

ABOUT THIS PROCEDURE

Workplace stress is a health and safety issue and this procedure highlights the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stressors. Through this procedure South Wales Police will endeavour to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of all its officers and staff.

TITLE	Stress Management in the Workplace
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How to navigate this document:

You can either:

- Scroll through each page in sequence
- Or click on the tabs on the right hand side to go to a specific section

If you have any questions on this procedure, please see the relevant contact in the [Further Reference](#) section or email the [Policy Unit](#).

Stress Management in the Workplace

KEY POINTS

South Wales Police is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of its staff. Workplace stress is a health and safety issue and this procedure highlights the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stressors.

This procedure will apply to all South Wales Police Officers and Police Staff including members of the Special Constabulary. Managers are responsible for implementation and South Wales Police is responsible for providing the necessary resources.

Managers are expected to identify workplace stressors that have the potential to cause harm. Stress risk assessments are to be used to protect, as far as is possible, the health and wellbeing of all SWP personnel.

Police work involves many complex skills and can create much emotional strain. The impact of this work can go unnoticed or may not be fully appreciated. The daily round of routine police work, domestic disputes, accidents, tragedy, death and violence exposes the individual to the stress and suffering of other people.

Specialist roles undertaken by both Police Officers and Police Staff can bring their own intrinsic pressures. Such roles include covert duties, public protection, road traffic collision investigation, high tech crime, disaster victim recovery and those routinely dealing with injury, mutilation and death for example 'crime scene investigation' and Coroner's officers. Personnel working in these types of roles within SWP are offered a programme of regular psychological debriefing, provided in-house by Counselling & Trauma Services.

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ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Chief Officers

Chief Officers will be responsible for the regular monitoring of the implementation and effectiveness of the support provided by this procedure and will report their findings to the Force Health Safety and Wellbeing Board.

BCU Commanders/Heads of Department

BCU Commanders and Heads of Department are responsible for ensuring compliance with this procedure. (See [Self Inspection Checklist](#))

They must ensure that:

- Managers identify work activities, working relationships and physical conditions, which could cause stress. These activities need to be suitably and sufficiently assessed and appropriate control measures implemented to reduce the risk to the lowest level reasonably practicable.
- All incidents are investigated to identify the causes and level of compliance with legislation/procedure and to consider whether an amendment to the risk assessment is necessary
- Training is provided to equip managers for the roles they are expected to undertake. This may include people management skills.
- Adequate resources are made available to implement control measures to reduce stress in the workplace.
- Staff are released for any training that may be identified.
- Managers are aware of the support that is available from Counselling and Trauma Services to them and to their personnel

Managers and Supervisors

- All managers and supervisors are responsible for identifying individuals or groups at risk of stress related conditions, as a result of their particular work activities within the general risk assessment process. Where a risk of stress has been highlighted then the manager must carry out the [stress risk assessment](#). Positive stress reduction measures should be introduced. Support and advice may be obtained from the Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing team, on extension 27999.
- Managers should maintain awareness of the proactive and reactive sources of support that are available from the Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing team. Anyone showing signs of stress should be advised that specialist support is available, including confidential counselling, and encouraged to access Counselling & Trauma Services.
- When a member of staff reports sick due to a stress related condition, there is no requirement to refer to Occupational Health after 48 hours of psychological absence. All absences to be referred by the Line Manager to Occupational Health at 28 days (regardless of reason for absence) or where any absence is a cause for concern. This does not necessarily mean an FMA appointment will follow, it may be nurse managed instead. Managers will maintain regular contact with the individual, sensitively establish the cause of the problem and, if work related, provide appropriate support and assistance in finding a resolution.

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Monitoring - managers must:

- Make suitable arrangements to monitor the implementation of control measures.
- Ensure risk assessments are reviewed should changes occur in work activity, equipment/vehicles etc., or any other significant changes.
- Monitor reported incidents.

