

## Household Noise Policy

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| Document Owner                                | Operations Director  |
| Prepared by                                   | Policy Officer<br>Head of Housing<br>Responsive Repairs Manager  |
| Approved by                                   | Directors Group  |
| Approved date                                 | 13 March 2025  |
| Date of next Review                           | March 2028   |
| Lines of Defence/how is the document audited? | 1. Regular case review by Manager<br>2. Approval by Directors Group<br>3. This Policy will be reviewed in 1 year |

## **1. Scope and Aims**

- 1.1. This policy applies to all Hexagon Housing Association (Hexagon) residents including leaseholders.
- 1.2. This Policy aims to reflect best practice as advised by the Housing Ombudsman's Spotlight on Noise report, and to respond to non-statutory noise sensitively and proportionately.
- 1.3. This policy addresses noise concerns that do not reach the statutory levels of noise nuisance and that do not constitute Anti-Social Behaviour. The key concern for this policy is household noise and internal noise transference.

## **2. Equality and Diversity**

- 2.1 Hexagon aims to understand the diverse needs of residents and deliver fair and equitable outcomes under this policy. We commit to considering reasonable adjustments in the delivery of our services to accommodate the diverse needs of residents and their household members.
- 2.2 An equality and diversity impact assessment has been carried out and is attached as an appendix to this Policy.
- 2.3 Hexagon will consider all reports of noise in a fair and unbiased manner.

## **3. Consultation**

- 3.1. Residents will be consulted on this policy in 2025/2026.

## **4. Policy Statement**

- 4.1. Some reports of noise nuisance will not meet the threshold of statutory noise nuisance or anti-social behaviour. In these cases, Hexagon recognises that the impact can still affect mental health and well-being, so each report needs to be risk-assessed and treated on its own merits.
- 4.2. Hexagon will triage noise reports to ensure that we are distinguishing between reports of statutory noise nuisance, anti-social behaviour, and household noise transference. In cases of statutory noise nuisance, Hexagon will assess these on a case-by-case basis and residents will be signposted to their Local Authority for additional assistance.
- 4.3. Hexagon will treat all residents with respect and fairness and take the issue of household noise transference seriously. Hexagon will also manage expectations and acknowledge that some household noise transference is unavoidable.

- 4.4. Household noise transference reports will be managed under this policy and will not be considered a complaint. Complaints about how we have handled a noise report will enter our complaints process as per our Complaints Policy.
- 4.5. Household noise includes, and is not limited to, movement, footsteps, doors closing, intermittent music, or the washing machine running.
- 4.6. All reports of household noise transference will be logged and responded to.
- 4.7. As part of works on empty homes between tenancies (void works), Hexagon will:
  - 4.7.1. Fit anti-vibration mats under white goods
  - 4.7.2. Leave in place carpets that are in good condition
  - 4.7.3. Remove hard flooring where there have been reports of noise transference.
- 4.8. Hexagon will offer an independent mediation service to residents as early in the process as possible.
- 4.9. Where appropriate, Hexagon will inspect the home the noise is reportedly coming from to assess the cause of the noise transference, for example any hard flooring. See our Hard Flooring Policy for details.
- 4.10. Hexagon will have regard to noise transference in our net zero plans for insulation to ensure that the thermal insulation activity planned will also provide noise insulation and will not make any existing noise transference issues worse.
- 4.11. When carrying out any Property Safety works, Hexagon will have regard to noise transference and ensure that, wherever possible, additional insulation or compartmentation will also provide noise insulation and will not make any existing noise transference issues worse.
- 4.12. Hexagon will, at a minimum, comply with Building Regulations and planning requirements relating to sound insulation in the design and build of new homes. Hexagon will use third-party testing to assess the sound insulation to ensure compliance using a UKAS accredited organisation for carrying out such tests and reports.
- 4.13. Hexagon will log reports of household noise transference to the property concerned to ensure continuity of intelligence. Hexagon will consider previous reports of noise transference during the Lettings process.

## **5. Legal Framework**

- 5.1. Noise policy statement for England 2010: Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs
- 5.2. Environmental Protection Act 1990
- 5.3. Housing Ombudsman: Spotlight on Noise Complaints 2022
- 5.4. Building Regulations Part E 2003
- 5.5. The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) 2005
- 5.6. Decent Homes Standard 2006
- 5.7. The Regulator of Social Housing: The Neighbourhood and Community Standard

## **6. Related Hexagon policies, strategies and procedures**

- 6.1. Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- 6.2. Complaints Policy
- 6.3. Household Noise Procedure

## Appendix 1: Equality Impact Assessment

Hexagon’s Vulnerable Residents and Reasonable Adjustments Policy commits the organisation to understanding the diverse needs of residents and, where there are any barriers to accessing the service or any disproportionate negative impact, considering reasonable adjustments to ensure a fair and equitable outcome for all residents.

