Noise is part of everyday life, but loud noise can permanently damage your hearing; permanent tinnitus (ringing in the ears) can result. Hearing damage can be caused instantly by very loud or explosive noises but is generally gradual. By the time you notice it, it is probably going to be too late…

The law
The Noise Regulations 2005 require action to be taken at certain “action values”. This relates to the levels of exposure to noise of our employees averaged over a working day or week.

The lower exposure action value is daily or weekly average exposure of 80dB(A); at this value Aberdeenshire Council has to provide information and training, and make hearing protection available.

The upper exposure action value is a daily or weekly average exposure of 85dB(A); above this value Aberdeenshire Council is required to take reasonably practicable measures to reduce noise exposure, such as engineering out the noise. Using hearing protection is mandatory if the noise cannot be controlled by these measures (or while these measure are being planned/carried out).

Finally there is an exposure limit value of 87 dB(A); no worker can be exposed to noise above this level (taking hearing protection into account).

Did you know that every 3 dB doubles the noise? So what might seem like small differences in the numbers can be quite significant.

This shows that a quiet office may range from 40 - 50 dB, while a road drill can produce 100 -110 dB.

What do employees have to do?
Co-operate
Help Aberdeenshire Council do what is needed to protect your hearing. For example: ensure that you follow any working methods that are put in place.
For further advice and guidance on any of the above please call the Health and Safety Unit on 01224 664118