



Unit 3, Neath Town Centre Retail Development
Fairfield Way, Neath, SA11 3ES

Noise Management Plan

1st August 2025
First Issue



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1.0 Introduction

This Noise Management Plan (NMP) supports the operation of a children's indoor role-play and activity centre at Unit 3, Neath Town Centre Retail Development, Fairfield Way, Neath, SA11 3ES. Planning approval has been granted under reference P2025/0074 by Neath Port Talbot Council, permitting the "change of use of ground floor unit from Class A1 (shop) to Class D2 (leisure) to provide a children's indoor role-play and activity centre, including provision of a new mezzanine floor, installation of themed play zones, and ancillary café."

The facility is designed for children up to the age of eight, providing an immersive play environment that encourages imagination, social interaction, and motor skill development. The space will feature themed role-play zones simulating real-world settings (such as a beauty salon, florist, builder's merchant, and bakery), a small physical play section, and a café offering light refreshments for parents and carers. Low-volume background music will be played during scheduled sessions to enhance the atmosphere. Sessions will be structured in two-hour blocks across the day, with a small number of seasonal evening events extending to 8:00 PM.

Although the venue's noise profile is expected to be modest — broadly comparable to a family café or nursery — the operator recognises the importance of proactively managing environmental sound. The unit is part of a mixed-use development that includes retail, leisure, and food & beverage outlets, with some residential properties nearby. This plan, therefore sets out structured, practical measures to ensure that the venue remains low-impact and well-managed, in keeping with its surrounding context.

The Local Planning Authority has imposed the following condition as part of the planning approval:

Condition 4: "Prior to the first beneficial use of the development hereby permitted, a Noise Management Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, which shall be fully implemented on site thereafter. The Noise Management Plan shall detail the operational controls that will be used to mitigate the noise impact on nearby sensitive receptors. The Plan shall be reviewed if any changes in activity take place, and a revised Plan resubmitted to the Local Planning Authority for its written approval. The revised Noise Management Plan shall be fully implemented thereafter."

This document is intended to satisfy the requirements of Condition 4, demonstrating the operator's commitment to managing noise impacts responsibly and ensuring that the venue operates in a way that is acceptable, sustainable, and sensitive to its surrounding environment. The NMP will form part of the operator's ongoing policy and will be reviewed and updated as necessary in response to operational feedback, neighbour concerns, or regulatory input. "

2.0 Noise Management Plan

This section sets out the control measures proposed to manage and minimise noise emissions associated with the role-play café at Unit 3, Fairfield Way. These measures respond to the requirements of the planning permission and reflect the operator's intention to be a responsible and considerate neighbour within a mixed-use environment.

The objectives of this Noise Management Plan are:

- To minimise the risk of noise disturbance to neighbouring businesses and nearby residential properties.
- To establish clear and practical operational procedures for the control of noise associated with customer activity, music, and building services plant.
- To demonstrate transparency and accountability in how potential impacts would be monitored and managed.
- To provide a flexible, live operational framework that can be reviewed and updated over time if required.

The operator acknowledges that structured measures may be necessary to manage environmental sound, even though the nature of activities was anticipated to be low-intensity and largely self-contained. This plan therefore, set out a series of proportionate and enforceable controls designed to ensure that the premises remained compatible with its surrounding context and to satisfy the expectations of the Local Planning Authority.

The following sub-sections describe the operational measures embedded into the running of the premises, covering areas such as customer management, music levels, equipment maintenance, and procedures for addressing any concerns or complaints.

2.1 Hours of Use and Operating Principles

The role-play café operates exclusively during daytime hours, opening to the public from 08:30 to 18:30, seven days a week. By confining customer activity to these hours, the venue avoids noise impacts during early morning and evening periods when the surrounding area is more sensitive, particularly with respect to nearby residential properties.

Structured two-hour play sessions, with a maximum of four sessions per day, help to control the flow of arrivals and departures. Each session is followed by a 30-minute interval to allow for cleaning and preparation, which prevents crowding at the entrance and reduces the risk of groups gathering or waiting outside. This structured approach limits the potential for cumulative noise build-up associated with continuous, unregulated customer turnover.

