



ASSOCIATION OF CHIEF POLICE OFFICERS IN SCOTLAND

ACPOS Best Practice Stress Policy

**Version 1.0
2011**

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The effectiveness and ongoing relevance of this document will be subject to review by the ACPOS business area(s) detailed above.

The next review of this document is due by [insert date]; however, it will be updated according to significant legislative and policy changes and re-released earlier, if required.

Version Control

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Scottish Police Service is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of staff and recognises that workplace stress is a health and safety issue and acknowledges the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stressors where ever they are found.
- 1.2 This policy is designed to apply to everyone in the service. Managers are responsible for implementation and each individual Force is responsible for providing the necessary resources.

2. Definition of stress (HSE)

- 2.1 The Health and Safety Executive define stress as “the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them”. The Scottish Police Service recognises that people perceive pressure in different ways and that each individual will tolerate pressure to different thresholds.

3. Aims

- To provide individual Forces with a generic document outlining national standards, as defined by the HSE, in relation to Stress Management.
- To assist all staff to understand the cause of stress and to work together in ways that encourage positive responses to the demands of work.
- To provide managers, supervisors and staff an understanding of their individual responsibilities in relation to stress and seek early assistance in managing stress in a constructive manner.
- To set out the types of support mechanisms available within the Forces.
- To set out Best Practice in relation to Stress Management and allow Forces to benchmark their own Stress Management Policy.

4. Responsibilities

- 4.1 The HSE have recognised the responsibilities of various groups to assist in identifying and managing the risks associated with stress. These are as follows;

4.2 Managers

- Conduct and implement recommended risks assessments within their jurisdiction.
- Ensure good communication between management and staff, particularly where there are organisational and procedural changes.
- Ensure staff are fully trained to discharge their duties.
- Ensure staff are updated on good management practice.
- Monitor workloads to ensure that people are not overloaded.
- Monitor working hours and overtime to ensure that staff are not overworking.
- Monitor holidays to ensure that staff are taking their full entitlement.
- Attend training as requested in good management practice and health and safety.
- Ensure that bullying and harassment is not tolerated within their jurisdiction.
- Be vigilant and offer additional support to a member of staff who is experiencing stress outside work e.g. bereavement or caring responsibilities.

4.3. Occupational Health, Health and Safety, and Welfare Services

- Provide pre-employment screening for high risk roles e.g. firearms
- Provide specialist advice and awareness training on stress.
- Train and support managers in implementing stress risk assessments.
- Support individuals who have been off sick with stress and advise them and their management on a planned return to work.
- Refer to workplace counsellors or specialist agencies as required.
- Monitor and review the effectiveness of measures to reduce stress.
- Inform the employer and the health and safety committee of any changes and developments in the field of stress at work.

4.4. Human Resources

- Give guidance to managers on the implementation of the stress policy.
- Assist in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of measures to address stress by collating sickness absence statistics and other data.
- Advise specialist trainers on training requirements based on monitoring/evaluation reports.

- Provide continuing support to managers and individuals in a changing environment and encourage referral to occupational workplace counselors where appropriate.
- Consider the use of mediation services.

4.5. Employees

- Raise issues of concern with your Line manager, occupational health or Health and Safety Representative.
- Accept opportunities for counselling when recommended.
- Seek resolution for issues of concern before a situation becomes serious for example before sickness absence occurs.
- Work with the Force to ensure return to work duty as soon as reasonably practicable.

4.6. Function of Safety Reps

- Safety Representatives must be meaningfully consulted on any changes to work practices or work design that could precipitate stress.
- Safety Representatives must be able to consult with members on the issue of stress including conducting any workplace surveys.
- Safety Representatives must be meaningfully involved in the risk assessment process.
- Safety Representatives should be allowed access to collective and anonymous data from HR.
- Safety Representatives should be provided with paid time away from normal duties to attend any Trade Union training relating to workplace stress.
- Safety Representatives should conduct joint inspections of the workplace at least 3 months to ensure that environmental stressors are properly controlled.

4.7. Role of the Safety Committee

- The joint Safety Committee will perform a pivotal role in ensuring that this policy is implemented.
- The Safety Committee will oversee monitoring of the efficacy of the policy and other measures to reduce stress and promote workplace health and safety.

5. Management Standards on Stress

5.1 Demands

5.1.1 Includes issues like workload, work patterns, and the work environment. The standard is that;

- Staff indicate that they are able to cope with the demands of their jobs; and
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

5.1.2 What should be happening / states to be achieved:

- The organisation provides staff with adequate and achievable demands in relation to the agreed hours of work
- People's skills and abilities are matched to the job demands.
- Jobs are designed to be within the capabilities of staff.
- Staff' concerns about their work environment are addressed.

5.2 Control

5.2.1 How much say the person has in the way they do their work

5.2.2 The standard is that:

- Staff indicate that they are able to have a say about the way they do their work.
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

5.2.3 What should be happening / states to be achieved;

- Where possible, staff have control over their pace of work.
- Staff are encouraged to use their skills and initiative to do their work.
- Where possible, staff are encouraged to develop new skills to help them undertake new and challenging pieces of work.
- The organisation encourages staff to develop their skills.
- Staff have a say over when breaks can be taken.
- Staff are consulted over their work patterns.

