



Nü Wellness Club, Neath

Noise Management Plan

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Overview

inacoustic has been commissioned to undertake a diagnostic airborne sound insulation assessment and prepare a Noise Management Plan for the proposed change of use of Unit 5, Fairfield Way, Neath, SA11 3ES, to form the Nü Wellness Club.

The following technical noise assessment has been produced to support the Planning Application to Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council and responds to the matters raised within the Council's pre-application advice, reference Q2025/0329.

This noise assessment is necessarily technical in nature; therefore a glossary of terms is included in Appendix A to assist the reader.

1.2. Scope and Objectives

The scope of the report can be summarised as follows:

- A diagnostic sound insulation test between the proposed health and wellbeing space to the adjacent spaces, in order to determine the acoustic performance of the partitions;
- A determination of the maximum permissible noise level within the health and wellbeing space, in order to avoid impacts upon the existing adjacent uses; and
- A suite of noise management measures to ensure the harmonious co-existence of the health and wellbeing space with the existing adjacent uses.

2. LEGISLATION AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

The development proposals for the Site are guided by the following legislation, policy directives and guidance:

2.1. Legislation

2.1.1. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 has a number of wellbeing goals to achieve through implementing sustainable development. Changes in noise levels can have an impact on the health of habitat and humans, as such the goals to create 'a resilient Wales' and 'a healthier Wales' are applicable.

2.2. National Policy

2.2.1. Future Wales: The National Plan 2040

The National Plan states the following under the heading Developing infrastructure responsibly:

When proposing new transport infrastructure or new development, average population exposure to air and noise pollution should be reduced and soundscapes improved where it is practical and feasible to do so. At the very least, exposure to pollution should be minimised. This will include taking into account the long-term effects of current and predicted levels of air and noise pollution on individuals, society and the environment arising as a result of proposals for transport infrastructure or development.

2.2.2. Planning Policy Wales

The Government's planning policies for Wales are contained in Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, February 2024). The policy provides overarching requirements for developments to adequately control noise pollution, to provide appropriate soundscapes and to incorporate good acoustic design.

The policy is supplemented by the Noise and Soundscape Plan 2023-2028, which provides more detailed guidance on planning for a new development, but does not set out specific assessment methods or criteria. The guidance in this document has been used to inform a qualitative assessment of the effect the proposed development could have on the local soundscape.

2.2.3. Technical Advice Note (Wales) 11

This note provides advice on how the planning system in Wales can be used to minimise the adverse impact of noise without placing unreasonable restrictions on development or adding unduly to the costs and administrative burdens of business.

It outlines some of the main considerations which local planning authorities should take into account in drawing-up development plan policies and when determining planning applications for development which will either generate noise or be exposed to existing noise sources.

2.3. Other Guidance

2.3.1. ProPG: Gym Acoustics Guidance (GAG) - March 2023

This guidance provides broad advice applicable with the planning framework, but also in investigating complaints in existing buildings, as part of achieving sustainable development into the future, and applies a risk-based framework for practitioners to assess whether an existing building is likely to be suitable for Gym use.

The Professional Practice Guidance does not constitute an official government code of practice and neither replaces nor provides an authoritative interpretation of the law or government policy on which users should take their own advice as appropriate.

The subject of this guidance is to consider and manage the impact of noise (including vibration that contributes to structure-borne noise) and/or perceptible vibration at sensitive receptors.

3. SITE DESCRIPTION

3.1. Site and Surrounding Area

The Proposed Development comprises Unit 5, Fairfield Way, Neath, SA11 3ES, comprises a duplex unit and sits below the new Neath Library and between a retail unit and commercial creche/nursery.

The premises are situated within a busy, town centre location, away from residential areas. There is no residential accommodation directly adjoining the premises.

The frontage of the unit can be seen in Figure 1, below.

FIGURE 1: PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA



3.2. Proposed Development Overview

The proposals comprise a health and wellness facility, with reception, changing facilities, sauna and contrast therapy (plunge baths) at ground floor level, with a pilates suite, therapy rooms, WCs and storage at 1st floor level, as shown in Figure 2.

The pilates offer will comprise reformer and mat pilates. The Applicant has confirmed that only light background music will be played for ambience within the contrast therapy area and pilates studio. The premises will not operate as a conventional gym and will not include free weights, powered cardio equipment, spin classes or other high-impact exercise activities.

