

PE1367/V

In the light of the responses from the two local authorities contacted, what is your response to these devices being banned in all local authority areas?

As the manufacturer of the Mosquito, we have dealt with the issue of banning the Mosquito on a much larger scale than simply the Scottish government. In 2008 the motion to ban the Mosquito device was taken before the European Commission in the form of a Written Declaration. The ban only attracted support by 8% of MEP's. The EU ruled that the device is in free circulation within Europe, presented no health concerns, complied with Low Voltage regulations and could not be banned within the EU.

We appreciate that the Mosquito is NOT a solution to teen anti-social behaviour, however, given that the state are unable to tackle the causes of teenage ASB in the short to medium term, the device offers a benign solution to people and businesses whose lives and businesses are being adversely affected by teen ASB on daily basis.

Used in accordance with our guidelines, the Mosquito is a non-confrontational and benign way to gently disperse groups of teens and allow individual members of our society who pay taxes to enjoy the peaceful benefit of their properties and businesses.

The majority of police forces, the Scottish Police Federation do not favour the use of these devices. Neither does Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People and local authorities contacted do not support their use. Who does? Why continue to use them?

We as a company receive calls daily from individuals and businesses telling us of the trauma they experience on a daily basis from youths acting badly. In most instances, these people / businesses have already been to the police, but the police have not been able to cure the problem.

We have examples of shops who have had to call the police out on a daily basis for months on end. The police move the kids away and then leave, only for the kids to return shortly afterwards. At an average cost to the police of £300 per call out, just this one shop was costing police around £9000 per month. The installation of a Mosquito device solved the problem within days. No confrontation or risky staff involvement was required and the shop and its customers go forward enjoying a relaxed atmosphere.

In terms of justifying the continued use of the Mosquito, this is easy. Until such time as society finds a solution to groups of antagonistic and troublesome kids hanging around people's property making their lives a misery, the Mosquito is the ONLY

effective way for these people to deal with the problem without confrontation and possible violent repercussions.

Do you believe that using these devices creates an acceptable image of Scotland and what its attitude towards young people is?

This question can be turned on its head. Does Scotland and the members of the SCCYP think it acceptable to ignore the suffering of civil minded tax payers who are the backbone of our society? We appreciate that it is not every child that causes such problems, however, the Mosquito takes on average 10 – 20 minutes to become annoying and has a maximum range of 100 feet (If set to maximum range. It should be noted that Mosquito"s mounted on shops etc. directly on a public thoroughfare are generally set to a much lower volume level than that required to cover 100 feet). Anyone walking through its field of coverage will hardly notice the sound. In addition, the Mosquito devices are programmed to shut down after 20 minutes, as this is normally more than sufficient to solve the problem. Only those standing in the field of coverage for an extended period will notice anything annoying. Is a few moments of sound too much to bare if it solves a problem such as a gathering of antagonistic youths? The Mosquito creates a calm environment that all people can enjoy. It is NOT designed to create „No go" areas.

Are these devices really an effective and acceptable tool to tackle anti-social behaviour? Surely there are other and more effective ways of tackling anti-social behaviour? What published evidence is there that the devices work and tackle the underlying cause, and don't just move children from one shop to another?

Are these devices acceptable? Yes we think they are, If they are used according to our guidelines and provided that customers have tried other avenues such as police to solve the problems first.

Are there more effective ways of tackling ASB? Yes, but these are long term societal changes. Maybe one day society will function in a way that make the use of Mosquito devices unnecessary, hopefully! Until then, Mosquito remains the most benign way of dispersing groups of rowdy teens without confrontation or risk of violence.

We have no formal studies demonstrating that the Mosquito work etc., however, if they did not do what we say they will do, when used correctly, we would not sell the amount we have. What we are told by police and have seen ourselves in our local area, is that rather than move a whole group of rowdy teens from one area to another, the groups tend to disperse into smaller less troublesome groups, however, we have no formal evidence to back up this claim. That said, neither do the people who are claiming it just moves them from one place to the other.

Would you agree that a device which would specifically target say ethnic minorities would be discriminatory and would not be permitted? What is then the difference with this device which targets young people?

We agree that a device that targeted ethnic minorities only would be a very bad idea, but we are not in the least discussing the same thing here. When used correctly in line with our guidelines, the Mosquito device is only used to disperse groups of teens who are acting in an antisocial manner and preventing people from going about their business / lives in peace.

Who supports their continued use and who opposes?

In the 5 ½ years that Mosquito has been sold, I would be confident in stating that over 99% of adults we have spoken too support the product providing it is used correctly. In addition, many young people also support the device, especially those who have been intimidated by groups of teens outside shops etc.

As to who opposes the Mosquito, that is easy. Liberty, the Human Rights group and the Children"s commissioners etc.

There also seems to be support for NOT using the Mosquito by police forces over the last 2 years. This is a top level lack of support and not a view shared by many of the officers on the beat. During the first 3 years that the Mosquito was being sold, police accounted for around 75% of sales, however, following the statement by Liberty that they would support anyone wishing to take legal action against a party using a Mosquito, the Police at the senior level became afraid of a legal challenge and in some cases stopped using their Mosquito"s and in others, began using them in a more low key manner.

In the 5 ½ years the Mosquito"s have been sold, NO legal action has ever been taken against us or any of our customers.

What consideration have you given to any adverse health impacts on people caused by these devices (e.g. to young children, autistic teenager, person with a digital hearing aid etc)?