While seasonal events (e.g., Christmas or Easter specials) may occasionally extend operating hours until 20:00, these events follow the same operational format, with no amplified sound, no external activities, and no changes to customer numbers. Such events are infrequent and scheduled during periods where background noise from the surrounding commercial environment remains relatively high.

Staff arrivals and preparatory work begin up to one hour before opening (from 07:30 onwards). During this time, all activities are conducted internally and with minimal noise. There are no deliveries or external waste handling during these early hours. Equipment checks, café preparation, and cleaning tasks are completed with an awareness of noise

sensitivity during the early morning period. Similarly, after closing, staff undertake shut-down and tidying procedures quietly to ensure that noise does not extend into the evening period.

The overall operating model is designed to ensure that customer-facing activities are concentrated during periods where background activity levels in the town centre naturally mask any incidental noise generated by the premises..

2.2 Capacity and Layout

Noise levels within the venue are managed through both physical design and operational control. The internal layout has been developed to disperse activity across multiple themed play zones, preventing the clustering of children in single areas where noise peaks could otherwise occur.

Soft finishes, padded flooring, and acoustic wall panels have been incorporated into the fit-out to absorb sound and reduce reverberation. These measures help to minimise the build-up of cumulative sound energy during busy sessions, ensuring that raised voices and playful activity do not escalate into excessive overall volume.

A controlled booking system is used to manage attendance, with strict session capacities maintained to avoid overcrowding. This proactive approach to occupancy control ensures that the venue remains acoustically manageable, preventing scenarios where excessive numbers of children and adults could create elevated noise levels through sheer density.

The café area is zoned to remain acoustically distinct from the active play zones. Seating for parents and carers is positioned away from the noisier sections of the venue, allowing adult conversations to take place at lower volumes in a quieter area. This layout strategy reduces the likelihood of collective volume escalation, where adults would otherwise have to raise their voices to be heard over the sounds of play.

Overall, the combination of considered spatial design and controlled session capacity provides an effective framework for maintaining internal noise levels at an acceptable and manageable level, reducing the risk of noise transmission to adjoining units or nearby residential receptors.

2.3 Customer Behaviour and Supervision

The role-play café is intended as a structured, family-oriented environment where children engage in supervised imaginative play while their parents or carers relax in designated seating areas. All children are accompanied by an adult, but additional staff supervision is essential to ensure that activities remain calm, inclusive, and considerate to the surrounding premises.

While brief moments of elevated excitement are a natural part of children's play, the venue is not intended to accommodate uncontrolled boisterous activity or unsupervised roaming between zones. Staff will monitor customer behaviour throughout each session to ensure that noise levels remain appropriate and that the space is used as intended.

If any particular area becomes overcrowded — or if groups of children begin to dominate certain spaces in a way that results in elevated noise — staff will politely intervene to guide activity back to a more manageable level.

Staff will conduct regular checks throughout the session, with a particular focus during busier periods, to monitor for:

- Excessive volume or disruptive behaviour.
- Groups clustering in ways that amplify noise levels.
- Parent and carer conversations escalating beyond typical café volumes.
- Any use of the space that deviates from its intended, family-friendly atmosphere.

In such instances, staff will politely redirect activity, encouraging quieter play and more considerate use of shared areas. Where necessary, issues will be escalated to the session lead or duty manager for further attention.

These day-to-day supervisory controls are a key element in ensuring that the venue remains well-managed from a noise perspective.

2.4 Music and Amplified Sound Control

The venue will operate as a family-friendly indoor environment with controlled background sound. While day-to-day play activities naturally generate a level of excitement and raised voices, specific controls are in place to manage amplified sound and prevent unnecessary noise emissions.

Background music may be played at a low level during sessions, primarily to enhance the play atmosphere. Music volume will always be set at a level that allows for normal conversation without the need to raise voices, typically below 50–60 dB within the main play zones. Music will be switched off during early morning setup and after closing to avoid unnecessary sound during quieter periods.

Occasional public-address announcements (e.g., session start times, closing reminders) may be made within the building but will be kept short and delivered at a low volume through the internal sound system. No announcements or music will be broadcast externally.

Toys and play equipment that produce sound — such as small keyboards, xylophones, or role-play telephones — are a normal and expected part of the play experience. However, large musical instrument toys that inherently produce louder noise (e.g., drum kits, electric guitars) will not be provided. All sound-generating equipment will be carefully selected to ensure it is appropriate for the indoor space.