FIGURE 2: PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT LAYOUT



4. AIRBORNE SOUND INSULATION ASSESSMENT

4.1. Assessment Basis

The principal potential internal noise sources are light background music, instructor speech and normal activity associated with reformer or mat pilates. Given the quiet nature of the proposed operation, the assessment has focused on the existing airborne sound separation between Unit 5 and the directly adjoining premises.

An overall internal activity level of 60 dB $L_{Aeq,T}$ has been adopted as a conservative upper assessment assumption. This is not intended as a prediction of the typical operating level or as a formal music limit; it provides a reasonable upper basis against which the measured sound separation can be considered.

The proposal does not include free weights, powered exercise equipment or high-impact fitness classes. Material structure-borne noise or vibration is therefore not expected from the intended use and no separate vibration assessment is considered proportionate.

4.2. Equipment and Procedure

Diagnostic airborne sound insulation measurements were undertaken on 9th July 2026. One lateral test path was assessed through the party wall to the adjoining retail unit and one vertical test path was assessed through the separating floor/ceiling to the library above.

A test signal was generated within Unit 5 and the resulting source- and receiver-room sound levels were measured across the relevant one-third-octave bands. Receiving-room reverberation times were measured using the interrupted noise method, with reference to BS EN ISO 3382-2. The measured frequency-dependent level differences were rated as a weighted level difference, D_w , in accordance with BS EN ISO 717-1.

The sound measurement equipment conformed to the Class 1 specification of BS EN IEC 61672-1. The equipment inventory is provided in Table 1 below:

TABLE 1: INVENTORY OF SOUND MEASUREMENT EQUIPMENT

Make, Model & Description	Serial Number	Calibration Certificate Number	Calibration Due Date
NTi Audio XL2-TA Sound Level Meter	A2A-14648-E0	UCRT24/2127	20/08/2026
NTi Audio MA220 Preamplifier	7599		
NTi Audio MC230A Microphone	A15871		
Larson Davis CAL200 Acoustic Calibrator	15314	UCRT24/2276	30/10/2026

The sound measurement equipment used during the survey was field calibrated at the start and end of the measurement period. A calibration laboratory has calibrated the field calibrator used within the twelve months preceding the measurements. A drift of less than 0.2 dB in the field calibration was found to have occurred.

4.3. Results

4.3.1. Sound Insulation

The full test results are presented in Appendix B. A summary of the results can be seen below in Table 2.

TABLE 2: SOUND INSULATION TEST RESULTS

Type	Source Room	Receiver Room	D _w (dB)
Airborne Wall	Unit 5	Adjacent Retail Space	42
Airborne Floor	Unit 5	Library	49

4.4. Discussion

In summary terms, the sound test was run with a source level within the Unit 5 space of just over 90 dB(A), which gave rise to a sound level within the adjacent retail unit of just under 49 dB(A) and the library of between 43 and 44 dB(A).

Given that the proposals for Unit 5 comprise a wellness suite, and not a typical commercial fitness centre i.e. there will be an emphasis on quietude and relaxation, rather than high-energy music, vocal instruction, and impactful activities, the level will be low; certainly not exceeding 60 dB(A).

Consequently, considering a directly proportional reduction in source noise level, the activities within Unit 5 will give rise to noise levels in the adjacent retail/creche units of below 20 dB(A) and below 14 dB(A) within the library. In reality, activities will typically give rise to levels within Unit 5 of substantially below 60 dB(A), and will likely be entirely inaudible on the basis of the assessed sound insulation properties of the existing structures.

5. NOISE MANAGEMENT PLAN

The preceding assessment demonstrates that the proposed wellness and pilates use can operate without material disturbance to adjoining occupiers. The measures below are intended to preserve the quiet nature of the use assessed, without imposing an unnecessarily restrictive operating regime.

5.1. Permitted Use

The premises will operate as a wellness and therapy facility comprising sauna and contrast therapy, treatment and physiotherapy rooms, and reformer or mat pilates. These are inherently low-noise activities and are materially different from those normally associated with a conventional commercial gym.

