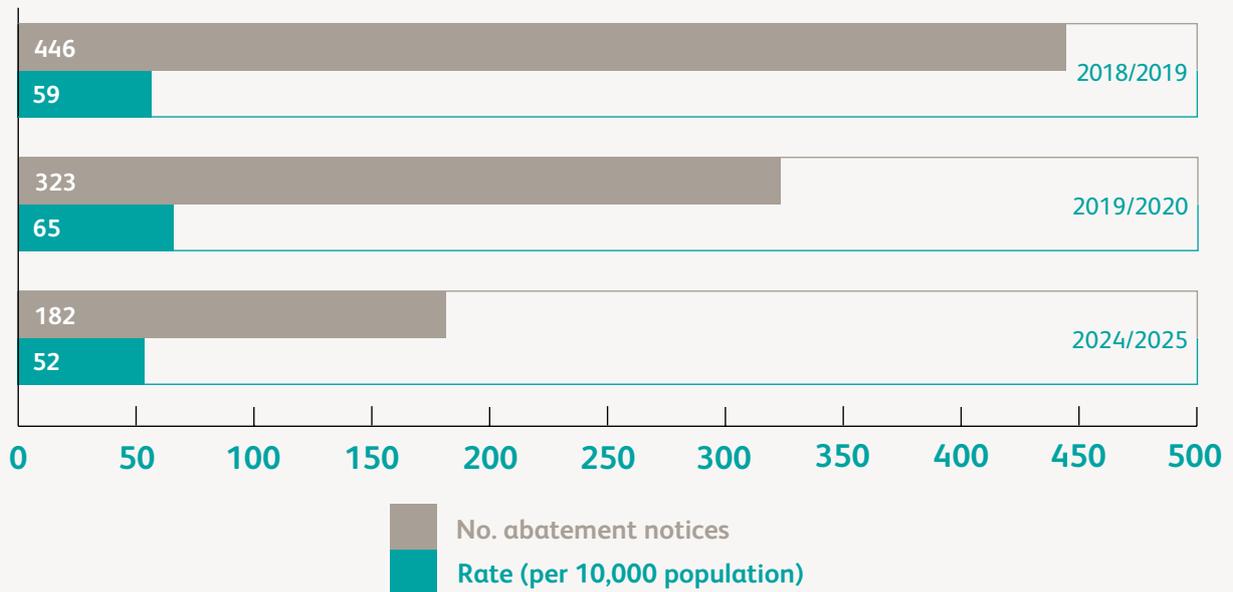


Figure 3: Bar chart displaying volume of complaints received and number of abatement notices served within Wales.





Enforcement statistics broken down by region

Table 3 presents figures on the number of different types of enforcement action taken by local authorities broken down by region. More abatement notices for noise (Section 80, Environmental Protection Act 1990) were served in the North West than in London despite a difference in the volume of complaints. In addition, there was greater use of the review process under the Licensing Act 2003 in the North West than in any other region. There were more prosecutions and community protection notices (specifically for noise) served within the West Midlands than any other region. The powers provided by the Noise Act 1996 are now little used.

Region	Abatement notices	Prosecution	Works in default	Community protection notice ¹	COPA 60/61 ²	COPA 62 ³	CNEA alarms ⁴	LA03 review ⁵	Planning: any	Noise Act 1996
Wales	182	11	1	5	86	0	2	1	2,956	0
South West	52	4	2	45	5	0	7	5	1,095	1
South East	224	22	3	50	197	1	9	7	4,475	0
London	524	28	13	13	1450	0	17	19	2,626	0
East of England	136	17	22	40	57	4	0	1	3,181	0
West Midlands	210	58	10	52	48	0	0	5	2,856	0
East Midlands	109	6	6	47	494	3	4	6	1,931	0
Yorkshire & The Humber	278	12	14	22	13	0	54	2	2,665	0
North West	596	14	16	33	16	0	1	20	3,904	0
North East	72	18	6	24	15	0	1	3	1,747	0
Totals	2,383	190	93	331	2381	8	95	69	27,436	1

Table 3: Number of enforcement actions undertaken across primary pieces of legislation broken down by region.

¹ Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
Community Protection Notice – Noise

² Control of Pollution Act 1974
Section 60/61 Notice – Construction Noise

³ Control of Pollution Act 1974
Section 62 Notice - Loudspeakers in streets

⁴ Clean Neighbourhoods & Environment Act 2005
Section 77 - Silencing of intruder alarms

⁵ Licensing Act 2003 - review proceedings

Historical comparison of enforcement data

Table 4 presents enforcement data from the period 2004/2005 alongside the most recent data to offer a comparison of certain types of enforcement powers over a 20-year period.

In summary:

- There were 190 prosecutions in 2024/2025. In 2004/2005, there were 656 prosecutions recorded. There is a 71 % decrease in comparison to 20 years ago.
- There were 93 seizures of equipment in 2024/2025. There were 439 equipment seizures in 2004/2005. There is a 79 % decrease in comparison to 20 years ago.
- 331 Community Protection notices were issued in relation to noise (the largest number were issued in the South East). There was a similar number issued (n=339) in the year 2019/2020.

