

CrossCountry Noise Management Strategy

March 2024

Executive Summary

Introduction

Section Three of the RSSB's widely endorsed Sustainable Rail Blueprint, 'A Quieter Railway' describes how noise is an unavoidable consequence of operating and maintaining the railway, and how the industry should endeavour to manage noise. It states that noise must be managed effectively, as evidence shows that excessive noise can adversely affect health and quality of life.

Due to the nature of our long-distance travel operation, we typically do not receive a significant number of noise complaints. However, we recognise that noise can be a disturbance to those living or working besides the railway. This document therefore outlines how noise complaints will be monitored, governed, and reported.

This document complies with the requirements of the Noise Action Plan: Railways (2019 or later) and Noise Action Plan: Agglomerations (2019 or later). The objectives, approach and deliverables contained within this Strategy are guided by the requirements of the Noise Policy Statement for England (2010) and Noise Action Plans under the Environmental Noise (England) Regulations 2006.

This Noise Strategy outlines how we record, report, and manage noise complaints from various stakeholders. It also outlines how complaints management is escalated through internal governance.

Objectives

The overall objective of our Noise Management Strategy is to support a quieter railway that actively manages noise and vibration to protect the health and wellbeing of our lineside neighbours, customers, and colleagues working on board.

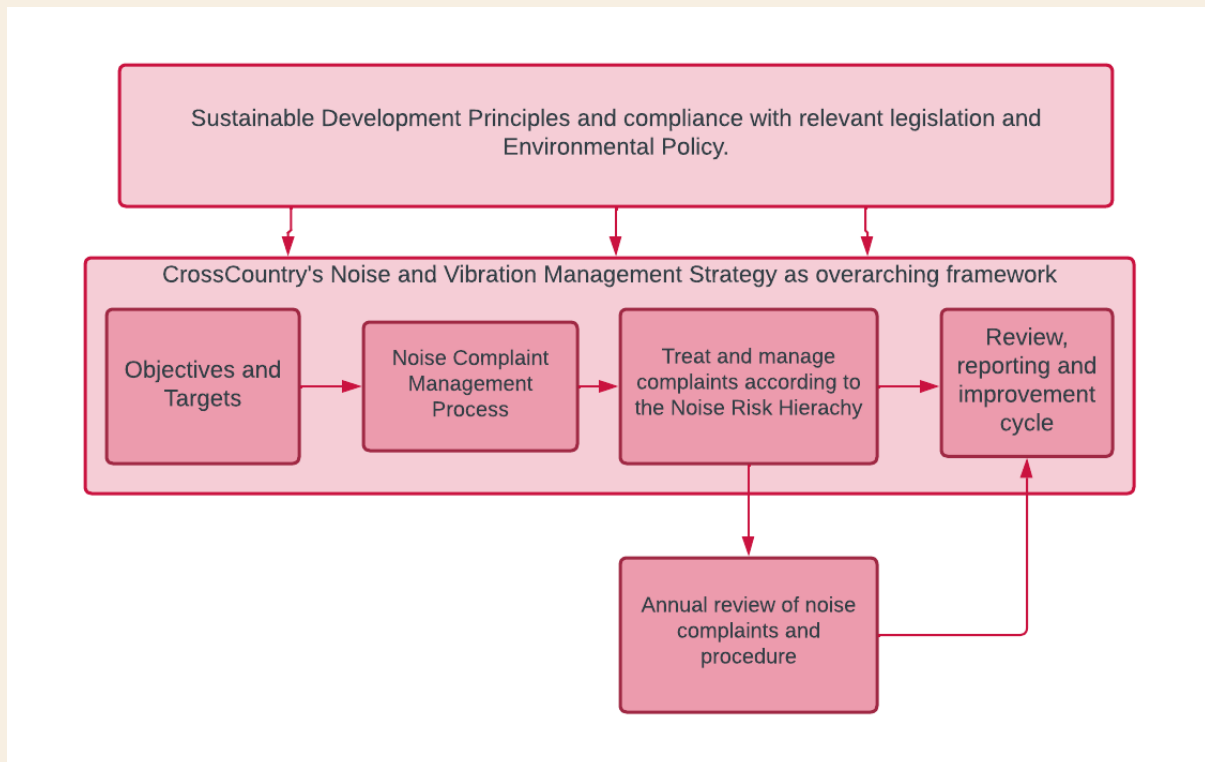
We will consider the impact of future changes to our operations on noise and vibration. On our journey to becoming a quieter railway, there are four vulnerable stakeholder groups in noise and vibration management we will consider.