- Spin classes, circuit training, CrossFit, boot camps, boxercise, HIIT, trampolining and similar high-energy or high-impact activities will not be undertaken.
- Free-weight training, weight dropping, powered cardiovascular exercise equipment, amplified entertainment and parties will not be introduced.
- Any material change to the nature or intensity of the operation will be subject to acoustic review before it is implemented.

5.2. Music Management

Music will be limited to light background music for ambience and, where necessary, quiet instructional support. It will not form a principal part of the customer experience and will be controlled by the premises manager or another authorised member of staff.

- Subwoofers will not be installed, bass-enhancement functions will remain disabled and loudspeakers will be positioned away from party walls where reasonably practicable.
- Any material alteration to the music system or intended music level will be subject to acoustic review.

5.3. Operational Controls

Instructors will use only the voice level reasonably required for instruction and will avoid unnecessary vocal projection. The external entrance doors will remain closed during classes and treatment sessions, other than for normal access and egress. Staff will also manage customer behaviour, arrivals and departures where these have the potential to affect adjoining occupiers.

5.4. Building Fabric and Equipment

Exercise and therapy equipment will be used in a manner that avoids unnecessary noise. Equipment will not be dropped or dragged across the floor, and reformer pilates equipment will be maintained in good working order so that worn, loose or defective components are identified and addressed promptly.

The integrity of the existing party walls and the separating floor and ceiling construction will be maintained. Any new service penetrations through those constructions will be appropriately sealed on completion, and materially different exercise equipment will not be introduced without prior acoustic review.

5.5. Staff Management

The premises manager will be responsible for implementing this Noise Management Plan. All staff will receive an appropriate briefing before working unsupervised within the premises. The briefing will cover:

- The activities permitted within the premises and those expressly excluded;
- The control of music and instructor voice levels;
- The correct use and maintenance of equipment, the need to keep entrance doors closed during sessions, and the procedure to follow in the event of a complaint.

5.6. Complaints Procedure

The operator will maintain a straightforward complaints procedure so that any concerns can be identified and resolved promptly. Where a complaint is received:

- The date and time, the nature of the concern and the activity taking place will be recorded;
- Where the alleged disturbance is ongoing, staff will make an immediate check and, where reasonably practicable, reduce or cease the suspected source;
- The matter will be investigated promptly and any necessary corrective action will be implemented; and
- Where contact details are available, the complainant will be updated within five working days and a record of the investigation and outcome will be retained.

5.7. Review

The Noise Management Plan will remain applicable for the lifetime of the proposed operation and will be reviewed where any of the following circumstances arise:

- A material change to the nature of the use, class type, music system or exercise equipment;
- Significant refurbishment or alteration to a separating wall, floor or ceiling; or
- Repeated or substantiated noise complaints, or a request from the Local Planning Authority following identification of a material noise concern.

6. CONCLUSION

Diagnostic airborne sound insulation measurements have been undertaken between Unit 5 and the adjoining retail accommodation and library. The measured weighted level differences were 42 dB through the party wall and 49 dB through the separating floor/ceiling.

The proposed operation will comprise quiet wellness, treatment and pilates activities, with only light background music for ambience. It will not include free weights, powered exercise equipment, high-impact fitness classes or the other activities typically associated with a conventional gym.

Based on the measured airborne sound separation and a conservative internal activity assumption of 60 dB $L_{Aeq,T}$, activity noise is expected to remain below 20 dB(A) in the adjoining retail unit and at approximately 14 dB(A) or below in the library. Noise from the intended operation is therefore unlikely to be readily audible or materially intrusive within the adjoining premises.

Subject to implementation of the Noise Management Plan, no additional acoustic upgrading is considered necessary for the proposed use. This conclusion relates specifically to the activities described within this report. Any material change to the use, including higher-energy classes, substantially amplified music or materially different equipment, should be subject to further acoustic review.

Any new externally mounted mechanical plant should be considered separately once its location and specification are available.