Hexagon recognises that responding and reacting to the changing needs of residents requires a willingness to do things differently and find individual solutions to ensure equitable access to our services for all. The following table will propose how we will adjust the service to account for possible requirements of different groups, to help us to prepare for these expected needs. However, we recognise that we cannot anticipate every need and that there is not a one-size-fits-all solution to all needs, so we will continue to be responsive and flexible in adapting to the diverse needs of residents in enacting this policy.

See the Vulnerable Residents and Reasonable Adjustments Policy for examples of Reasonable Adjustments we will consider. When considering what is reasonable, we will take into account: The effectiveness of the adjustment(s) in preventing or reducing the disadvantage for the person with a disability; The practicality of us making the adjustments; The availability of our resources, including external assistance and finance; Any disruption to the service that making the adjustment may cause.

| Characteristic              | Impact          | Explanation of Impact   | Reasonable Adjustments Considered | Consideration of effectiveness, practicality, cost/availability of resources and any disruption to service | Decision on whether to implement the Reasonable Adjustment |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|---|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Age</b>                  | <b>Positive</b> | Children in the home may increase the likelihood of noise transference, this policy ensure this is triaged appropriately and not assumed to be anti-social behaviour. | None                              |  |  |
| <b>Pregnancy/ Maternity</b> | <b>Positive</b> | As above, children in the home may increase the likelihood of noise transference, this policy ensure this is triaged appropriately and not                            | None                              |  |  |

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|   |                 | assumed to be anti-social behaviour.  |  |   |        |
| <b>Disability: Physical health and mobility</b> | <b>Positive</b> | This policy ensures that any noise transference occurring due to mobility aids or other health equipment is managed appropriately and not assumed to be ASB   |  |   |        |
| <b>Disability: Learning and neurodiversity</b>  | <b>Positive</b> | We will assess the impact of the noise on the individual resident with due consideration of any support needs or neurodiversity, rather than only assessing if it is a problem based on decibel.                      | Hexagon will, at the resident's request, liaise with support workers, representatives, or advocates. Hexagon will signpost or refer residents to support services. | No issues   | Agreed |
| <b>Disability: Vision and hearing</b>           | <b>Positive</b> | Residents who are hard of hearing may be more likely to listen to music or TV at higher volumes, this policy ensures this is treated sensitively and appropriately and not treated as ASB (when at reasonable hours). | We will adapt to the resident's requested communication needs throughout a Household Noise case.   | Some adjustments to communication methods may result in more staff time or costs. Hexagon will choose the adaptation that is most time and cost efficient whilst adequately meeting the resident's needs. | Agreed |
| <b>Disability: Mental health</b>                | <b>Positive</b> | We will assess the impact of the noise on the individual resident with due consideration of any support needs or mental health, rather than only assessing if it is a problem based on decibel.                       | Hexagon will, at the resident's request, liaise with support workers, representatives, or advocates. Hexagon will signpost or refer residents to support services. | No issues   | Agreed |
| <b>Sex</b>                                      | <b>None</b>     | No impact identified  |  |   |        |
| <b>Gender reassignment / Transgender</b>        | <b>None</b>     | No impact identified  |  |   |        |

|                              |             |  |   |   |        |
|------------------------------|-------------|--|---|---|--------|
| <b>/ Non-binary identity</b> |             |  |   |   |        |
| <b>Race or nationality</b>   | <b>None</b> | No impact identified   |   |   |        |
| <b>Religion or belief</b>    | <b>None</b> | No impact identified   |   |   |        |
| <b>Sexual orientation</b>    | <b>None</b> | No impact identified   |   |   |        |
| <b>Language</b>              | <b>None</b> | Residents with low or no English language proficiency may not understand the communication from Hexagon or be able to communicate to English speaking staff. | We will adapt to the resident's requested communication needs throughout a Household Noise case, providing a translation service where necessary. | Some adjustments to communication methods may result in more staff time or costs. Hexagon will choose the adaptation that is most time and cost efficient whilst adequately meeting the resident's needs. | Agreed |
| <b>Literacy</b>              | <b>None</b> | Residents with no or low literacy may not be able to understand letters sent during the course of a Household Noise case.                                    | We will adapt to the resident's requested communication needs throughout a Household Noise case.  | Some adjustments to communication methods may result in more staff time or costs. Hexagon will choose the adaptation that is most time and cost efficient whilst adequately meeting the resident's needs. | Agreed |