Customers will not be permitted to bring in and use their own sound systems (e.g., portable Bluetooth speakers, amplifiers). All sound systems within the venue will be controlled and managed by staff to ensure consistency.

2.5 Building Openings and Façade Control

The premises benefit from a fully enclosed building envelope, with solid walls, a sealed roof structure, and no openable windows or louvres directly connecting to the external environment. The primary point of access is the customer entrance door located at the front of the unit.

To maintain effective noise control, the entrance door will remain closed at all times except for brief periods when customers or staff are entering or exiting the premises. The door will not be propped open or held open for extended periods, even during warmer weather, as the premises are served by a mechanical air conditioning system that provides adequate cooling and ventilation.

This approach ensures that any noise generated within the venue — including customer activity, background music, or mechanical plant — is contained within the building, minimising the potential for sound breakout to adjacent areas. Staff will ensure that the door is closed promptly after use and that it is not left open unnecessarily during operational hours.

2.6 Plant Noise Management

The premises are served by a small number of external condenser units mounted on the roof, providing heating and cooling via the air conditioning system. A mechanical ventilation heat recovery (MVHR) unit supplies fresh air to the open-plan play areas, and a kitchen extract fan is installed to manage ventilation in the café area. All plant items have been specified and assessed in accordance with a separate Noise Impact Assessment, which demonstrated that cumulative plant noise emissions would remain at least 15 dB below the representative daytime background sound level at the nearest residential properties, indicating a negligible impact in accordance with BS 4142:2014.

Nonetheless, operational controls and ongoing maintenance measures will be applied to ensure plant continues to operate as intended and that noise levels remain appropriately managed.

The following procedures will be followed:

- All external plant will typically operate during the premises' approved opening hours and will not be unnecessarily run outside of these times.
- Regular maintenance and servicing of condenser units, the MVHR system, and the kitchen extract fan will be carried out in accordance with manufacturer guidelines to prevent faults, mechanical wear, or excess noise emissions (e.g., rattling, vibration).
- Any faults, unusual noise emissions, or deterioration in plant performance will be investigated promptly, with remedial action taken as a priority.
- Should any plant equipment require replacement or upgrading, the operator will ensure that the noise performance of the new equipment matches or exceeds the standards of the originally assessed systems, unless otherwise agreed with Neath Port Talbot Council.

These management measures ensure that plant noise remains predictable, controlled, and compliant with the planning conditions applicable to the site.

2.7 Deliveries and Waste Handling

Although the premises generate minimal delivery and waste collection activity, occasional supplier visits and refuse collections are expected. These will be managed to avoid unnecessary noise, particularly during early morning and evening periods when the surrounding area is more sensitive. The following controls will apply:

- Delivery drivers and waste collection personnel will be instructed to avoid engine idling, radio use, and unnecessary noise while on site.
- Where trolleys or cages are used for transporting goods, these will be rubber-wheeled or handled carefully to avoid impact noise. Bins and waste containers will be moved without dragging or dropping.
- Any issues arising from delivery or waste handling noise will be logged and investigated in accordance with the complaints procedures set out in **Section 2.9**.

These measures ensure that the limited delivery and waste activity associated with the venue remains controlled and considerate at all times.

2.8 Staff Training and Responsibilities

Effective day-to-day management is essential to ensuring that the measures in this plan are implemented consistently and successfully. All staff will be trained in the operational procedures set out in this Noise Management Plan as part of their induction.

Training will cover:

- Awareness of the site's planning conditions and the purpose of the Noise Management Plan.
- How to monitor and manage customer behaviour in a way that promotes a calm, family-friendly atmosphere.
- Procedures for ensuring doors remain closed when not in active use.
- Responsibilities relating to the start-up and shut-down of sound systems and mechanical plant.
- Clear escalation procedures if staff have concerns about noise-related incidents or receive a complaint.

Training will be refreshed on a regular basis — including at the start of each school holiday period — and whenever significant changes are made to the layout or operation of the venue.

A designated member of staff will act as Noise Supervisor during each shift — typically the duty manager — with overall responsibility for:

- Overseeing compliance with the Noise Management Plan.
- Ensuring the venue is operated in accordance with its approved hours and conditions.
- Responding to any complaints or concerns raised by neighbours, the local authority, or members of the public.
- Logging incidents and actions taken where relevant.