All Staff

- Members of staff should inform their line manager if there are any issues which may detrimentally affect their physical and psychological well being.
- Staff are encouraged to monitor their own levels of stress, take care of themselves and take action to prevent deterioration in their health. They also have a duty to co-operate with managers and supervisors in stress reduction measures, including attending any stress debriefing and training provided and follow any guidance regarding work-related stress.

Human Resources (H.R.) Business Partners

Specialist professional advice may be obtained from the Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing team but it will be the HR Advisor within the BCU or department who will provide general advice, help and support to managers.

Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing team

The Team will:

- Review this procedure annually or in the light of any relevant changes e.g. change in legislation.
- Advise Managers on Stress Risk Assessment process
- Provide input to Learning and Development Services on training

Counselling and Trauma Advisors

- The Counselling and Trauma Advisors will provide specialist proactive and reactive support and therapeutic interventions including one to one counselling. They also coordinate the Trauma Risk Management (TRiM) programme which provides support after the most disturbing incidents. TRiM identifies the need for specialist support and enables early intervention.
- The team will give support to managers of individuals, teams and individuals who have been off work with stress and provide specialist advice to contribute to a planned return to work strategy.
- Counselling & Trauma Advisors will also provide general advice and support to managers carrying out stress risk assessments.

Occupational Health

- The FMA will determine the individual's fitness for their role and will advise managers accordingly in the form of a Confidential Management Report followed by a more detailed

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formal report. The FMA may on occasion need to liaise with individuals General Practitioner; if a report is required this will only be obtained with the individual's written consent.

- Independent Force paid assessments by psychiatrists or other specialists in the field can be arranged where an independent opinion is needed, e.g. fitness for work or a diagnosis or even treatment.
- Individuals will be kept under regular review by Occupational Health and will be asked to attend for FMA reviews until discharged.

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For background see 'key points' tab.

TRiM

Specific incidents may give rise to particular stressors - for example death or serious injury of colleagues, incidents involving injury or death to young children, extreme violence, 'unnatural' deaths or situations of intense fear. The development of trauma support programmes recognises this particular aspect of the role. Within SWP, a Trauma Risk Management System (TRiM) provides support to personnel involved in the most distressing or disturbing incidents.

There is a danger of recognising the major incidents and specialist roles whilst ignoring the slow build up of stress from routine operational activity. It is acknowledged that to be engaged on general police duties in some areas may be as great a personal risk and is equally pressured. This procedure also addresses the pressures faced by many staff who may not necessarily be in the front line but nevertheless are routinely working in potentially stressful environments.

Risk Assessments and Health and Safety Considerations

This procedure recognises the impact of stress that police officers and staff may experience in the course of their work. The procedure provides guidance on the procedures to be followed where work related issues may have contributed towards or caused stress related problems.

The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 places a duty on employers, so far as is reasonably practicable, to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of their employees while they are at work.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 extends this specifically to include the requirement to undertake a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to the health and safety of staff and others such as visitors, contractors etc. and to ensure that appropriate control measures are in place.

It is the responsibility of Managers to assess the risk of stress-related ill health arising from work activities and take action to control that risk via the risk assessment process.

(Separate guidance for Trauma Risk Management (TRiM) following a traumatic or unusually disturbing incident can be found on the HR Helpdesk and within the Counselling & Trauma Services procedure. Managers need to refer to this guidance when considering support for any individual or group of staff who may be affected by their involvement in a traumatic incident).

For further information / advice contact the Health, Care and Safety Team on Ext. 27999. Managing stress effectively is an important responsibility for any reasonable employer. Helping staff to identify and manage symptoms of stress contributes towards individuals' well being and their effectiveness

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in work. This has a positive impact for the individual and contributes towards reducing sickness absence levels and the effectiveness of the organisation.

BCU Commanders and Heads of Departments are responsible for the implementation of the procedure.

Definitions

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) define stress as: -

" the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed upon them"

This makes an important distinction between pressure, which can be determined as a positive state if managed correctly, and stress, which can be detrimental to health.