SRB Strategic Area	Recipients of noise and vibration	Aims of the noise management strategy
Quieter Journeys	Passengers	<p>Strategic aim: Noise management contributes to improved customer experience and attracts growth.</p> <p>Objective: Improve customer experience on our trains and stations, promote modal shift, improve accessibility for persons with hearing impairment and sensitivity to noise and generate growth opportunities.</p>
Quieter Workplace	Colleagues	<p>Strategic aim: Noise management contributes to an improved and inclusive working environment.</p> <p>Objective: Ensure safety and improve the working environment, on trains, at stations and maintenance sites.</p>
Quieter for communities	Neighbours	<p>Strategic aim: Protect the wellbeing of our local communities and vulnerable people.</p> <p>Objective: Be inclusive in our approach to protect the quality of life, social infrastructure, and vulnerable people by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Reducing significant adverse effects of noise on health and quality of life b) Mitigating and minimising adverse effects on health and quality of life c) Protecting and preserving areas where the environmental noise levels are low.
Quieter for communities	Wildlife and Heritage Assets	<p>Strategic aim: Protect the health of local flora and fauna.</p> <p>Objective: Protecting and preserving the quiet areas, local green spaces, areas of outstanding natural beauty (AONB), and significant habitats for breeding animals.</p> <p>Protecting and preserving rural areas where the environmental noise levels are low. Protecting and preserving heritage sites and sites of scientific significance.</p>



Approach to achieving the Noise Strategy's objectives: 12 Monthly Review and Internal Governance Structure



Upon completion of the complaints review and the network analysis, we have established an internal governance process to address the identified noise and vibration issues.

In carrying out this strategy we commit to:

- Act as a responsible neighbour under Section 122 of the Railways Act 1993, and act with care and reasonable regard to neighbours under the common law
- Demonstrate a positive contribution to the communities and environment, under the Maximising Social Value and Rail at the Heart of Communities goals within the Sustainable Rail Blueprint
- Apply the principles of sustainable development as defined by the Government in the UK Sustainable Development Management Plan
- Support the DfT Rail Environment Policy Statement (July 2021)
- Fulfil the obligations of our National Rail Contract.

Scope

This Strategy addresses all our operating routes, as outlined in the Network Overview section, and applies to managing noise from CrossCountry's operations. Reference to 'noise' within this paper signifies 'environmental airborne and ground-borne noise and vibration'.

More specifically:

- a) Environmental airborne noise emitted by rolling stock and other equipment used we use
- b) Environmental ground-borne noise and vibration emitted by rolling stock and other equipment we use.

Limitations

This strategy applies to the activities that CrossCountry carries out under its current operating licence. Where changes to our operation take place, we will review our Strategy and update it as relevant. This Strategy also does not apply to any maintenance, renewals or other activities carried out by the Infrastructure Managers. We recognise that train operators are restricted in their means of addressing wheel-rail interface noise. To overcome this restriction, we rely on collaborative working with Network Rail as set out in the Engagement and Collaboration section of this strategy.

This scope of this strategy does not cover interior rolling stock noise.

An annual review of noise complaints will be undertaken, and escalation will be applied where required, as per Section 'Governance and Organisational Culture'. Should noise complaints become a significant challenge within CrossCountry, a further review of this strategy will be undertaken.



Governance and Organisational Culture

CrossCountry has established its ISO14001:2015 accreditation. This accreditation will be maintained and renewed as appropriate.