Legal measure	England & Wales 2004/2005	England & Wales 2024/2025
Abatement notices served	8,340	2,282
No. equipment seizures	439	93
Prosecutions	656	190
Any use of Noise Act 1996	41	1
Total no. noise complaints	286,872	306,956

Table 4

A comparison at regional level also evidences a downward trend in enforcement. The below data (Table 5) are presented for the London region:

Measure	2004/2005	2024/2025
Abatement notices served	3,235	519
No. equipment seizures	110	13
Section 61 construction consent	134	919
Convictions	133	28
Any use of Noise Act 1996	0	0
Total no. noise complaints	107,121	103,023

Table 5



Technology provision

Table 6 provides a breakdown by region of the number of local authorities that stated they provide a mobile application or 'app' for service users to utilise. Data are also presented regarding the number of local authorities which stated that they did not provide an app (43% of local authorities who responded did not provide an app). Figure 4 presents a graphical representation of the data in Table 6.

Region	App regularly in use	Number of users	App not in use
Wales	21	2,086	0
South West	8	541	13
South East	32	1,601	28
London	7	4,341	17
East of England	26	1,894	14
West Midlands	9	620	13
East Midlands	16	826	14
Yorkshire & The Humber	3	302	7
North West	15	1,046	13
North East	4	617	6
Total	141	13,874	125

Table 6

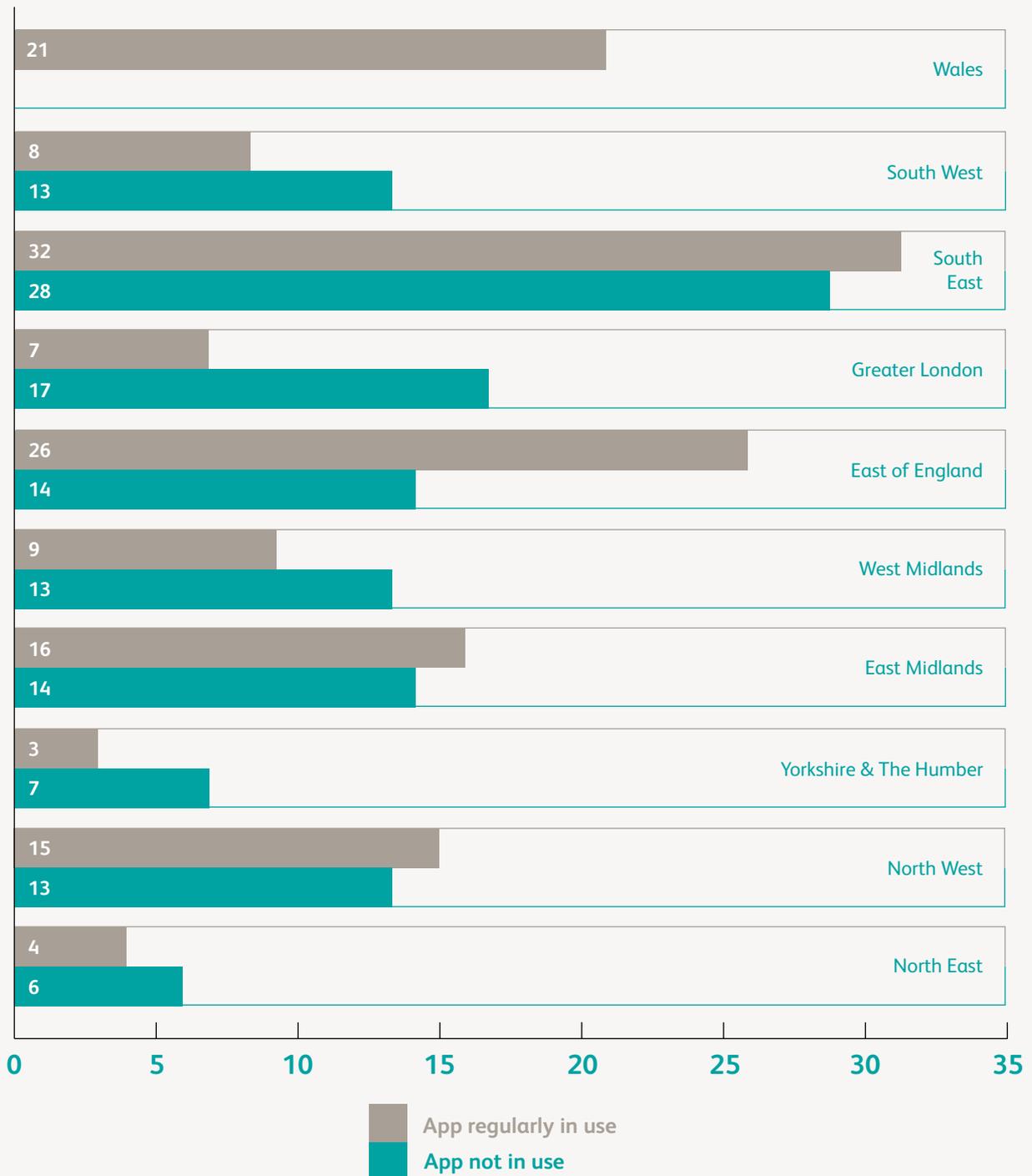


Figure 4: Number of local authorities within Wales and each English region who stated they either did or did not utilise an app as part of the noise nuisance service (note: numbers reported may not total the number of local authorities within each region).