During the first year of Mosquito sales, CSS undertook significant research into the legality, scientific and medical aspects of the device. At the time – and still the case as far as we are aware – there was no legislation that applied to sound levels in the environment and their effects on health. Due to this lack of guiding legislation, we as a company enforced the HSE "Damage to human hearing by airborne sound of very high frequency or ultrasonic frequency" on ourselves. This document details the maximum safe exposure to high frequency sound for workers in industrial settings. The potential exposure for a member of the public in an open environment rather than an enclosed factory setting on which the report focuses is minimal and deemed to be very safe.

In addition to the above mentioned HSE report, we commissioned the ISVR (Institute of Sound and Vibration Research) at Southampton University to undertake an investigation into the potential effects of exposure to the device. Whilst the report stated that further research was warranted, it did not present any conclusions that would lead anyone to believe that brief and irregular exposure to the Mosquito sound would cause any problems. For more detailed information on the above mentioned reports and to view reports from other sources such as the NHS and the Belgian Superior Health Council etc., please see www.compoundsecurity.co.uk

With regard to Autistic people, discussions with NAS concluded that the Mosquito was likely to be of benefit to more autistic people than it would cause a problem for. Only 1% of autistic people have problems with loud sudden noises (Note, Mosquito is not loud or sudden), however, significantly more autistic people have major problems with large groups of people, especially those acting in a rowdy manner.

In relation to the effects on people wearing hearing aids, Siemens confirm that modern hearing aids do not amplify sounds above 8Khz, which is well below the 17KHz operational range of the Mosquito.

Do you have any information about the spread and numbers of these devices across Scotland?

We have no data on the number of units being used in Scotland, however, we believe it to be very low.

Do you have any concerns about the use of such devices and whether they might constitute an offence of assault?

We do not have any concerns that the correct usage of a Mosquito device constitutes an assault. Legal investigation was undertaken before the Mosquito was made available to the public and can be viewed on our website.

Additional comments

Ultra-sonic!

Many people use the term „Ultra-Sonic“ in relation to the Mosquito. This is not in fact the Case. The Mosquito uses „High frequency“ sound below the „Ultra-sonic“ range.

How loud is it?

Many Mosquito units are installed on shops, particularly late opening community shops. These shops generally have small frontages and the majority of these have been professionally installed. In these instances, we set and recommend that the user retains the volume settings as they are supplied. These would be either 92db or 98db.

The following are taken from respected published work and provide a guide to volume levels as the normal person is likely to experience them:

1. Toddlers squeaky rubber duck – Up to 90dB
2. A violin being played – 82 – 92 dB
3. Traffic noise from inside a car – Up to 85dB
4. A flute being played – 92 – 103 dB

(Readings taken at 1 meter)

It should be noted that with the exception of exposure to sounds in excess of 140dB, most hearing loss is caused by long term exposure to a sound, not because the sound is particularly loud.

I can't hear it, what does it sound like?

The best analogy for anyone of slightly advanced years is that the Mosquito device sounds like an alarm clock. This is due to the sound pulsing (switching on and off) 4 times each second. Now imagine you are downstairs drinking your morning coffee on your day off and your alarm clock goes off upstairs. Does the sound hurt your ears? No of course not. Can you sit there with your coffee and ignore it? Maybe for a minute or two, but then you have to go and turn it off because it is annoying you! That is precisely how the Mosquito achieves its effect.

Co-Op

The Co-Op group conducted detailed trials of the Mosquito device in 2006 / 7 (details available on our website) and found the device to be most effective. Over the next year Co-Op installed a large number of devices to shops around the UK. In 2008/9 Co-Op announced that they would stop using the Mosquito as it did not conform to their ethical policies.

We are aware that some Co-Op stores are still using their Mosquito's and would not be without them.

Whilst we agree that to an extent classical music (We also produce such units) can have an effect similar to a Mosquito, classical music does present some problems.

These are:

1. Music as we generally experience it has a centre frequency of 4 – 6 KHZ which is the peak range of human hearing. Unfortunately sound at 4 – 6KHz is NOT directional and can be heard from any position around a speaker. This means it cannot be targeted at one small area. This is no good in a residential area, as it will affect nearby residents not only in their gardens, but inside their homes too. The Mosquito sound is highly directional and does not penetrate solid objects or dense foliage.
2. Playing of classical music for this purpose generally involves either PRS and / or PPL licensing which can cost up to £300 per year

Call for Legislation

For the last 3 years CSS has been campaigning to get the government to introduce legislation to control the use of the Mosquito devices. We have lobbied and met many MP's who agree with our request, but despite what must be termed as a significant effort by such a small company as ours, we have not been able to achieve this.

The legislation we are seeking is limit the use of the Mosquito devices to the police and people / businesses the police authorise. By the same token the police should be allowed to deploy Mosquito devices in locations they deem appropriate WITHOUT fear of legal action against them.

We feel that this provides the best of both worlds and ensures that Mosquito devices would be under the control of the police. This not only allows a useful method of dispersing groups of rowdy / troublesome kids calmly, but will create significant savings for police forces whilst still effectively policing ASB.

Senior members of the English Youth Parliament are supportive of this legislation and have met with CSS and jointly with MP's to lobby for this legislation. Further details are available upon request.

Further reading

Additional reports obtained by or commissioned for CSS that are available to view on our website at www.compoundsecurity.co.uk are:

NPL (National Physical Laboratory) Independent report commissioned by CSS

AERC – Environmental investigation. Independent report commissioned by CSS

Health Canada. Independent report

Hewittsons – Human Rights investigation. Independent report commissioned by CSS

Guide Dogs for the Blind. Independent report

Official Home Office position as stated in the House of Commons.

RCPCH (Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health) Independent report.