Role	Responsibilities	Escalation to
Environment & Sustainability Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation and implementation of the Noise Strategy. Maintain records of noise complaints, monitoring, management, and mitigations and make these available to the appropriate authority as necessary. Facilitate noise response actions, track their progress and report on their results. Communicate the Noise Strategy with the organisation and relevant stakeholders. Facilitate, organise, and sponsor investigation of noise complaints by the local managers. Validate compliance to CrossCountry's Engine Shut Down Policy through audit checks with Local Managers. 	Head of Safety Security and Environment
Head of Safety Security and Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safeguard compliance to the legislative and contractual requirements on noise management. Enforcement of noise management governance Review and approval of Noise Strategy and Action Plan if required. 	Managing Director / Arriva Group
Local Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete checks to ensure compliance with CrossCountry's Engine Shut Down Policy. 	Head of Safety Security and Environment
Customer Relations Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide initial response to the complainant. Record noise complaints in the system, ensuring the full details pertaining to the noise incident are captured. Ensure that the Environmental Manager is alerted to any received complaints for investigation. 	Environment & Sustainability Manager / Head of Safety Security and Environment
Train Crew Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report instances of abnormal or excessive noise through the defect reporting procedure. 	Local Managers



Network Description

Overview

CrossCountry is a long-distance operator running services across covering the length and breadth of Great Britain. It provides connectivity between major cities, as well as connecting local communities to key transport hubs. It unites three nations, Scotland, England, and Wales, with core routes including Edinburgh to Penzance, Cardiff to Nottingham and Manchester to Reading.

The CrossCountry network interacts with every Network Rail region and most of its routes, without being the lead operator in any. Similarly, CrossCountry call at over 120 stations, but do not manage or own any of the station infrastructure. Its position on the UK rail network is therefore unique, so collaboration with its industry partners is crucial to CrossCountry's success.

CrossCountry currently operate a diesel-only fleet comprised of Class 220/ 221 Voyagers and Class 170 Turbostars, which are maintained by Alstom and West Midlands Trains (WMT) respectively. CrossCountry do not carry out or manage any maintenance infrastructure.

CrossCountry's network is divided into four regions: West and Wales, East Midlands and East Anglia, West Midlands and North West, and North East and Scotland. Each region is led by a Regional Director, supported by an organisational structure encompassing Customer Service Managers, Driver Team Managers, and front-line crews.

Agglomerations

Defra's 'Strategic Noise Mapping for Railway Noise' refers to an urban area as an 'agglomeration' if it has a population more than 100,000 persons and a population density equal to or greater than 500 people per km². These areas have a significant number of people living and working closely together and are often in cities of metropolitan regions. These areas are particularly important for noise management, as agglomerations tend to have a concentrated presence of transportation infrastructure like railways, roads, and airports, coinciding with a high number of people living or working alongside.

The agglomerations identified in round three of the strategic noise mapping by DEFRA within CrossCountry's operation are listed below.

NB. although CrossCountry pass through or stop within these agglomerations, they do not manage any infrastructure within them and therefore do not allocate budget for noise management for infrastructure alterations within them.