To achieve the objectives of this procedure, the organisation will:

- Identify those areas of work where a predictable risk exists by carrying out risk assessments and implementing measures to minimise such risks.
- Give appropriate training/information to staff who could be vulnerable to stress.
- Provide support, counselling and advice to staff who are exposed to stress in situations in work.
- Maintain an appropriate reporting and recording procedure.

Stress and Pressure

There is no such thing as a "pressure free" job. Every job brings its own set of tasks, responsibilities and day-to-day problems, and the pressures and demands these place on people are an unavoidable part of working life.

Some pressure can, in fact, be a good thing. It is often the tasks and challenges that people face at work that provides structure to their working days, keeping people motivated and are key to a sense of achievement and job satisfaction. However, excessive work place pressure and stress can be harmful.

This procedure deals with work induced stress no matter how caused and is intended as a framework document which individual command teams and departments can supplement with their own procedures and guidelines reflecting the principles of this procedure and the individual needs of the service area concerned.

Specific Instructions, Tactics, Methods, Practices and Procedures

To assist employers in managing workplace stressors, the HSE has devised a set of "Management Standards" that form the basis of stress risk assessments. The Management Standards comprise of six key areas of work that cover the primary sources of stress at work. These are: Demands, Control, Support, Relationships, Role and Change.

They require managers, employees and their representatives to work together to review those aspects of work and to implement changes that will avoid or reduce unnecessary stress or assist individuals to manage the pressure of their roles and protect their well-being.

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Under each area there are 'states to be achieved', which organisations should work towards. The approach is aimed at the organisation rather than individuals, so that a larger number of employees can benefit from any actions taken.

Stress Risk Assessments and Guidance

Risk Management Procedure:

Whenever a Risk Assessment is carried out, an assessment in respect of stress must be included.

The risk management cycle allows the promotion of safe systems of work and individual health. Stress risk assessment is a systematic problem solving approach to the analysis and management of workplace stress problems. Critical to the success of the process is the managers understanding of the organisation and its culture together with the active involvement of all interested parties and the full support of senior management from the outset.

It also needs to be appreciated that highlighting problems can both activate concerns within the workforce and raise expectations that something will be done.

To identify the need to carry out a full stress risk assessment a general risk assessment for the role/event or individual should be undertaken.

Stress Risk Assessment forms and Guidelines

A specimen Risk Assessment Form for Work Related Stress is provided. A Managers' Guide has been developed to assist managers and includes completed examples of stress risk assessments, this can be found on FORMS:

The generic risk assessment for this procedure can be used as an aide when completing this form
Action Steps:

Step 1. Look for the hazards – the main types of hazards can be grouped into six broad categories

- Demands – such as workload, work patterns and the work environment
- Control – such as how much say the person has in the way they do their work.
- Support – such as the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues.
- Relationships – such as promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour.
- Role – such as whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that they do not have conflicting roles.
- Change – such as how organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organisation

Step 2. Decide who might be harmed and how. Any staff, regardless of age, status, gender, sexual orientation, religion or belief, race, ethnicity, or disability can be affected by work-related stress.

Step 3. Evaluate the risk and decide if enough is being done. Consider how likely it is that each hazard mentioned in Step 1 could cause harm in the unit. In taking action ask:

- What action is already being taken?
- Is it enough
- If not, what more can be done?

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Remember try to eliminate the risks as far as possible. Try to combat risks at an organisational level at source before considering the training (in terms of pressure management) or counselling needs of the individual member of staff. Try to take action that protects everyone, rather than just a few individuals.

Step 4. Record your findings. The main findings of the risk assessment must be recorded and shared with staff. Use this document to monitor progress and help you monitor the impact of particular hazards.

Step 5. Review the assessment and revise when necessary Review the assessment whenever significant changes occur in the organisation, or in the individual div/departments. Do this in consultation with staff. Consider reviewing the assessment regularly.

Operational Planning

When planning for major events / operations ensure that plans are implemented so as to anticipate any potential psychological trauma.

