

Noise Induced Hearing Loss Awareness

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help



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What can cause hearing loss?

There are three main cause of hearing loss:

Disease of the ear, eg an infection which may cause perforation of the eardrum

You will no rmally know if you have had an inner ear infection as you will probably have been treated by your GP or Hospital.

The ageing process

We all lose some of our hearing naturally as we get older. If this is combined with a disease of the ear or exposure to noise, your hearing will deteriorate at a faster rate than with ageing alone. You cannot recover damages for naturally occurring ear diseases or hearing loss that occurs solely through age but you can if it is combined with hearing loss due to exposure to noise.

Exposure to excessive noise levels

Your hearing loss might be due to excessive noise in your life. Common examples are those who participate in shooting, motorcycling, listen to loud music or work in a noisy environment.

If your hearing loss is due to exposure to noise in the workplace then you may be entitled to recover compensation as your employers were under a duty to protect your hearing from 1963 onwards.

In all cases if you believe that you are suffering from hearing loss then you should arrange to take a hearing test. An audiologist will be able to diagnose the extent of your hearing loss, the causes of it and what you can do to improve your level of hearing.

What are the symptoms?

Often it is quiet difficult to know whether you are losing your hearing as it is a very gradual process and is often noticed by your friends and family before you.

Common signs are:

- When in a crowded place you have difficulty following a conversation.
- When you need to have the television volume higher than is comfortable for others around you.
- You struggle to follow a conversation on the telephone or hear it ringing.

What is hearing loss?

The inner ear contains thousands of nerve endings almost like wheat in a field. When wind blows over the wheat it is like noise would do over the nerves. The wheat bends as do the nerves and then return to normal when the wind stops. If the wind is strong enough and for a prolonged period of time then the wheat will become permanently damaged and will stay bent. This is what happens to the tiny nerve endings in the ear, they become bent and are unable to pick up certain frequencies.

Similarly if there is a strong sudden gust of winds then the wheat breaks. The nerves act in exactly the same way and a loud noise can break the nerve endings possibly causing severe hearing loss if not total deafness. Many employers/industries failed to protect their employees from noise. Often the wrong kind of ear protection was given to their employees but commonly no ear protection was given at all.

These are just some of the historic industries in which noise has been proven to have caused hearing loss:-

1. The Textile Industry
2. Road workers
3. Ship Building
4. Mining
5. The Steel Industry
6. Heavy Engineering

Normally exposure to noise will have been for about 2 years or more and throughout the duration of your shift if your hearing loss is work related.

Can I get compensation?

Civil Claims

If you have been exposed to loud and excessive noise during the course of your employment, the exposure occurred after 1963 and it has caused you to lose some of your hearing you may be able to claim compensation through the courts even if you also suffer from an inner ear disease and/or age related hearing loss.

In order to do so you will need to establish that your employer was either negligent or in breach of their legal duty at the time the exposure occurred. If successful the result will be a payment of compensation, the amount of which will depend on the extent of your hearing loss.

You will need a good recollection of your employment and the nature of the employment, the cause of the noise to which you were exposed and you may need statements from former work colleagues who can confirm your evidence.

You may also be able to recover additional compensation for the provision of hearing aids and their maintenance, this largely depends on the availability of such aids free of charge from the NHS. You may also be entitled to an additional sum if your hearing loss restricts the type of employment available to you.

State benefits

You may be entitled to compensation by applying to the DSS for Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefits provided that your last exposure to noise in the workplace was not more than 5 years ago, you worked in certain occupations and you have a certain degree of hearing loss

Who pays for all of this?

The funding of these cases is often by way of a conditional fee agreement which is also known as a 'No Win, No Fee' Agreement. This means that your solicitor agrees to take your case on and only gets paid if the case is successful.

The legal costs are paid by the other side in addition to paying your compensation. An insurance policy is usually taken out to cover you against the possibility of losing the case. Alternatively, your trade union may cover the costs of such a claim or you may have legal expenses insurance as part of your household or other insurance policies that will pay for the legal costs.

Your solicitor will advise you as to the options available to you.

What should I do now?

We solicitors can advise you further about all of these issues, please feel free to contact us to discuss any questions or queries you might have on

Freephone 0800 294 3065

What help can I get?

There is a network of Support Groups throughout the country, some of whose contact details appear in the useful contact section below. They provide emotional and practical support and advice to sufferers and their families. Their support workers have vast experience of helping and advising sufferers and will be up to date on all the latest issues concerning compensation and treatment.

Useful telephone numbers:

RNID

Information Line

Telephone: 0808 808 0123

Textphone: 0808 808 9000

www.rnid.org.uk

Royal Association for Deaf People

Telephone: 0845 688 2525

Email: info@royaldeaf.org.uk

www.royaldeaf.org.uk

Hearing Concern

Telephone: 020 7440 9871

Email: info@hearingconcern.org.uk

www.hearingconcern.org.uk

Leeds Society for Deaf and Blind People

Telephone: 0113 243 8328

Email: info@leedsdeafandblind.org.uk

www.leedsdeafandblind.org.uk

Sense

Telephone: 0845 127 0060

Email: info@sense.org.uk

www.sense.org.uk

UK Council on Deafness

Telephone: 01206 274075

Email: info@deafcouncil.org.uk

www.deafcouncil.org.uk



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we solicitors is a modern dynamic firm that strives to achieve the highest levels of professionalism and excellence. Our specialist industrial hearing loss department has many years of experience in dealing with claims concerning exposure to loud and excessive noise in the workplace.

You will receive clear advice from our friendly and approachable staff as they guide you through the entire process.

The firm will give you free initial advice and thereafter can offer you a **No Win, No Fee*** arrangement under which you will be **guaranteed 100% of any compensation won** on your behalf.

**Call freephone 0800 294 3065
for legal advice at no cost to you**

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