5.3 Support

5.3.1 Includes the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues.

5.3.2 The standard is that;

- Staff indicate that they receive adequate information and support from their colleagues and superiors.
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

5.3.3 What should be happening / states to be achieved;

- The organisation has policies and procedures to adequately support staff.
- Systems are in place to enable and encourage managers to support their staff.
- Systems are in place to enable and encourage staff to support their colleagues.
- Staff know what support is available and how and when to access it.
- Staff know how to access the required resources to do their job.
- Staff receive regular and constructive feedback.

5.4 Relationships

5.4.1 Includes promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour.

5.4.2 The standard is that;

- Staff indicate that they are not subjected to unacceptable behaviour, e.g. bullying at work; and Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

5.4.3 What should be happening / states to be achieved.

- The organisation promotes positive behaviour at work to avoid conflict and ensure fairness.
- Staff share information relevant to their work.
- The organisation has agreed policies and procedures to prevent or resolve unacceptable behaviour.
- Systems are in place to enable and encourage managers to deal with unacceptable behaviour.

- Systems are in place to enable and encourage staff to report unacceptable behaviour.

5.5 Role

5.5.1 Whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that the person does not have conflicting roles.

5.5.2 The standard is that:

- Staff indicate that they understand their role and responsibilities.
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

5.5.3 What should be happening / states to be achieved;

- The organisation ensures that, as far as possible, the different requirements it places upon staff are compatible.
- The organisation provides information to enable staff to understand their role and responsibilities.
- The organisation ensures that, as far as possible, the requirements it places upon staff are clear.
- Systems are in place to enable staff to raise concerns about any uncertainties or conflicts they have in their role and responsibilities.

5.6 Change

5.6.1 How organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organisation.

5.6.2 The standard is that:

- Staff indicate that the organisation engages them frequently when undergoing an organisational change.
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

5.6.3 What should be happening / states to be achieved;

- The organisation provides staff with timely information to enable them to understand the reasons for proposed changes.
- The organisation ensures adequate employee consultation on changes and provides opportunities for staff to influence proposals.

- Staff are aware of the probable impact of any changes to their jobs. If necessary, staff are given training to support any changes in their jobs.
- Staff are aware of timetables for changes.
- Staff have access to relevant support during changes.

5.7 Evaluation

5.7.1 An evaluation process is essential in ensuring that this Strategy is operating effectively.

5.7.2 The evaluation process will consider;

- Sickness and accident or incident statistics.
- Turnover data.
- Information from exit interviews.
- Information from workforce surveys.
- Health and Safety Committee minutes.
- Information from team and branch meetings.
- Information from grievances.

5.7.3 Stress management should be a standing item on divisional and branch management team and health and safety committees, and concerns should be fed through the Force Health and Safety Committee.

5.8 Review

5.8.1 This Strategy will be reviewed no later than three years from the date of implementation.

Legal and other references (Acts and Regulations)

Forces have a duty under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of its employees. This includes the minimization of the negative effects of stress on the workforce where this can be achieved.

Forces need to show a commitment to preventing discrimination against employees with a stress related illness. Through the provision of education, risk assessments, Health and Safety, Occupational Health and Welfare, Personnel and, a Critical Incident Stress Management policy, forces can play an active role in the management of stress at work.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (amended 2004) is to prevent discrimination against disabled people in employment. This pertains to those with a mental impairment also. For example, stress related illness or depression.

The Employment Rights Act 1996 provides employees with the right not to be unfairly dismissed. When looking at whether dismissal is fair or not, the reason must fall within one of five fair categories, one of which is 'capability'. This is defined as skill, aptitude, health or any other physical or mental quality.

The Working Time Regulations 1998 (as amended) – this is to protect workers from excessive hours which might result in physical or mental breakdown or stress related illness.

The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 which states that it is an offence under this act for a person to pursue conduct which he or she knows can amount to harassment.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 which state that the organisation has a duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all its employees whilst at work. Employers are required to assess risks to the health and safety of employees and make arrangements for putting into practice the preventative and proactive measures that follow. This includes both physical and mental health of employees

Supporting Documents and Policies.

Trauma Support Policy
Health and Safety Policy and Risk Assessments
Strategy for a Healthy Police Service
People Management Strategy and People Management Plan
Attendance Management Policy
Alcohol and Drugs Policy
Bullying and Harassment Policy
Equal Opportunities Policy
Family Friendly Policies and Flexible Working
Grievance Procedure
Mediation Scheme
Appraisal Policy
Working Time Regulations and Agreements
Job Share and Part Time Working
The Rivers Centre for Traumatic Stress – Support for specialist post-holders review

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Document used in drafting this best practice policy include:

HSE Model Stress Policy
HSE Management Standards
GMP Strategy to Reduce Stress in the Workplace
GMP Guide to undertaking a Stress Risk Assessment
Dumfries and Galloway Stress Policy