This type of assessment is already in place in respect of firearms.

HEALTH AND SAFETY: RISK MANAGEMENT EMERGENCY PROCEDURES MANUAL ACPO

Support and advice is available from the Health, Care and Safety Team on Ext 27999.

The same style of briefing and debriefing should be implemented in respect of potential stressors that are identified within operations/events.

Dynamic Risk Assessment

Dynamic risk assessment requires continuous assessments and control of risk in rapidly changing circumstances, particularly during operational incidents. The often unpredictable and rapidly changing nature of operational incidents means that it is not feasible to include every situation or scenario within a Generic Risk Assessment (please see H&S: Risk Management Guidance & Procedure).

Stress Related Illness

Anyone who works for SWP who begins to suffer symptoms of stress can access confidential support from the Counselling & Trauma Advisors. If the individual wishes to have counselling, they can refer themselves to Counselling & Trauma – see Counselling & Trauma Services procedure for further information.

Sometimes people become so ill that they are unable to work. There is no requirement to refer to Occupational Health after 48 hours of psychological absence. All absences to be referred by the Line Manager to Occupational Health at 28 days (regardless of reason for absence) or where any absence is a cause for concern. This does not necessarily mean an FMA appointment will follow, it may be nurse managed instead.

Administration

Comments and further amendments should be forwarded to the Health Care and Safety Team, Human Resources Department.

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Substantial changes will require immediate amendment whilst minor changes will be brought forward for consideration at the time of review of the procedure.

Further Information- Support

Further support and guidance regarding mental health can be found on the Wellbeing pages of BOB. This is where you can find more information on Blue Light Champions, Care First and other SWP Wellbeing provisions and initiatives. Each dept and BCU also has a Wellbeing SPOC.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND FORMS

FORMS

Stress Risk Assessment Form

[Managers Guide to Work-related Stress Risk Assessments](#)

LEGISLATION AND REGULATION

The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

FURTHER INFORMATION AND LINKS

Managing the causes of work-related stress – A step-by-step approach using the Management Standards

Tackling stress: the Management Standards approach – a short guide. INDG406

Making the stress Management Standards work: How to apply the Standards in your workplace. MISC714

Working together to reduce stress at work: A guide for employees. INDG424

Tackling work related stress HSG 218

Successful Health and Safety Management (HSG 65)

Reducing Error and Influencing Behaviour (HSG 48)

A summary of the relevant legislation is included in the health and safety executive document- 5 steps to risk assessment (INDG 163).

www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards

[Managers Guide to Work-related Stress Risk Assessments](#)

[Tackling Work Related Stress Workbook](#)

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[Thriving At Work Stevenson Farmer Review](#)

RELATED PROCEDURES OR SOPS

CONTACTS

RISKS AND IMPACTS

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

[Stress Management EIA](#)

DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

N/A

RISK ASSESSMENTS

Please see the Risk Assessment elements of this procedure. Whenever a risk assessment is carried out an assessment in respect of stress must be included- a template is provided for guidance:

[Stress Management Form](#)

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DATE	VERSION	KEY CHANGES & COMMENTS	FULL REVIEW?	AUTHORISED BY
26/10/07	01	First Published		
05/03/10		Annual review		
03/03/11		Policy statement updated		
07/05/13	04	Policy updated		
13/08/14	05	Policy transferred into new Guidance and Procedure template		
09/10/19	05	Annual review. Dates changed, minor amendments, links checked		
13/05/2020	06	Renamed references to "Health, Care and Safety team" to "Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing team"		
15/02/2023	07	Annual Review	Y	
11/04/2023	07	Removing of out-of-date information	N	
04/03/2024	07	Replacement of information to align with the SWP Sickness policy	N	
16/07/2024	07	Rename of the Practitioner's guidance to stress risk assessing to "Managers Guide to Work-related Stress Risk Assessments"	N	

Please note [governance process](#) and obtain the relevant level of sign off.

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