Copies of this Noise Management Plan will be kept on site and made available to all staff for reference.

2.9 Complaint Handling and Logging

The operator is committed to responding promptly, politely, and transparently to any concerns raised about noise from the premises. A clear complaints handling procedure will be in place to ensure that any issues are taken seriously, investigated thoroughly, and addressed appropriately.

A Noise Complaints Log will be maintained by the duty manager and reviewed regularly by senior staff. As a minimum, the log will include:

- Date and time of the complaint.
- Name and contact details of the complainant (if provided).
- Nature and location of the issue raised.
- Summary of the investigation carried out.
- Actions taken to address the issue and prevent recurrence.

Where possible, the venue will aim to respond to complaints at the time they are made, particularly if they relate to ongoing activity. This allows staff to take immediate remedial action, such as addressing customer behaviour, adjusting staff conduct, or checking plant and equipment for unexpected noise.

In the event of a complaint, the duty manager will:

- Acknowledge the concern politely and without defensiveness.
- Investigate the issue, which may include:
 - Reviewing activity within the premises at the relevant time.
 - Speaking with staff to gather observations.
 - Checking noise levels or identifying any equipment-related issues.
 - Contacting the complainant (if appropriate) to clarify details.
- Record the findings and document any remedial action taken.
- Discuss any persistent or repeated concerns with senior management.

A phone number or email contact for noise-related queries will be provided to the Local Authority and can be shared with neighbouring occupiers upon request. Where a concern is raised outside of operational hours, it will be followed up as soon as reasonably possible the next working day.

All complaints, correspondence, and investigation outcomes will be kept on file and made available to Environmental Health Officers or other Council officers upon request.

2.10 Monitoring and Review

This Noise Management Plan is intended as a live operational document that will be reviewed and updated as needed to ensure its continued effectiveness. The operator recognises that managing noise is an ongoing responsibility — not just a planning obligation, but a reflection of good neighbourliness and professional standards.

The plan will be formally reviewed:

- At least once every 12 months.
- Following any substantiated complaint or formal feedback from the Council.
- If there are changes to the layout, opening hours, or session format.
- Before the introduction of seasonal events or new equipment likely to affect noise levels.

Each review will consider:

- The number and nature of any complaints received.
- Feedback from staff, customers, or neighbouring occupiers.
- Any persistent challenges or patterns of concern.
- Observations made by the duty manager or senior team.

Where necessary, the café will amend its procedures, training, or internal signage to address noise-related issues. This may include:

- Adjusting session timings or intervals between sessions.
- Refining staff supervision duties or child engagement protocols.
- Limiting use of particular equipment or play zones during quieter hours.
- Reinforcing noise awareness as part of staff induction and refresher training.

All updates to the Noise Management Plan will be documented and retained on file. The most recent version will be made available to Neath Port Talbot Council on request.

By treating this plan as a working document, the operator aims to support a professionally managed and community-minded facility — one that balances lively activity with appropriate acoustic control.

3.0 Commitment and Contact

The operator of Unit 3, Fairfield Way, is fully committed to implementing the measures set out in this Noise Management Plan and maintaining an open, constructive relationship with neighbouring businesses, residents, and the Local Authority. While the venue is inherently low-intensity, the operator recognises the importance of proactively managing environmental sound and accepts the responsibility that comes with operating in a mixed-use setting.

The controls outlined in this plan reflect both good industry practice and a site-specific response to the planning context and requirements of Neath Port Talbot Council. These measures will be applied consistently and reviewed regularly to ensure that the venue continues to operate in a manner that is compatible with its surroundings.

For any noise-related concerns or comments regarding the operation of the premises, please contact:

[Manager Name]
Role Play Café Manager
Unit 3, Fairfield Way, Neath, SA11 3ES
[Phone Number]
[Email Address]

All communications will be acknowledged and responded to in a timely and constructive manner. A noise complaints log will be maintained on-site and is available for review by Council officers upon request.

This document was originally prepared on the 1st of August 2025 by Chris Parker-Jones, Director of ParkerJones Acoustics, a full Member of the Institute of Acoustics (MIOA), with postgraduate qualifications and professional experience in the assessment and management of environmental noise.



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