

HS2 Approach to Noise

At HS2, we are very aware that planning and building the railway disrupts the lives of local people. We set very high standards during construction to ensure that we are doing everything we can to reduce noise and vibration. The principles of best practicable means (BPM) are implemented to reduce the adverse effects of noise and vibration on all residents. This includes reviewing how each piece of work is going to be carried out, the type of plant or equipment that will be used and mitigation measures such as screening ahead of work starting.

All work activities are evaluated on their own merits, having regard to the local conditions and potential impacts which are subject to a Section 61 consent agreed with the London Borough of Ealing.

We have a number of noise mitigation measures in place at all the HS2 sites in Ealing that have been discussed with the London Borough of Ealing and include:

- Noise control measures on all sites (e.g. acoustic barriers placed around noisier work areas) which are regularly reviewed;
- Fixed noise monitors on all the sites and attended noise monitoring is undertaken on a risk-based basis. All noisy activities are identified ahead of any works taking place through Section 61 consent applications;
- Appointed noise champions for the site teams, to ensure the personnel working on site have the responsibility to understand noise requirements and consents, and to manage their work accordingly;
- Noise signage displayed on all the sites reminding all site staff of the Section 61 noise mitigation requirements in key areas (e.g. canteens, notice boards);
- Regular targeted toolbox talks to site teams on noise, ensuring ongoing communication and upskilling of the workforce takes place; and
- Working closely with the HS2 Helpdesk team so they are able pinpoint and respond to any noise complaints quickly.

In addition, we act upon noise complaints received and review what additional measures we can put in place. This has included measures put in place recently to minimise the noise levels from tunnelling works in the Old Oak Common area in response to feedback from residents and undertaking attended monitoring and compliance audits at the Willesden Euroterminal site.

We are continually reviewing the suitability of the noise mitigation measures in place and will review any additional measures put forward by the London Borough Ealing or residents.

Noise insulation and respite provision

The HS2 Information Paper E23, sets out the noise and vibration policy adopted for HS2 Phase One, which was examined in detail during the parliamentary scrutiny of the enabling legislation for the HS2 scheme. This document explains the limits that we set and the actions we will take to protect health and quality of life.

Residents qualify for noise insulation in connection with HS2 if the predicted or actual construction noise goes above a certain 'trigger' level. The trigger level is the point where the noise from our work is above what we believe is acceptable which is consistent with the Noise Policy Statement for England (2010) and Planning Practice Guidance - Noise (2019).

The noise insulation criteria and the mitigation package offered as set out in Information paper E23 is not under review as it has been applied consistently across the HS2 route. HS2 has proactively offered noise insulation to all residents in Ealing who are eligible. Eligibility however is constantly reviewed and if in the future further eligibility is identified based on noise levels we will engage with residents to make them aware and offer to install noise insulation.

The noise insulation scheme applies to all rooms, with a qualifying door or window, which are not solely used as a kitchen, utility room, bathroom, cellar or sanitary Accommodation. However, we recognise that, in some instances, buildings and the people who live in them may not be properly protected by our policies and that we need to consider these 'special cases' individually. Examples of special cases include homes where noise insulation isn't an option, such as houseboats or mobile homes, and night workers, those who regularly work from home needing a quiet environment to work in and people with a medical condition which will be seriously aggravated by construction noise. We have set up a panel to oversee and manage how we assess special case applications and actively encourage individuals to make themselves known to either HS2 or our contractors in order that their individual circumstances can be considered by the panel. In Ealing several residents have gone through the special case process and have been offered alternative mitigations measures including noise insulation in additional rooms or both facades of their property where they weren't previously eligible.

Respite provision will be and has been offered to residents in Ealing where it has been predicted that the threshold noise criteria is likely to be exceeded. This has included overnight hotel respite stays for overnight noisy works and daytime respite during the tunnelling works.

HS2 Prolonged Disturbance Compensation Scheme

The Prolonged Disturbance Compensation Scheme (PDCS) is intended to complement a wider package of environmental controls to provide a greater choice for people affected by severe and prolonged disruption from construction works. It adds to the noise

insulation and temporary re-housing measures set out in Information Paper E23: Control of Construction Noise and Vibration to give people more choice to remain in their homes; help avoid the disruption of being temporarily re-housed to maintain social cohesion; to support people with cash to provide alternative respite from works; and in special circumstances, gives owner-occupiers the option of requiring the Secretary of State to purchase their property.

Implementation of these controls and the methods of working have meant that eligibility for the PDCS scheme has not occurred in Ealing. Noise levels from construction activities have on occasion exceeded the temporary rehousing thresholds, but they have not lasted long enough to trigger temporary rehousing or eligibility for PDCS which we understand is frustrating to hear. Noise levels are constantly reviewed and if in the future eligibility is identified we will engage with residents to make them aware and the various options available to them.