Complaints within Agglomerations

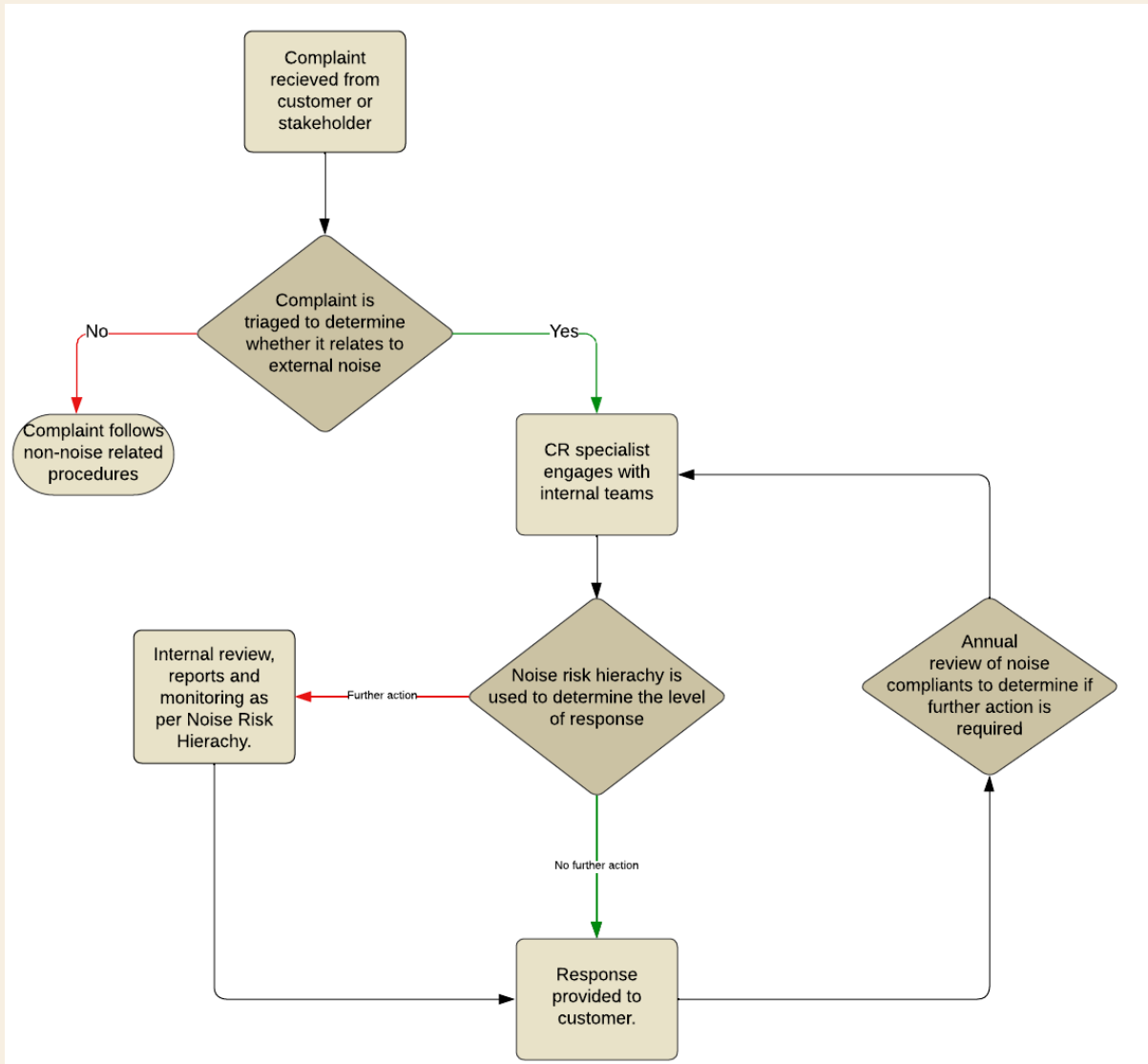
CrossCountry passes through 20+ agglomerations on the vast network it covers. To best protect and preserve the quality of life of those living around the network, actions within agglomerations will be prioritised based on the number of complaints received.