7. APPENDICES

7.1. Appendix A – Definition of Terms

Sound Pressure	Sound, or sound pressure, is a fluctuation in air pressure over the static ambient pressure.
Sound Pressure Level (Sound Level)	The sound level is the sound pressure relative to a standard reference pressure of 20 μ Pa (20x10 ⁻⁶ Pascals) on a decibel scale.
Decibel (dB)	A scale for comparing the ratios of two quantities, including sound pressure and sound power. The difference in level between two sounds s1 and s2 is given by 20 log ₁₀ (s1 / s2). The decibel can also be used to measure absolute quantities by specifying a reference value that fixes one point on the scale. For sound pressure, the reference value is 20 μ Pa.
A-weighting, dB(A)	The unit of sound level, weighted according to the A-scale, which takes into account the increased sensitivity of the human ear at some frequencies.
Noise Level Indices	Noise levels usually fluctuate over time, so it is often necessary to consider an average or statistical noise level. This can be done in several ways, so a number of different noise indices have been defined, according to how the averaging or statistics are carried out.
L _{eq,T}	A noise level index called the equivalent continuous noise level over the time period T. This is the level of a notional steady sound that would contain the same amount of sound energy as the actual, possibly fluctuating, sound that was recorded.
L _{max,T}	A noise level index defined as the maximum noise level during the period T. L _{max} is sometimes used for the assessment of occasional loud noises, which may have little effect on the overall L _{eq} noise level but will still affect the noise environment. Unless described otherwise, it is measured using the 'fast' sound level meter response.
L _{90,T}	A noise level index. The noise level exceeded for 90% of the time over the period T. L ₉₀ can be considered to be the "average minimum" noise level and is often used to describe the background noise.
L _{10,T}	A noise level index. The noise level exceeded for 10% of the time over the period T. L ₁₀ can be considered to be the "average maximum" noise level. Generally used to describe road traffic noise.
Free-Field	Far from the presence of sound reflecting objects (except the ground), usually taken to mean at least 3.5m
Facade	At a distance of 1m in front of a large sound reflecting object such as a building façade.
Fast Time Weighting	An averaging time used in sound level meters. Defined in BS 5969.

In order to assist the understanding of acoustic terminology and the relative change in noise, the following background information is provided.

The human ear can detect a very wide range of pressure fluctuations, which are perceived as sound. In order to express these fluctuations in a manageable way, a logarithmic scale called the decibel, or dB scale is used. The decibel scale typically ranges from 0 dB (the threshold of hearing) to over 120 dB. An indication of the range of sound levels commonly found in the environment is given in the following table.

TABLE 3: TYPICAL SOUND LEVELS FOUND IN THE ENVIRONMENT

Sound Level	Location
0dB(A)	Threshold of hearing
20 to 30dB(A)	Quiet bedroom at night
30 to 40dB(A)	Living room during the day
40 to 50dB(A)	Typical office
50 to 60dB(A)	Inside a car
60 to 70dB(A)	Typical high street
70 to 90dB(A)	Inside factory
100 to 110dB(A)	Burglar alarm at 1m away
110 to 130dB(A)	Jet aircraft on take off
140dB(A)	Threshold of Pain

The ear is less sensitive to some frequencies than to others. The A-weighting scale is used to approximate the frequency response of the ear. Levels weighted using this scale are commonly identified by the notation dB(A).

In accordance with logarithmic addition, combining two sources with equal noise levels would result in an increase of 3 dB(A) in the noise level from a single source.

A change of 3 dB(A) is generally regarded as the smallest change in broadband continuous noise which the human ear can detect (although in certain controlled circumstances a change of 1 dB(A) is just perceptible). Therefore, a 2 dB(A) increase would not be normally be perceptible. A 10 dB(A) increase in noise represents a subjective doubling of loudness.

A noise impact on a community is deemed to occur when a new noise is introduced that is out of character with the area, or when a significant increase above the pre-existing ambient noise level occurs.

For levels of noise that vary with time, it is necessary to employ a statistical index that allows for this variation. These statistical indices are expressed as the sound level that is exceeded for a percentage of the time period of interest. In the UK, traffic noise is measured as the L_{A10} , the noise level exceeded for 10% of the measurement period. The L_{A90} is the level exceeded for 90% of the time and has been adopted to represent the background noise level in the absence of discrete events. An alternative way of assessing the time varying noise levels is to use the equivalent continuous sound level, L_{Aeq} .

This is a notional steady level that would, over a given period of time, deliver the same sound energy as the actual fluctuating sound.

To put these quantities into context, where a receiver is predominantly affected by continuous flows of road traffic, a doubling or halving of the flows would result in a just perceptible change of 3 dB, while an increase of more than 25%, or a decrease of more than 20%, in traffic flows represent changes of 1 dB in traffic noise levels (assuming no alteration in the mix of traffic or flow speeds).

