

Noise Awareness in Construction

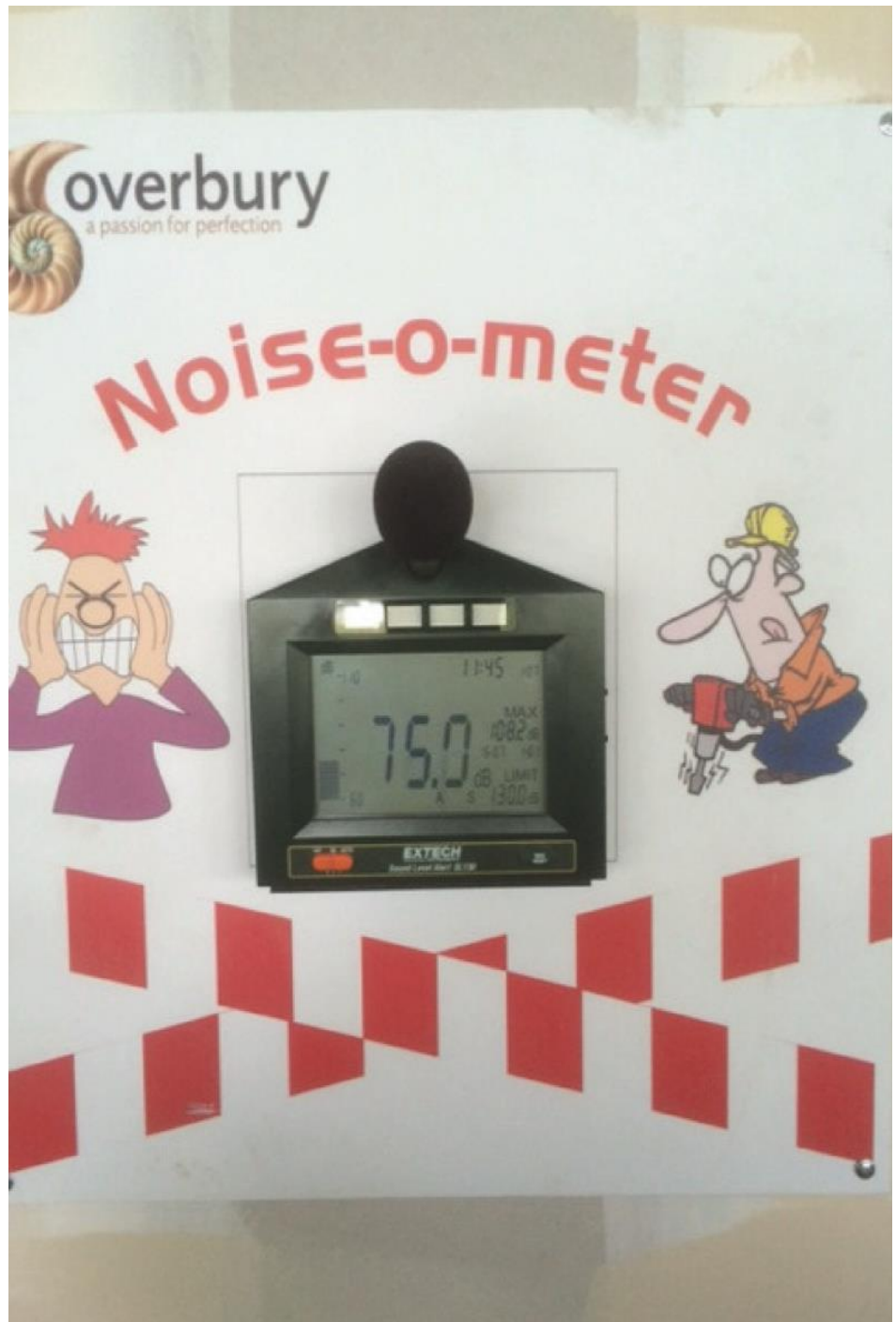
Hearing loss is usually gradual rather than immediate because of prolonged exposure to noise. It may only be when damage caused by noise over the years combines with hearing loss due to ageing that people realise how deaf they have become.

Most construction sites have periods where noisy activities coincide and need awareness and control. During the fit-out stage of this project, the notice board in the picture was installed as part of an initiative to raise awareness of the noise being generated by various trades.

A noise meter was attached to the board and had a pre-set alarm that would go off when the first action level of 80dBA was reached.

PPE is the last course of action with the following being the hierarchy of control:

- **Eliminate the risk** e.g. bolted rather than welded joints on site (which require grinding)
- **Reduce level of noise at source** e.g. mufflers on tools, newer tools, tools in good repair
- **Minimise exposure** e.g. by fabricating off-site or removing the noisy activity to a remote location where fewer people are exposed.



Key Points:-

- Not many people can relate to what 80dBA actually sounds like. This initiative helped to give a more practical understanding of the Noise at Work Regulations for supervisors as well as workers.
- Cost of a noise meter is approximately £280 (at time of writing)
- This initiative does not replace the need for good hierarchy controls (Eliminate, Reduce & Minimise exposure) but it can help to bring more focus on those activities that could be controlled better.

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