Complaints Management Procedure

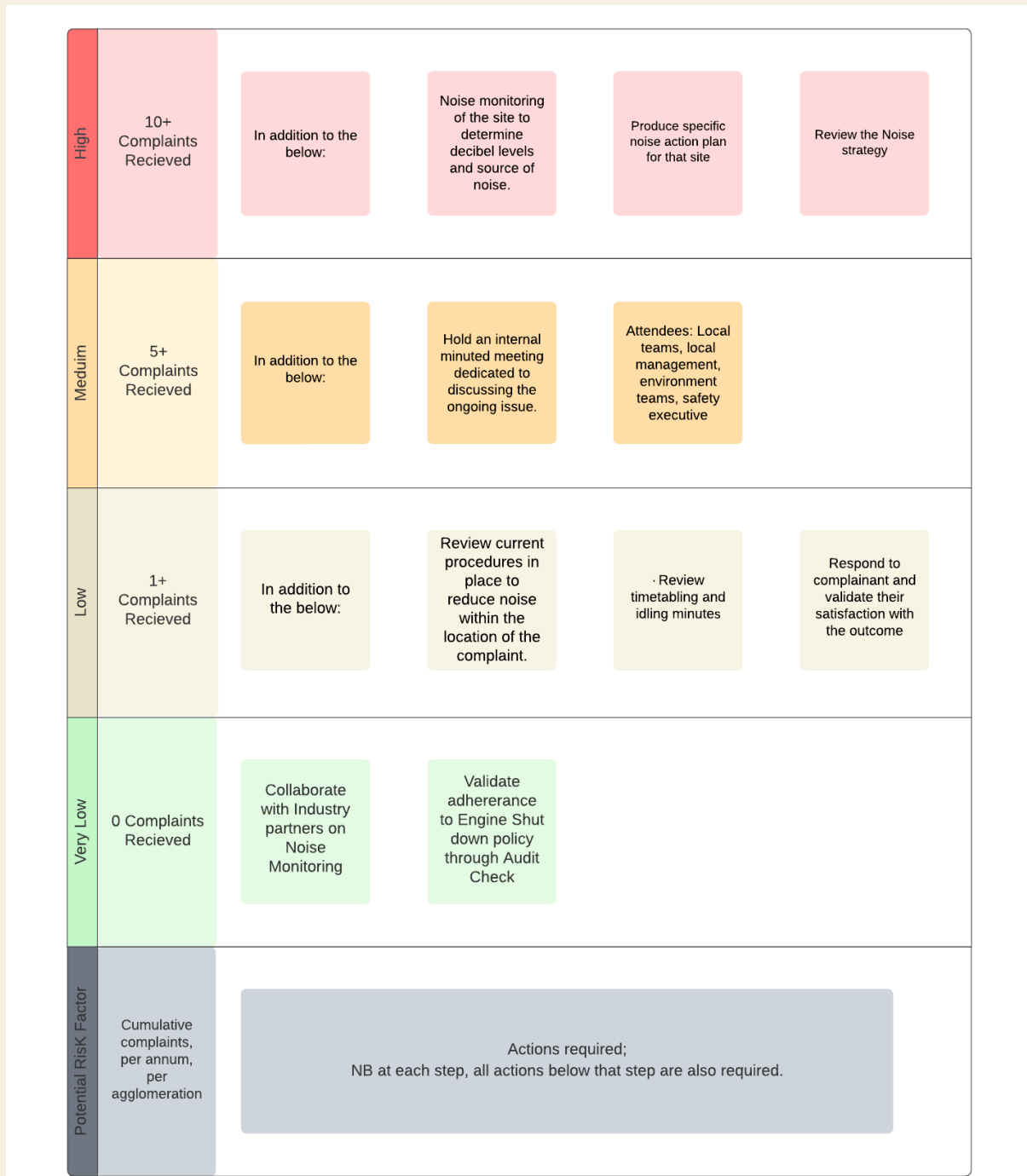
All complaints are processed through the Customer Relations Management (CRM) system. Complaints that enter the system via email are automatically uploaded to the CRM system. The complaint would first be triaged and sorted into relevant categories. Noise complaints are registered as 'Environmental – Noise'. As noise complaints are uncommon, and require further investigation, they are allocated to the specialist team within the Customer Relations (CR) function.

Complaints that enter the system via the telephone would be manually entered into the system via the Customer Relations Consultant. The complaint would then follow the same triage process to the specialist team. From here, the complaint would be investigated internally to identify the source of the noise. The specialist would liaise with internal Environment, Safety and Fleet teams to provide a response to the customer. If multiple complaints are logged within the same agglomeration, the management of this follows the noise risk hierarchy.





Noise Risk Hierarchy



By following the above procedure, complaints will be reported, managed, and resolved effectively. Any noise complaints will be discussed and heard at our periodic safety meeting for awareness and to maintain focus throughout the company.

We recognise that a main cause of noise disturbance is the wheel-track interface. As we have limited control over the rail infrastructure, we will ensure that future fleet procurement will consider the impacts of noise and aim to reduce noise where this is reasonably practicable.

References

RSSB Sustainable Rail Blueprint – <https://www.rssb.co.uk/sustainability/the-sustainable-rail-blueprint>

Noise Action Plans –

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/noise-action-plans-large-urban-areas-roads-and-railways-2019>

Noise Action plan for Railways -

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5d1aec3c40f0b609dde41806/noise-action-plan-2019-railways.pdf>

Noise Action Plan for Agglomerations -

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5d1aec26ed915d0bc6a0a11c/noise-action-plan-2019-agglomerations.pdf>

Noise policy statement for England –

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/noise-policy-statement-for-england>

Environmental Noise (England) Regulations 2006 -

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2006/2238/contents/made>

The Railways Act 1993 - <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1993/43/contents>

UK Sustainable Development Management Plan. –

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5f2ace79d3bf7f1b17facde1/PHE_SDMP_2020_25-2.pdf

Rail Environment Policy Statement (July 2021) -

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/60eee7498fa8f50c7f08ae4b/rail-environment-policy-statement.pdf>