Note that the time constant and the period of the noise measurement should be specified. For example, BS 4142 specifies background noise measurement periods of 1 hour during the day and 15 minutes during the night. The noise levels are commonly symbolised as $L_{A90,1\text{hour}}$ dB and $L_{A90,15\text{mins}}$ dB. The noise measurement should be recorded using a 'FAST' time response equivalent to 0.125 ms.

7.2. Appendix B –Sound Insulation Results

FIGURE 3: TEST RESULTS - PARTY FLOOR

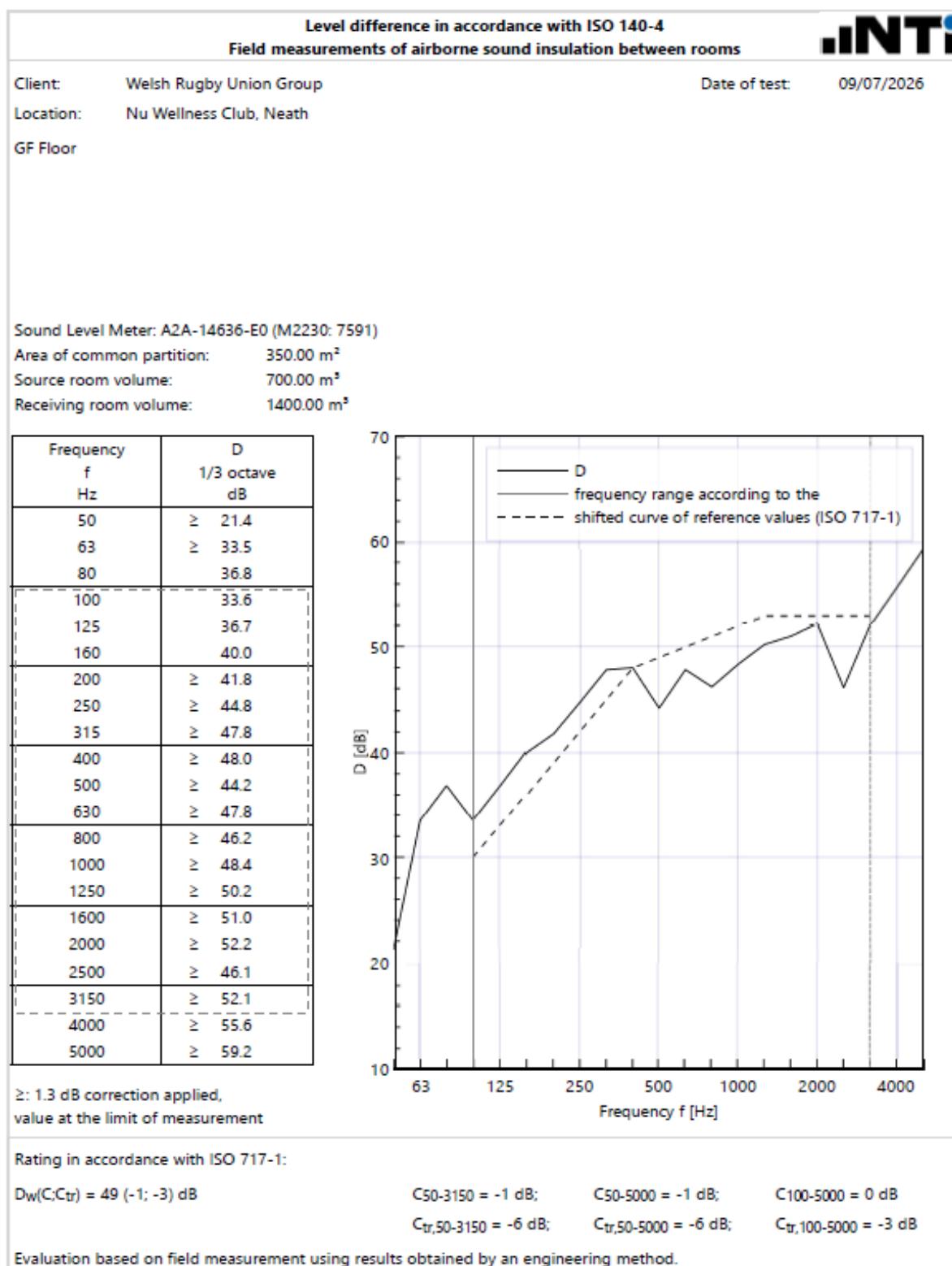
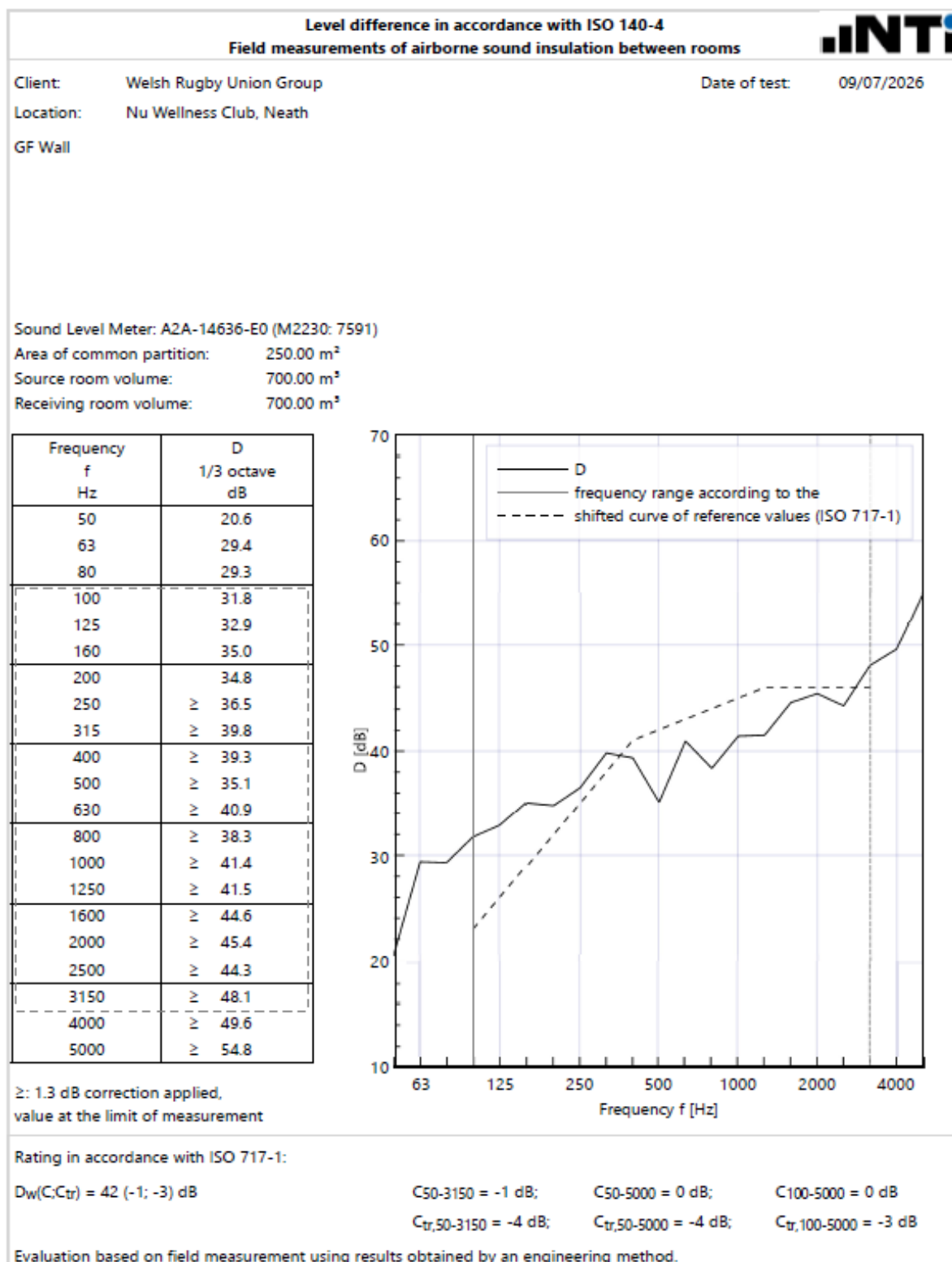


FIGURE 4: TEST RESULTS - PARTY WALL



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