Sources of noise

Table 7 presents figures, also broken down by region, of the number of local authorities that recorded complaints against four specific types of noise source, alongside figures regarding noise from homes believed to be utilised for short term purposes as a holiday let. In addition, the number of local authorities that either applied an exemption under the Freedom of Information Act or were unable to report against a specific code are also provided. It can be seen that:

- i) The number of complaints regarding wind turbines and domestic battery storage units was quite low.
- ii) The greatest number of complaints about short term or holiday let properties was in the North West, but data was unavailable from 112 local authorities within England/Wales.
- iii) The greatest number of complaints regarding Air Source Heat Pumps was in the South East but data was unavailable from 85 local authorities within England/Wales.



Region	Wind turbine	Number of LAs unable to respond or use of exemption	House alleged or proven to have been rented out as a short term let or a holiday let	Number of LAs unable to respond or use of exemption	Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP)	Number of LAs unable to respond or use of exemption	Domestic battery storage	Number of LAs unable to respond or use of exemption	Short Term Operating Reserve (STOR) generators	Number of LAs unable to respond or use of exemption
Wales	7	3	30	11	6	4	0	3	1	8
South West	5	4	36	7	4	7	0	7	1	7
South East	0	14	44	21	48	16	0	17	15	17
Greater London	0	7	27	14	3	14	0	14	0	14
East of England	1	12	10	20	7	14	0	13	16	15
West Midlands	1	4	39	7	3	5	27	6	27	6
East Midlands	0	6	22	10	11	5	0	5	5	6
Yorkshire & The Humber	1	6	34	9	5	7	0	9	0	9
North West	2	10	60	10	13	11	0	11	1	11
North East	0	2	24	3	3	2	0	2	30	2
Totals	17	68	326	112	103	85	27	87	96	95

Table 7: Number of complaints received within England and Wales against selected sources of noise broken down by English region.

A separate question was posed regarding the ability of the software in use to create new codes to capture complaints against the types of noise source identified above. Only 22 councils reported that their software did not offer the functionality to create new codes to allow future reporting about newer technology like Air Source Heat Pumps. This figure, however, when combined with the numbers of local authorities that did not provide data in relation to the above sources suggests that local authority databases are not yet uniformly configured.

The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health will be exploring insights from this data in spring 2026 and will be writing an insights report for publication in the summer of 2026.

Appendix 1

This data briefing highlights data gathered during the period October 2025 to February 2026 from local authorities within England and Wales that responded to a Freedom of Information request submitted by CIEH. This was a departure from the previous voluntary survey which, over time, had yielded decreasing response rates, as shown below. The change in method deployed in November 2025 resulted in a 92% response rate across England and Wales, making the resulting data more representative than in previous years.

Survey Year	% of responding local authorities (rounded)	Number of responding local authorities
1990/91	74	300
1992/93	72	293
1993/94	66	300
1994/95	72	292
1995/96	66	267
1996/97	70	266
1997/98	59	225
1998/99	53	198
1999/00	59	221
2000/01	66	249
2001/02	82	308
2002/03	77	290
2003/04	73	274
2004/05	69	261
2005/06	55	206
2006/07	47	176
2007/08	55	208
2008/09	49	183
2009/2010	48	178
2010/2011	44	152
2011/2012	40	130
2012/2013	46	159
2013/2014	43	150
2014/2015	37	130
2015/2016	38	133

Table 8: Response rates to CIEH noise complaints data survey conducted within England and Wales since 1990.

Survey Year	% of responding local authorities (rounded)	Number of responding local authorities
2018/2019 ⁶	45	143
2019/2020	36	117
2020/2021	45	144
2023/2024	35	118
2024/2025 ⁷	92	294

Table 8 continued: Response rates to CIEH noise complaints data survey conducted within England and Wales since 1990.



Figure 5: Response rates to CIEH noise complaints data survey conducted within England and Wales since 1990 (note: the survey has not been conducted every year since 1990)

⁶ The noise survey was paused for two years after this annual report

⁷ [Local government facts and figures: England - LGiU](#)





CIEH

Chadwick Court,
15 Hatfields,
London SE1 8DJ

+44 (0)20 7827 5800

info@cieh.org

cieh.org

